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RESEARCH ARTICLE

PROSPECTS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AGRO-TOURISM ON THE TERRITORY OF THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN

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Abstract. *This article discusses the potential for the development of agro-tourism, which is an industry of the national economy that requires significant investment. Agro-ecotourism is one of the most popular forms of modern recreational activity. Depending on their specific characteristics, natural and climatic conditions, and management practices, various countries of the world organize this activity in different ways. It has been determined in this work that recreational activities are based on agro-landscapes and natural recreational resources. A systematic approach was the basic methodological foundation for this research, specifically the method of factor analysis, which enabled the identification of key questions for surveys that form the basis for prospects for agro-ecotourism development. A sociological survey conducted by KAZTOUR based on the author's questionnaire revealed population preferences in the field of agrotourism. Among the organisers of tourist trips, 30.9% chose hiking, 24.4% chose enjoying nature, 15.5% wished to get acquainted with agriculture and care for animals, and 13.6% expressed a desire to receive diverse impressions from a business trip. The majority of people (70.4%) preferred a foothill landscape, 26.1% preferred a river-steppe landscape, and only 3.4% preferred a desert landscape. Most respondents, 47.6%, preferred two-day trips with overnight stays, another third, 33%, chose one-day trips without overnight stay, and only 7% of respondents chose a week-long vacation. A program has been proposed for the successful development of agritourism in Kazakhstan at the city or even country level, reflecting factors that will lead to a high demand for agritourism among the population. These factors are listed in the results of the article. As part of the development of the tourism cluster in the republic, priority areas for tourism have been identified: business tourism, ecological tourism, cultural and educational tourism, active and adventure tours. The main tasks have been identified and necessary methods have been proposed to address the issues of popularization and development of agritourism on the territory of the Republic of Kazakhstan.*

Keywords: *Agro-tourism, eco-tour, rural tourism, recreation, ethno-tourism, urbanization.*

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ҚАЗАҚСТАН РЕСПУБЛИКАСЫНЫҢ АУМАҒЫНДА АГРОТУРИЗМДІ ДАМУ ТЕРСПЕКТИВАЛАРЫ

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Андатпа. Бұл мақалада халық шаруашылығының саласы болып табыла-тын және үлкен инвестицияларды қажет ететін агротуризмді дамыту мүмкіндіктері қарастырылады. Агротуризм-қазіргі заманғы демалысты ұйымдастырудың ең танымал бағыттарының бірі. Әлемнің әртүрлі елдері, аумақтың ерекшелігіне, табиғи-климаттық ерекшеліктеріне және шаруашылық ерекшеліктеріне байланысты, қызметтің бұл түрін әр түрлі ұйымдастырады. Жұмыста демалысты ұйымдастыру агроландрафт және табиғи рекреациялық ресурстар негізінде жүзеге асырылатыны анықталды. Зерттеудің негізгі әдістемелік негізі жүйелі тәсіл, атап айтқанда агротуризмді дамыту перспективаларының негізін құрайтын сауалнаманың тірек мәселелерін анықтауға мүмкіндік беретін факторлық талдау әдісі болды. KAZTOUR жүргізген және автордың сауалнамасына негізделген әлеуметтік сауалнама халықтың агротуризм саласындағы артықшылықтарын көрсетті. Туристік саяхатты ұйымдастырушылардың 30.9%-ы жаяу серуендеуді, 24.4%-ы табиғаттан ләззат алуды, 15.5%-ы ауыл шаруашылығымен танысып, жануарларға күтім жасағысы келді, ал 13.6%-ы іскерлік сапардан әртүрлі әсер алғысы келді; адамдардың көпшілігі (70.4%) тау етегіндегі ландшафтты, 26.1%-ы өзендала ландшафтын және тек 3.4% өзен-шөлді таңдады; сауалнамаға қатысқандардың көпшілігі 47,6% екі күндік түнгі сапарларды таңдады, тағы үштен бірі 33% бір күндік түнгі саяхатты таңдады, ал сауалнамаға қатысқандардың тек 7% - ы бір апталық демалысты таңдады. Қазақстанда агротуризмді дамыту үшін халықтың агротуризмге деген үлкен сұранысына әкелетін факторларды көрсететін қала немесе тіпті ел деңгейінде бағдарлама ұсынылды, бұл факторлар мақаланың нәтижелерінде келтірілген. Туристік кластерді дамыту шеңберінде республикада туризмнің басым бағыттары анықталды: Іскерлік туризм, экологиялық туризм, мәдени-танымдық туризм, белсенді және шытырман оқиғалы турлар. Негізгі міндеттер айқындалып, Қазақстан Республикасының аумағында агротуризмді насихаттау және дамыту мәселелерін шешу үшін қажетті әдістер ұсынылды.

Түйін сөздер: агротуризм, экотур, ауылдық туризм, демалыс, этнотуризм, урбанизация.

