Development of children’s and youth tourism in the modern social space of Kazakhstan

Aigul M. Sergeyeva, Akzhunus G. Abdullina, Assem Y. Albekova, Gulnur Zh. Shumakova

K. Zhubanov Aktobe Regional University, Aktobe, Kazakhstan, sergeyeva.aigul@gmail.com

Abstract. Children's tourism is one of the widespread types of tourism and performs educational, pedagogic, sanitary and other socially significant functions. It is one of the most steady sectors of the tourist services market. The most developed and oldest segments of children’s tourism in Kazakhstan are health-improvement and cultural-educational tourism, educational programs are consistently in demand. The article is devoted to the development of children’s and youth tourism in the modern social space of Kazakhstan. The article analyzes how children’s and youth tourism is organized in the regions of Kazakhstan, its structure and quantitative parameters. The authors note that both the number of health-improving institutions for children and the consumer structure of children’s and youth recreation have changed: the number of children having a vacation in urban school camps with a day stay, specialized and spa-type camps is gradually increasing. The problem of forming a system of management for children’s and youth tourism lies in the large number of activities with different subordination. The article analyzes the situation with camps in Kazakhstan on the basis of data from the years 2016–2019. We have highlighted the prospects of the regions to develop children’s and youth tourism and the main directions of its improvement. Thereto the market of children’s and youth tourism was studied, the types of recreation that are in the greatest demand were identified. We evaluated the opportunities to develop children’s sightseeing tours in the regions and cities of the Republic of Kazakhstan. To study the needs of children, an opinion poll was held among parents via Google Forms. The polling consisted of 5 questions to which 114 results were received from respondents. In Kazakhstan children’s and youth tourism have a different level of development. The formation and development of children’s tourism depends on many factors: high-quality personnel, a favourable natural environment and the location of historical and cultural heritage, financing, etc. It is understood that the economic growth in the field of children’s tourism in Kazakhstan is kept back by insufficient information transparency, focus on the provision of tourism services, which, in its turn, contradicts the emerging opportunities of communication innovations that have significantly changed the conditions and opportunities to implement processes of interaction between people and elements of socio-economic systems, the high level of inequality of the population’s income requiring the diversification of the tourist product.

Keywords: children’s and youth tourism, Kazakhstan, children’s recreation, camp, comprehensive assessment of children’s tourism in the regions, questionnaire

Розвиток дитячо-юнацького туризму в сучасному соціальному просторі Казахстану

А.М. Сергєєва, А.Г. Абдулліна, А. Е. Альбєєкова, Г.Ж. Щумакова

Актюбінський регіональний університет ім. К. Жубанова, Актобе, Казахстан, sergeyeva.aigul@gmail.com; akshunus_a@mail.ru

Анотація. Дитячий туризм – один із масових видів туризму – виконує освітню, виховну, оздоровчу та інші соціально значущі функції. Це один із найбільш стійких секторів ринку туристичних послуг. Найбільш розвиненим і найстарішим сегментом дитячого туризму в Казахстані є оздоровчий та культурно-пізнавальний туризм, стабільно користуються попитом освітні програми. Стаття присвячена розвитку дитячо-юнацького туризму в сучасному соціальному просторі Казахстану. У статті досліджується структура системи організації дитячо-юнацького туризму в регіонах Казахстану і її кількісні характеристики. Авторами наголошуються, що змінилося як число оздоровчих закладів для дітей, так і сама структура споживання дитячо-юнацького відпочинку: поступово збільшується число дітей, що відвідують у міських шкільних таборах із денним перебуванням, профільніх і таборах санаторного типу. Складність формування системи управління дитячим туризмом полягає у величезній кількості діяльності з різним підпорядкуванням. У статті розглянуто ситуацію з таборами в Казахстані на основі даних за 2016–2019 роки. Були відзначено можливості регіонів у розвитку дитячого та юнацького туризму і основні напрями його вдосконалення. Крім того, було вивчено ринок дитячого та юнацького туризму, визначено види відпочинку, які користуються найбільшим попитом. Оцінювалася можливість проведення дитячих екскурсійних тури в області та містах РК. Для вивчення потреб дітей серед батьків було проведено соціальне опитування через GoogleForms. Опитування складалося з 5 питань, на які було отримано 114 відповідей від респондентів. Дитячий і юнацький туризм у різних регіонах Казахстану розвинений по-різному. Структурування і розвиток дитячого туризму залежить від багатьох чинників: якість персоналу, сприятливість середовища і розташування історико-культурної спадщини, фінансування і т. і.
Introduction

Children’s and youth tourism are an essential segment of the tourist market, its development is important in economic and social terms. Children’s tourism is a specific type of social space, and by now the situation has developed where the principles of spatial organization and the principles of organizing social interaction in the field of tourism are quite strictly designed and standardized.