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НАУЧНАЯ СТАТЬЯ

ПЕРСПЕКТИВЫ РАЗВИТИЯ АГРОТУРИЗМА НА ТЕРРИТОРИИ РЕСПУБЛИКИ КАЗАХСТАН

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***Аннотация.** В данной статье рассматриваются возможности развития агротуризма, который является отраслью народного хозяйства и требует больших вложений. Агротуризм – это одно из наиболее популярных направлений современной организации отдыха. Различные страны мира, в зависимости от специфики, природно-климатических особенностей территории и особенностей хозяйствования по-разному организуют этот вид деятельности. В работе определено, что организация отдыха происходит на основе агроландшафта и природных рекреационных ресурсов. Базовой методической основой исследования явился системный подход, а именно метод факторного анализа, позволивший определить опорные вопросы анкетирования, которые легли в основы перспектив развития агротуризма. Социологический опрос, проведенный KAZTOUR и основанный на анкете автора, показал предпочтения населения в области агротуризма. Среди организаторов туристических путешествий 30.9% предпочли пешие прогулки, 24.4% – наслаждение природой, 15.5% захотели познакомиться с сельским хозяйством и ухаживать за животными, а 13.6% выразили получить разнообразные впечатления от деловой поездки; большинство людей (70.4%) предпочли предгорный ландшафт, 26.1% отдали предпочтение приречно-степному ландшафту и только 3.4% импонировали приречно-пустынный; большинство опрошенных 47,6% предпочли двухдневные поездки с ночевкой, еще треть 33% выбрали однодневные путешествия без ночевки, и только 7% опрошенных выбрали недельный отдых. Для успешного развития агротуризма в Казахстане предложена программа на уровне города или даже страны, отражающая факторы, которые приведут к большому спросу населения к агротуризму, данные факторы перечислены в результатах статьи. В рамках развития туристического кластера в республике были определены приоритетные направления туризма: деловой туризм, экологический туризм, культурно-познавательный туризм, активные и приключенческие туры. Определены основные задачи и предложены необходимые методы для решения вопросов популяризации и развития агротуризма на территории Республики Казахстан.*

***Ключевые слова:** агротуризм, экотур, сельский туризм, отдых, этнотуризм, урбанизация.*

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors state that there is no conflict of interest.

АЛҒЫС/ҚАРЖЫЛАНДЫРУ КӨЗІ

Зерттеу жеке қаржыландыру көздерін пайдалана отырып жүргізілді.

МҮДДЕЛЕР ҚАҚТЫҒЫСЫ

Авторлар мүдделер қақтығысы жоқ деп мәлімдейді.

БЛАГОДАРНОСТИ/ИСТОЧНИК ФИНАНСИРОВАНИЯ

Исследование проводилось с использованием частных источников финансирования

КОНФЛИКТ ИНТЕРЕСОВ

Авторы заявляют, что конфликта интересов нет.

1 INTRODUCTION

Agrotourism is one of the demanded directions of modern tourism, within which different countries vary their methods of recreation organization depending on the natural and climatic features of their territories. The study showed that agro-landscape and natural recreational resources are the basis for the organization of agritourism. The method of factor analysis was used to determine the key questions of the questionnaire, which determine the prospects for the development of this sphere of tourism.

This organization is a developed sphere of private entrepreneurship, the role of which, in combination with expanded reproduction of agricultural products and environmental protection measures, is emphasized in the “Message of the Head of State Kasym-Jomart Tokayev to the people of Kazakhstan. September 1, 2020”, where the list of priority tasks includes: “The leading role of private entrepreneurship. “Greening of the economy, environmental protection (**Message from the Head of State Kassym–Jomart Tokayev to the people of Kazakhstan. September 1, 2020**).

Kazakhstan is in great demand among foreign tourists. Every year the number of tourists visiting our country only increases. Kazakhstan was able to achieve great performance thanks to the International Exhibition EXPO-2017 in Astana.

In 2017, the Concept aimed at the development of the tourism industry in the Republic of Kazakhstan until 2023 was adopted. The main task of this concept is to develop regional cultural and tourist clusters, increase investment and create a unified national tourist brand.

The history of agritourism is an integral part of the tourism industry. Field trips to the countryside have long been a popular way to diversify leisure and recreation. Programs of excursions as part of the educational process increasingly include visits to rural farms and farms, which is an important part of teaching various disciplines. The modern tourism industry is increasingly focused on the development of agritourism, which is becoming popular among city dwellers. Trips outside the city to suburban garden plots not only bring recreation, but also the opportunity to participate in the production of agricultural products. Such trips become an integral part of the urban lifestyle of the first half of the twentieth century.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Modern scientific literature defines tourism as a set of relations and phenomena arising in the process of travel and stay of people outside their permanent place of residence, provided that it is not related to work. Tourism opens wide opportunities for communicating with the natural, cultural-historical and social values of their country and the world, including agritourism.