Despite the certain success in the development of the recreation field and tourism for children in Kazakhstan, the state is not sufficiently involved in its management. The analysis of the condition of development of children’s tourism in the Republic of Kazakhstan shows that currently there are certain problems in its organization, which include: weak development of the infrastructure component of children’s tourism; low availability of recreation to the majority of children of Kazakhstan; low elaboration of the regulatory framework and uniform standards of activity in the field of children’s tourism; the absence of a number of companies engaged in children tourism from the unified register of tour operators; the inability of many organizations working with children to ensure the safety of children’s recreation; the low professional quality of most specialists working in the field of children’s recreation and tourism; insufficient consumer awareness about the tourist products offered for children. All these negative facts point out that organizations in the field of children tourism are effectively managed both separately and in combination with each other. All types of children’s tourism in practice are found and medical care.

Due to the pandemic, the past year and this year have tended to reduce the financial solvency of most of the population of Kazakhstan, price increases and unemployment have negatively affected the development of tourism as a whole. One of these types of tourism is children’s tourism, with the help of which a holistic approach to the upbringing of children is effectively implemented, based on the continuity of educational, pedagogic and health-improving processes, the spiritual and physical development of children, their socialization and further activities. The focused attention of all interested parties to the problems of children recreation is understandable as the health of the coming generation is the basis for the long-term growth of society and one of the most important elements of ensuring its safety.

There is a fundamental difference between the recreation of children and adults – children’s recreation is characterized by the increased responsibility of organizers for the lives of children, which, in turn, affects the cost of recreation. In addition, children’s recreation, unlike that of adults, pursues a complex aim – the recreation of children with a pronounced educational component. It should be noted that though children themselves are not very critical of the quality of services, there is an understanding on the part of parents and organizers of children’s recreation that the quality of services provided for children on vacation (food, accommodation, leisure, environmental situation, psychological climate, educational and educational technologies) should be at the highest level. Special attention should be paid to the safety of children as a basic aspect of the quality of services; this refers to food safety, physical, psychological safety, etc. Children’s cultural and educational trips, excursions, tours are organized everywhere, with trips to various regions of the country. The problems of the studied segment of children’s recreation arise from the general problems of recreation, health improvement and recreation in Kazakhstan, among which the high cost of recreation in the country plays a significant role. In the diagram below (Figure 1), the authors have made an attempt to clarify the place of children’s tourism in the system of children’s recreation, health improvement and medical care.

The variety of forms and types of children’s tourism makes it essential to develop its classification. All types of children’s tourism in practice are found both separately and in combination with each other. A children’s tourist product will be understood as a set of goods and services a certain quantity and quality as well as the knowledge and skills of the personnel serving children required to meet their cognitive or recreational needs in a particular tourist region based on the use of local tourist and recreational resources.
Children’s tourism is understood as a type of tourism the consumers of which are children aged from 7–17 who travel for tourist purposes in an unfamiliar environment accompanied by a person providing pedagogical influence (control, training, upbringing) (Khoo-Lattimore, 2015; Brazendale et al., 2017; Rhoden et al., 2016; Wu et al., 2021; Durko and Petrick, 2013). Children are important participants in the tourism and leisure industry, because like their parents they are consumers and active decision-makers. Since children play an important role in the tourism and recreation industry, high priority is given to how their entertainment needs are met through games and children’s activities (Seraphin and Yallop, 2019; Gaines et al., 2004). Children’s tourism is often implemented as part of social tourism programs and in this role fulfills an important mission of improving the quality of life of the population (Omelan et al., 2018; Thorton et al., 1997). Undoubtedly, children tourism is also a large segment of the tourist market producing profit for both organizers and tourist destinations (Bakhvalova, 2015). The maintenance and development of the domestic market of children and youth tourism is extremely important in social and economic terms. Effective management of children’s recreation can bring significant profit (Morozov, 2003). The development of domestic children’s and youth tourism can reduce the currency outflow from the country, promote the reallocation of cash flows between donor industrial regions and subsidized regions with significant recreational resources (Morozov and Morozova, 2016). In addition, the additional cash inflow from children’s tourism will have a beneficial impact on the economic development of both the regions themselves and the country on the whole (Smirnova, 2014; Rassokhina, 2015). Modern information systems of children’s tourism consist of several types of supporting subsystems, which include: technical support, software, information support, organizational support, legal support (Fedyunin et al., 2017). In foreign countries much attention is paid to the development of children’s tourism as the state policy of Western European countries lobbies primarily for the interests of children and teenagers (Cullingford, 1995; Horak and Weber, 2000). The role of children in family tourism is increasingly recognized. However, their
travel experience is not sufficiently studied. Chinese children have much travel experience and a clear insight of what constitutes an unforgettable family tourism experience. Such experiences usually occur with their nuclear family and focus on family unity and physical activity. Coming across animals, tasting local food, and evaluating the natural and artificial environment are also important. As future tourists, their views matter to destinations interested in attracting more tourists (Wu et al., 2019). In his paper, Carr discusses the social structures of children’s recreation and learning opportunities in the tourist environment (Carr, 2011).