The first varieties of tourism appeared already in ancient Egypt. Egyptians participated, for example, in religious festivals, many of them traveled to see the pyramids and works of art. Residents of local regions (territories) hosted tourists for overnight stays, provided them with food services.

Theoretical aspects of tourism activities have been studied in the following directions:

- tourism was studied in the works of: Erdavletov S.R. (**Erdavletov, 2011**), Zorin I.V. (**Zorin et al, 2016**), Mukhambetov T.I. (**Mukhambetov et al, 2014**), Kairova S.G. (**Kairova et al, 2018**), Baizhanova S. (**Baizhanova et al, 2007**), Kairova S.G. (**Kairova et al, 2018**);

- V.A. Kvartalnov (**Kvartalnov, 2014**), A.A. Zholdasbekov (**Zholdasbekov, 2012**), M.D. Mamadiyarov (**Mamadiyarov et al, 2007**) were engaged in the organization of tourism activities.

In the first half of the 20th century, Patrick Abercrombie, a universal theorist, practitioner and world-class architect and urban planner, was engaged in the study of rural landscape and the development of methods for assessing, above all, its aesthetic component. He was the first to put the protection of rural nature on a scientific basis. Because with the development of tourism, not parks but alternative large-scale rural areas became the choice of tourists for urban populations (**Patrick Abercrombie and the formulation of the problem of rural nature conservation in England,**

2015). But Patrick Abercrombie, unlike American scientists who realized his concept of protecting pristine nature in the United States through established unpopulated nature reserves, also advocated for the protection and improvement of rural areas.

Different countries and regions have their own most interesting places for tourists. The natural richness, diversity of climatic conditions and landscape features contribute to the development of tourism and agritourism in a wide variety of regions in all corners of the Earth (Qiu et al, 2016; Mastronardi et al, 2015; Khanal et al, 2019; Scaglione et al, 2017; Wang, 2020; Cocks et al, 2017; García-Martín et al, 2016; Hernández-Morcillo et al, 2017; Amalu et al, 2018; Anderson, 2018; Ferrari, 2017; Hampton, 2018; Horwath, 2018; Imbaya et al, 2019; Kuroda, 2019; Ruoso, 2020; Guay et al, 2019).

The main purpose of the work is to conduct a study of tourism and agrotourism in general, and to develop practical recommendations for the popularization of agrotourism on the territory of our republic.

As a branch of economy, tourism is a form of activity that requires significant areas of territory with rich natural resources. In this sense, it is similar to other resource-oriented industries. Tourists choose places of recreation and travel, taking into account the unique landscapes, climate and diversity of nature. Agritourism plays an important role in this process, allowing travelers to learn about agriculture and nature, and to enjoy a unique experience of interaction with the environment.

Leading in recreational activities are recreational and sports activities. Recreational and sporting type of recreation is route and thus is identified with tourism. Such types of tourism as water, underwater, fishing, skiing, hunting, as well as agrotourism are gaining popularity (Figure 1).

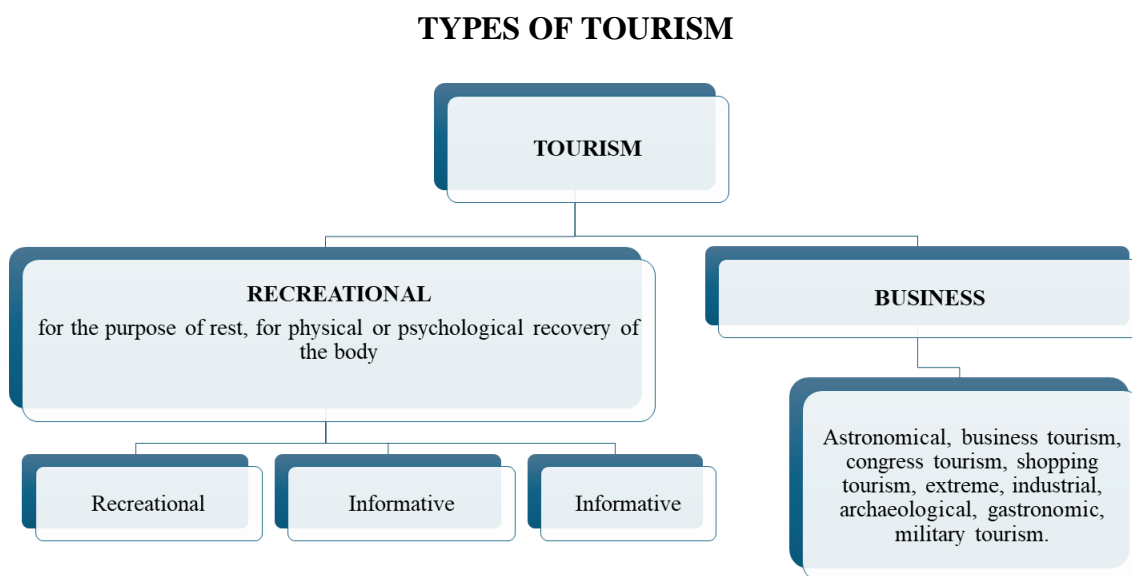


Figure 1 – Main types of tourism (authors' material)

The need to develop the prospective development of tourist activity, its territorial and functional organization, architectural and planning organization of tourist complexes, tourist bases, development of excursion routes, identification of tourist preferences and much more requires the classification of modern tourism. Tourism is classified according to various features, but the leading one is the dominant purpose of travel. Forms of tourist activity can be divided into three main directions: therapeutic, health and sports and cognitive. The latter is recognized by many specialists as the leading function in the industry.

The concept of recreation includes such types as: health-improving recreation (or recreation), sanatorium-resort treatment and tourism. Each of which in theoretical studies is subdivided into different forms. In urban planning the most common term in the consideration of the social factor “recreation of the population”. The term “recreation” is more accurate than the concept of rest. To date, it is considered difficult to create an ideal classification of types and forms of recreational activities because of the multifunctional dependence of recreational services (Novikova, 2013).

3 MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study utilized: a systematic approach and a number of analytical analyses.

All analytical conclusions were based:

- on the method of factor analysis;
- on the collection of departmental material (information from the Bureau of National Statistics of the Agency for Strategic Planning and Reforms of the Republic of Kazakhstan);
- on sociological research (survey of residents in order to determine preferences on the subject of agrotourism);
- study of archival data, statistical and demographic data, as well as the analysis of natural and climatic factors of the study region.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Agrotourism is an important branch of tourism that contributes to employment and requires little investment. Kazakhstan's participation in the international tourism industry is gradually increasing, which opens great prospects for further development of tourism in the country.

Today, when urbanization at a great pace shows unprecedented growth. Elementary questions in children's environment are questions about where milk and cheese, bread and butter come from, but they do not find a proper answer. An important task is to educate city dwellers about the simple, but at the same time very important life of villagers and their role in modern society. Therefore, agritourism plays an important role; it gives a unique opportunity to city dwellers to get closer to the world around them and even merge with it, to feel the charm of closeness with nature and the ecosystem as a whole.

The development of agro-tourism in Kazakhstan is fully consistent with the concept of Kazakhstan's transition to a “green” economy. This is the industry that can give the greatest multiplier effect on economic growth and employment of the population, with the proper use and distribution of natural resources and human resources.

In 2019 in Kazakhstan, investment in tourism development reached a historical record and amounted to 153.7 billion tenge, indicating significant attention to the development of the industry. Agrotourism has also become one of the priority areas in tourism, which emphasizes the strategic importance of this sector for Kazakhstan's economy.

In 2019, agritourism and tourism played a significant role in the economy of our republic, increasing its share in GDP to 5.6%. According to the plan, for 2025, this figure is expected to grow further to 8%. This means that investments in the tourism sector and expenditures of domestic and foreign tourists should increase by 7-8% per year. (*The profitability of the tourism sector may increase to 200 billion tenge per year, 2019*). The study shows that the agritourism and tourism sector has achieved the stated target due to the current dynamic development of the industry as shown in (Figure 2).

According to the press service of the Tourism Industry Committee, from 2020 to 2022, investments in tourism in Kazakhstan reached a record high of \$ 4 billion. Of these, in 2022 alone, their volume was equal to 513.3 billion tenge and more than 400 tourist facilities were put into operation.