The tourism industry has recognized the lack of research examining children’s travel preferences and attitudes. The cognitive competence and social development of children is constantly changing, which suggests that their perceptions of the holiday and desires must be explored in different ways depending on the stages of development of the children (Li et al., 2020; Nickerson & Jurowski, 2001; Poria & Timothy, 2014). This was said about the adventure tourism close to nature in the village of Ban Songpraek in southern Thailand and its impact on children. The leadership and social cohesion of rural residents, as well as their relations with rural authorities and tourist entrepreneurs, are a critical factor for the well-being of children (Tirasattayapitaka et al., 2015).

Traditions of children’s recreation in camps in Kazakhstan have developed since Soviet times. Many generations of children in Kazakhstan spent their childhood in camps and remember it with pleasure. Therefore, the demand for such vacations is constantly present on the market. However, in the 1990s, the Soviet system of children’s health camps was almost destroyed, and a new system that meets the requirements of the market, modern pedagogy and parents was not created. As a result of the default, vacations abroad for children became less affordable to many parents and this situation required the development of children’s tourism in Kazakhstan and the CIS. Among the former pioneer camps that fell into the state of disrepair or were re-purposed into recreation centers for adults it was quite difficult to find something acceptable. Nevertheless, in the first years after the default such camps appeared, well-known up to the present, for example, “Baldauren” and “Maralsay”, “Discovery Borovoe”. In most cases children go abroad to various children’s camps. Children’s camps are poorly represented on our tourist market. Camps of various types are developed in such countries as Cyprus, Croatia, Greece, Malta, Italy, Germany, Turkey, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Poland, etc. Children’s recreation centers may initially expect a large presence of teenagers from different countries, but most often teenagers come in groups, with their counselors. Most of the camps focus on learning foreign languages, on teaching windsurfing, i.e. centers have a ready-made program (Zolotareva, 2016; Bordun et al., 2020).

The level of tourism development in Kazakhstan is closely related to the general level and the state of economic development. Since children’s tourism is one of the components of tourism in general, all the problems that arise during its development are associated with the same factors that impede the development of tourism (Fomin, 2007; Mazbayev and Sardarov, 2018). Experts are of the opinion that in the future, children and youth tourism can and should become one of the priority directions of tourism development in Kazakhstan (Nikitinsky, 2012; Koroblev, 2015). The economic advantages of this type of tourism are obvious: schoolchildren and students travel, as a rule, in organized groups, trips are regular from year to year and it greatly assists business planning.

To solve the tasks, the methods of system, logical, comparative analysis and questioning were used. The empirical basis of the study consisted of the statistical data of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan on the state of children’s recreation, scientific literature and periodical materials, as well as materials obtained by the authors as a result of their own research held as questioning among parents via Google Forms. The paper proposes a methodology for a comprehensive assessment of the resources for the development of children tourism in the region, which is formed on the basis of a general methodology for assessing the tourist potential. A list of evaluation criteria and parameters for 2 groups of tourism development resources has been compiled. The calculation of private values of the potential for tourism development is carried out by groups of resources: natural-climatic and historical-cultural. Based on the comparison of the obtained values of the tourism development potential per resource groups, it is possible to determine the position of the region in the tourist market. The purpose of applying the integrated assessment methodology is that it is necessary to identify the regions of Kazakhstan that are favourable for the development of children’s tourism and ready for tourist development.