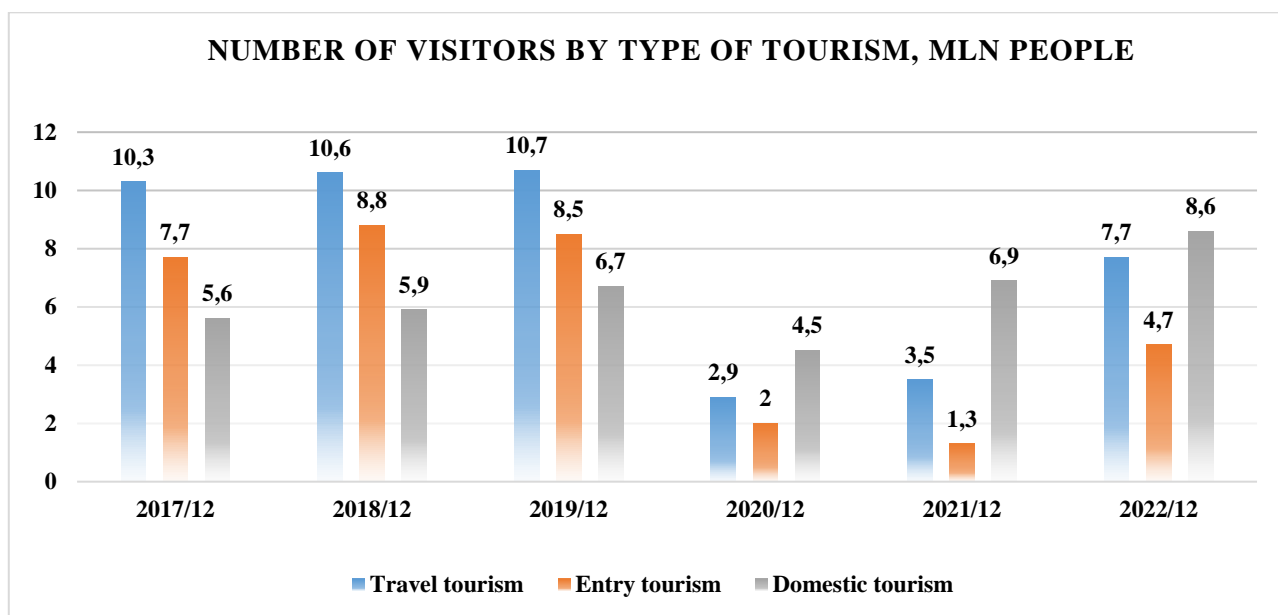


Figure 2 – Number of visitors served by type of tourism, according to Finreview calculations based on data from the ISE RK COP data (Novikova, 2013)

Over the past five years, the average annual occupancy rate of accommodation facilities amounted to 22-25%, with an average annual increase in tourist accommodation by 12.5%. Thus, we can state the dynamics of tourism development in the country as a whole.

Interestingly, the occupancy rate of agritourism accommodations almost does not change for the last five years and ranges from 22% to 25%. At the same time, the number of tourists lodging in these places has been increasing annually at a rate of 12.5%. These data indicate the dynamic development of the regional tourism industry in the country.

The basic methodological basis of the study is a systematic approach, namely the method of factor analysis, which allows to identify the main questions of the survey, which can help in the development of a conceptual framework of prospects for the development of agroecotourism in Almaty region.

Through the travel agency KAZTOUR was launched a sociological survey to determine the most frequent places of visit, attractive attractions and cities in Almaty region, conducted in the period from 05.06.2021 to 20.04.2022.

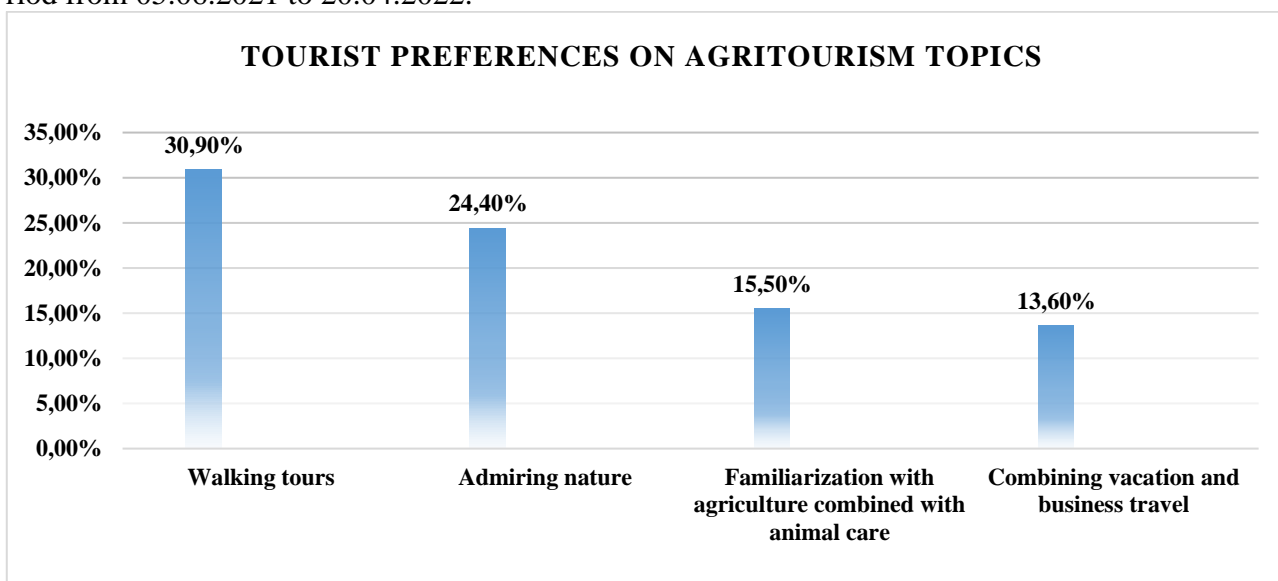


Figure 3 – Data of the sociological survey among the population of Almaty city residents to identify tourist preferences on the subject of agrotourism (author's materials).

The number of respondents who participated in the survey amounted to 1700 people. This sociological survey allowed to identify tourist preferences on the topics of agritourism (Figure 3).

According to the sociological survey conducted among the residents of Almaty, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- 30.9% chose any theme in the context of walking due to the health-improving and strengthening effect on the body, emotional positivity, accessibility for all age groups and levels of physical fitness;
- 24.4% chose admiring nature as an immunity booster and inflammation reliever;
- 15.5% would prefer an introduction to agriculture combined with animal care. In such trips, tourists get acquainted with agriculture, study the animal world and have the opportunity to care for pets;
- 13.6% of respondents are interested in the opportunity to enrich their business travel experience with a variety of themed experiences, including agritourism and other forms of tourism.

In exploring preferences for vacation landscape selection, data on preferences for agritourism and tourism were obtained and are presented in (Figure 4).

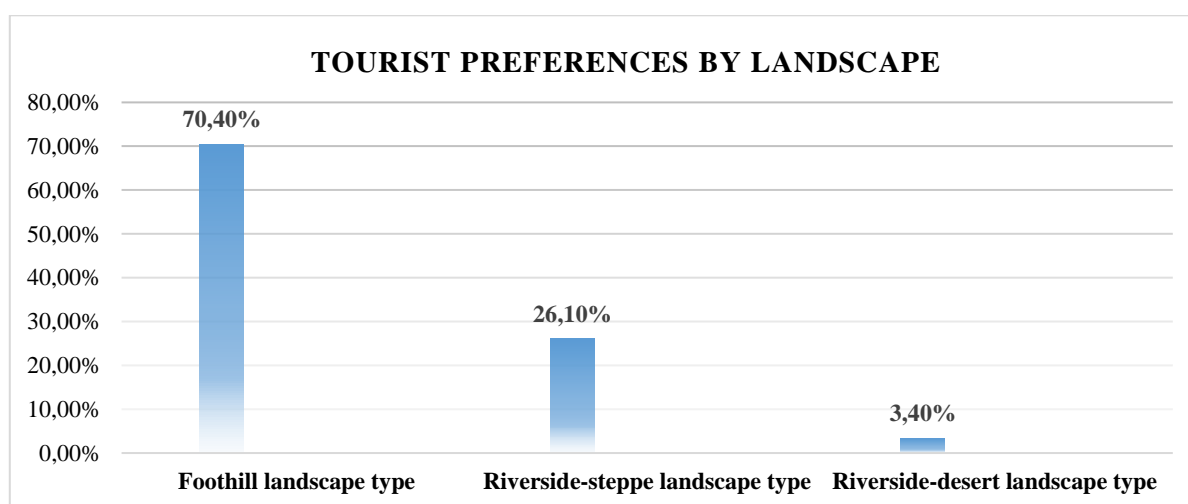


Figure 4 – Data of the sociological survey among the population of Almaty city residents to identify tourist preferences for landscape (author's materials).

During detailed analysis of the obtained data on landscape, it was determined that the majority of 70.4% of respondents defined for themselves the foothill type of landscape. At the same time, the third part of respondents 26.1% favored the riverine-steppe type of landscape. And only 3.4% of respondents favored the riverine-desert type.

One of the main questions during the sociological analysis was the question about the duration of the desired tourist trip, the obtained results are shown in (Figure 5).

The data obtained indicate a high interest of the population in various travel formats. According to the survey, the majority of respondents would prefer two-day trips with an overnight stay (47.60%), while 33% preferred one-day tours without an overnight stay. 19.4% of respondents expressed a desire to go on a week-long trip. The development of agritourism in Almaty region will expand opportunities for the tourism industry and reduce the share of outbound tourism.

For full-fledged development of agritourism in Kazakhstan it is necessary at the city or even state level to develop a program, which should reflect the following proposals:

- at the legislative level to adopt the term “Agrotourism”, which can be interpreted as, “visiting rural areas with the provision of services for temporary accommodation or stay, meals, organization of leisure activities, excursion services;
- state support for citizens or organizations, peasant farms involved in the development of agro-tourism in the form of subsidies, preferential treatment, etc. is necessary;