Results and discussion

In connection with summer holidays the development of children’s tourism in Kazakhstan is of seasonal character. Therefore children and teenagers have summer vacation in summer camps. Among them thematic camps are separately distinguished following one topic: tent camps with training in the elements of tourism, sports, etc. Table 1 shows the number of camps in Kazakhstan by regions (Official figures of children’s camps of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan).
Table 1 shows the average prices of tickets to camps on the market of Kazakhstan. The most expensive camp is the Republican educational and wellness center “Baldauren” and the ticket there costs 150,000 tenge for 15 days. The cost of a ticket to the camps “Altair”, “Ak-Bulak”, “Maral-Sai”, “Baldauren-Kapshagai” in the Almaty region is 120,000–90,000 tenge. The price of tickets to camps in the North Kazakhstan region is rather low and an average price makes up 16,000 tenge. The tickets to the camps of the North Kazakhstan region have the lowest prices as these camps are on the balance sheet of the association of children and teenager clubs (under the akim’s office). In summer only orphans and children under wardship will rest there for free. The

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>№</th>
<th>Oblast and major cities</th>
<th>Out of town health camps</th>
<th>Tent camps (yurta, sport, local lore and other types of summer health camps)</th>
<th>Specialized camps and recreation points with no meal services</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>All the year round</td>
<td>Seasonal</td>
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<td>State</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>State</td>
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<td>9</td>
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<td>Atyrau oblast</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>Kyzylorda oblast</td>
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<td>9</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Almaty oblast</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Nursultan</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Shymkent</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>124</td>
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Table 1. The amount of the price for a ticket to camps in the Republic of Kazakhstan in 2019

*Source: Based on official statistical data on children’s camps of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the table is compiled by the authors*
leading positions in the number of camps are occupied by the East Kazakhstan, Almaty, Akmola regions. Let’s focus on some problems. The most important problems are those caused by economic factors. First of all it should be noted that children’s mass recreation must not be expensive. This is due to the fact that the level of well-being of our population on the whole is not high enough. And to make recreation inexpensive is possible as the majority of children are the segment of the tourist market that are not so demanding of the level of comfort, and for the sake of having good vacations they agree to live four and even six children in a room and travel in a couchette car. The simplicity of children’s requirements to the level of comfort may reduce the cost of the tour. But a cheap ticket may also mean low pay for employees and service personnel, which eventually makes this work not so attractive for employees. As a result employees with a low level of professional training are hired, which affects the quality of services, causes the insufficient supervision of children. Currently with prices for utilities and taxes growing, the cost of tickets to camps has begun to increase. Another problem that affects the cost of a ticket is the land tax. If these issues are not solved on a legal basis, the prices for tickets will continue to grow and there may be a situation when most parents will not be able to use the services of local camps due to their high cost.

Fig. 2. The number of children covered by children’s health camps in the 2016–2019 years period

Source: Based on official statistical data on children’s camps of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the figure is compiled by the authors

2 105 205 or 70.2 % of the total number of schoolchildren studying in grades 1–10 spent their summer recreation in camps in 2019. There were 12 960 (in 2018–13 893) health camps and playgrounds, of which 10 967 were school−based, 236 − were stationary out of town camps (143 public and 93 private ones), 1 757 tent camps, sports camps, yurta camps. The number of children covered by children’s health camps in the period 2016–2019 is shown in Fig. 2.

In 2020 the State Commission for Ensuring the State of Emergency under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the chief sanitary doctors of the regions and cities of Nur-Sultan, Almaty and Shymkent due to the well-known reasons decided to ban the activities of suburban health and school camps. During the pandemic in summer 5 586 online camps operated in the republic, which covered 1 043 674 schoolchildren (34.1 %). To organize the employment in the regions special “Online vacations” accounts, pages in social networks were created, motivation online meetings were organized. Special attention was given to organize the employment of children of certain categories. The Republican educational health center “Baldauren” organized online−courses to develop youth leader skills for 125 leaders of pedagogical teams, students of pedagogical universities and colleges, who, in turn, trained more than 5 000 youth leaders. The centers of the youth leaders’ movement organized more than 3 thousand online events covering about 200 000 children. During the summer holidays in 2020 the events involved 1 315 980 schoolchildren (43 %).