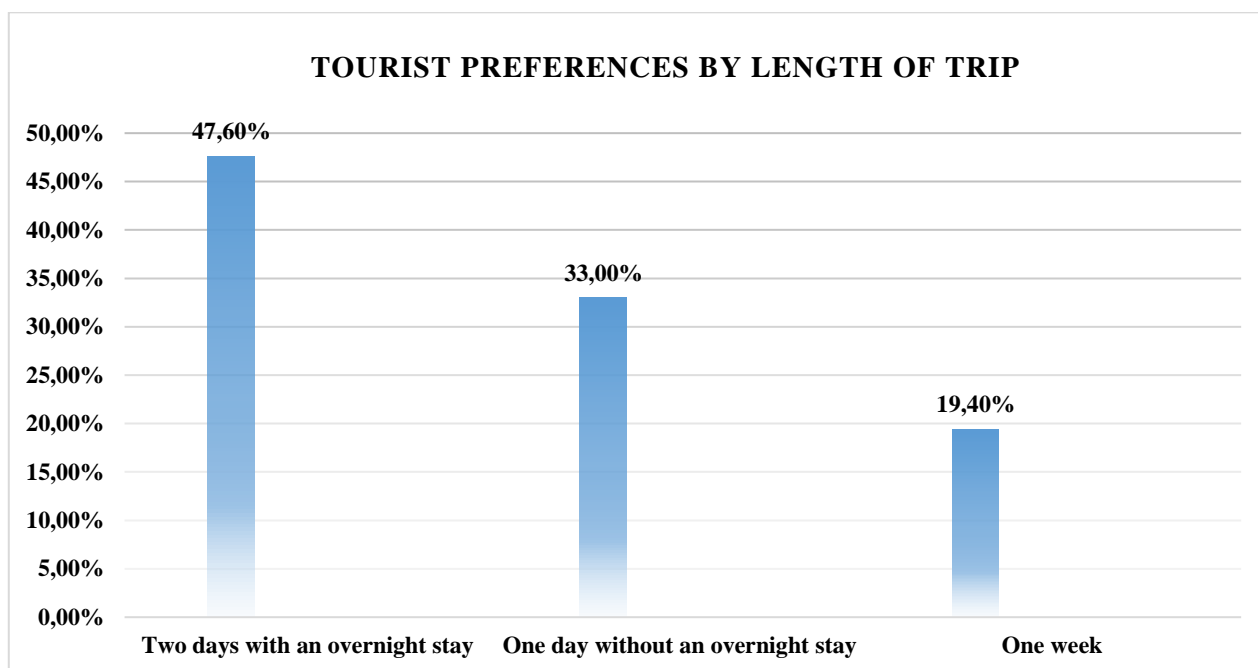


Figure 5 – Data of sociological analysis among the population of Almaty city residents to identify tourist preferences for the duration of the trip (author's materials).

- opening of consulting centers that would provide technical assistance in opening agricultural farms or tourist bases;
- it is necessary to develop rural areas and create the required infrastructure;
- it is necessary to create a catalog of promising villages and hamlets, with a detailed description of the cultural characteristics of each village and the possibility of creating agritourism bases there,
- the development of agritourist bases should start with the involvement of modern technologies and the development of modern infrastructure;
- design of fast-built and mobile homestead tourist lodges;
- utilize the advantages of a multi-ethnic and multi-confessional republic, where representatives of each nationality could become part of agro and ethno-tourism;
- to train specialists in the field of agro-tourism, as there is now an acute shortage of professional tourism workers who know both the local history of the region and our rich cultural and historical heritage;
- use the “Rukhani zhangiru” program as an important tool to involve school-age children in its development;
- construction of specialized agro-tourist villages, which will additionally create jobs, increase the intellectual knowledge of villagers in the field of business development and vision, use of new technologies and rational use of human and natural resources;
- together with the development of agro-tourism, such directions as pilgrimage tourism, adventure tourism and ethnographic tourism should be developed;
- use the time of national holidays to create agrotours, this will motivate the development of rural tourism, increase self-education and cultural education of villagers, which in general can lead to a decrease in the outflow of villagers to big cities in search of income and a better life;
- it is necessary to actively use areas of high-mountain pastures, for example, Assy Plateau, for popularization of “Jailau” tourism;
- development of such types of tourism as hunting tourism, gastronomic tourism, medical tourism, harvesting, ethnographic tourism, eco-community tourism, agricultural tourism, press tours for mass media (**Figure 6**).

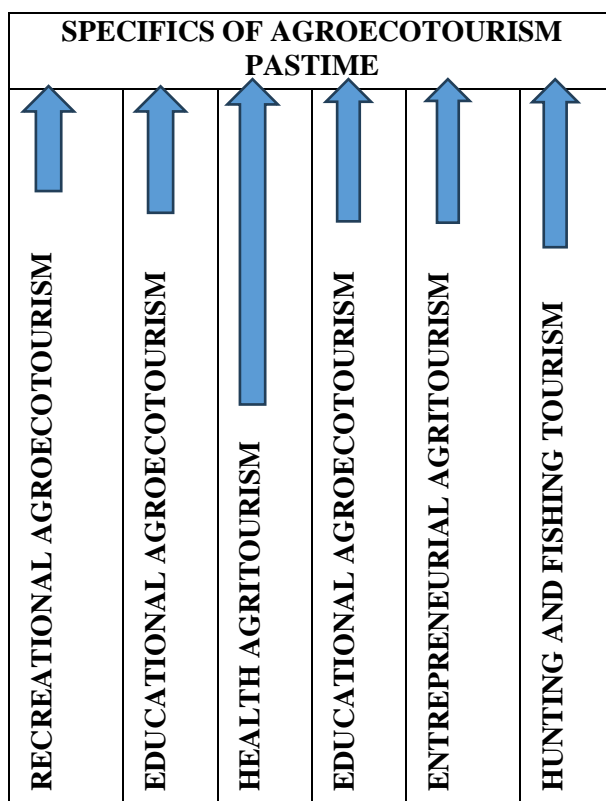


Figure 6 – Specificity of agroecotourism pastime (author's materials).

Thus, it can be noted that today agrotourism is a popular, rapidly developing type of tourism in Kazakhstan. It allows rational and profitable use of sparsely populated areas of the country, support and promote agriculture and the most effective use of natural riches and landscape features of certain regions. It is a good opportunity for tourists to get a unique experience, to plunge into the culture and life of the rural population, among picturesque nature, in an ecologically clean environment, and for farmers – a new source of income to maintain and develop the farm. In addition, agrotourism allows to preserve folk traditions and customs, revealing their essence and history from the very roots.

In the context of the development of the tourism cluster in the republic, the key areas of tourism have been identified: business, ecological, cultural and educational and active adventure tours. Special attention is paid to the development of agrotourism as one of the promising sectors in the tourism industry (Figure 7).

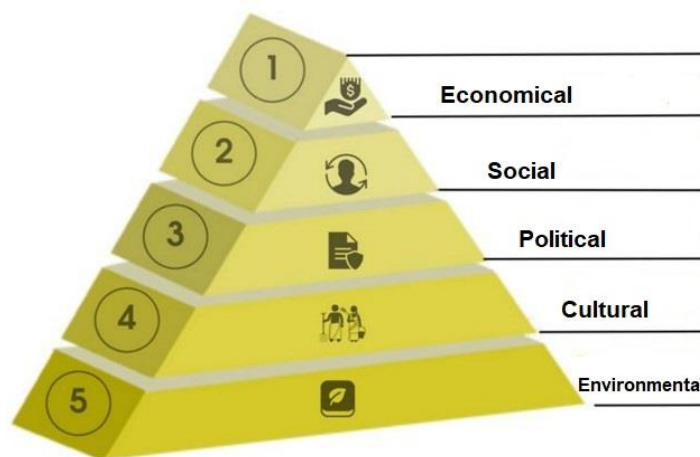


Figure 7 – Prerequisites for the formation of agroecotourism (author's materials).

This is due to Kazakhstan's competitive advantages related to its unique culture, rich and diverse natural potential, agro-tourism, increasing business activity and the possibility of developing the tourism industry. Kazakhstan offers various types of active recreation and travel, which contributes to attracting the attention of tourists from all over the world.

For less mobile groups, tourism, especially agro-ecotourism, plays an important role in social rehabilitation. Participation in self-sufficiency while traveling contributes to social and domestic rehabilitation. Acquisition of skills of adaptation to different environments provides social and environmental rehabilitation. At the same time, learning new skills, abilities and knowledge contributes to socio-educational rehabilitation. Participation in excursions contributes to socio-cultural rehabilitation, and interaction with other tour participants provides socio-psychological rehabilitation. Thus, agroecotourism is an important part of “inclusive tourism”, taking into account the needs of all segments of the population

To see something new and beautiful is the desire of people at all times. In this respect, agro-ecotourism will play a leading role among other types of tourism. Moreover, agroecotourism will provide a combination of environmental and cultural safety, contribute to the preservation of the cultural and natural environment, and help to create all the conditions for greater awareness of the local population.

Agro-ecotourism should be developed sustainably, and for this it is necessary for tourists to follow the rules and principles of agro-ecotourism. The categories related to this type of tourism should be defined and classified, special routes and ecotours should be identified and protected from mass tourism, and they should be based on the principles of sustainable and ecotourism.

5 CONCLUSIONS

1. In Almaty region there are many resources that are promising for the development of agroecotourism. These resources are related to various activities such as agriculture, hunting, fishing and collection of wild plants. The city of Almaty plays an important role in the formation of tourist flow, but also the rural areas of the region can be a potential base for the establishment of agro-tourism complexes.

2. One of the important aspects of agrotourism is the social component, which allows to cover a wide range of socially cared for groups of the population, including immobile citizens. It is especially important to take this into account when organizing cognitive children's recreation in the field of tourism.

3. A sociological survey of potential tourists of different socio-demographic groups was conducted, which determined what types of agritourism are the most popular among the population. Thus, based on the author's questionnaire, revealed tourist preferences on the subject of agritourism, tourist preferences by landscape and by duration of the trip.

4. The proposed prospective development of agritourism in Almaty region contributes to the expansion of opportunities for tourists and reducing the flow of outbound tourists. The created infrastructure contributes to the satisfaction of a variety of tourist preferences of the population.

5. The main tasks are defined and the necessary methods for solving the issues of popularization and development of agrotourism in the territory of the Republic of Kazakhstan are proposed.

6. Within the framework of development of tourist cluster in the republic the priority directions of tourism were defined: business tourism, ecological tourism, cultural and cognitive tourism, active and adventure tours.

7. To date, due to the current situation with the coronavirus, both in the world and in Kazakhstan, a huge number of tourists will prefer rest and tourism within our country. Additional interest may be the interest of foreign tourists, which will increase the flow of local tourists.

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