Children sports tourism and outdoor activities are widely represented in Kazakhstan. On the territory of Kazakhstan the most famous children’s camps are “Maugli”, “Arman-dala” and activities there include rock climbing, catamaran rafting, hiking on flat and mountain bikes, etc. Children’s health camps offer health-promoting programs, while children can improve their health in specialized children’s health camps, as well as health centers and clinics aimed at

parents with children. To plan tourism at the regional level it is highly important to assess the entire set of natural and cultural resources of the territory. In this work an attempt was made to apply the methodology of resource assessment for the development of children’s tourism in Kazakhstan. The value of natural and cultural resources was assessed on a five-point scale: 1 point – for a resource of local significance; 2 points – for a resource of regional significance; 3 points – for a resource of national significance; 4 points – for a resource of world significance. The points help to calculate the most significant elements of tourist resources, compare different territories with each other.

Table 2. The assessment of sightseeing tours for children in Kazakhstan (based on the system of points)

Source: made by the authors based on the results of their own research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>№</th>
<th>Oblast and major cities</th>
<th>Natural factors to develop children tourism</th>
<th>Historical-cultural factors to develop children tourism</th>
<th>The assessment of opportunities to hold sightseeing tours</th>
<th>Seasonal character of a sightseeing tour</th>
<th>The modern state of a sightseeing tour for children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>all the year round</td>
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<td>Aktobe oblast</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>seasonal (spring-summer months)</td>
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<td>Almaty oblast</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>seasonal (spring-summer months)</td>
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<td>Atyrau oblast</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>seasonal (spring-summer months)</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>East Kazakhstan oblast</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>seasonal (spring-summer months)</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>all the year round</td>
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<td>Pavlodar oblast</td>
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<td>Good</td>
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<td>Nursultan</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>all the year round</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Shymkent</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>all the year round</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mobile types of outdoor children’s recreation include sightseeing trips and walking tours. Table 2 analyzes the possibilities, the current state of conducting children’s sightseeing tours in Kazakhstan through the system of points. Each region has plenty of natural, historical and cultural monuments, protected areas of local, regional and republican levels, but the level of their use for sightseeing purposes is low. The regions and cities with “10” points have monuments included in the UNESCO list (the Mausoleum of Khoja Ahmed Yasawi, Petroglyphs of the archaeological landscape of Tamgaly, Saryarka, Objects of the Great Silk Road in the Chang’an-Tien Shan Corridor, Western Tien Shan), so these regions occupy a high place in tourism. Tour operators are constantly creating new excursion programs with tourist brands that are attractive for children, such as “Historical Tour to Turkestan”, “Baikonur rocket launch tour”, “Path of the Batyrs”, educational tours (excursions to the museum of writers, mausoleums of heroes), etc.

A summer camp is a part of the social environment where children realize their talents, needs in communicative and physical activity. A summer camp is, on the one hand, a form of organizing free time for children of different ages, genders and levels of development, on the other hand – the space to improve health, develop artistic, technical and social creativity. To study the needs of children in children’s health camps we held an opinion poll among parents through Google Forms. It consisted of 5 questions to which 114 results were received from respondents (Fig. 3).
With what purpose do you send your children to camps?

- health improvement: 71.70%
- self-development, opening new personal qualities and leadership skills: 13.00%
- recreation: 4.40%
- cognitive activities, the study of foreign languages: 10.60%

What are children's camps to focus on?

Source: Based on the questionnaire, the pie chart is compiled by the authors

- entertainment program: 35.10%
- meal services: 37.70%
- safety: 6.10%
- educational program: 21.10%

Assess the camp you've selected per the following criteria

Source: Based on the questionnaire, the pie chart is compiled by the authors

Are you satisfied with the quality of children's camps in Kazakhstan?

Source: Based on the questionnaire, the pie chart is compiled by the authors

- excellent: 9.60%
- good: 7.00%
- satisfactory: 50.60%
- unsatisfactory: 33.30%

For what components are you ready to pay higher prices for a camp?

Source: Based on the questionnaire, the pie chart is compiled by the authors

- learning of languages: 18.00%
- sport and entertainment activities (horse riding, football, etc): 14.00%
- sightseeing tours: 14.00%
- personality development (entrepreneurial, leadership qualities, interpersonal skills in a team): 10.20%
- no need to raise the cost: 10.20%

Proceeding from the results of the opinion polling, the following conclusion can be made:
- most parents send their children to camps to experience personal growth and personal development;
- according to parents the most important thing in a camp is safety;
- 50% of respondents rate the quality of children’s camps in Kazakhstan as satisfactory;
- most of all, parents draw attention to the program for children in the camps to which they sent their children;
- parents would agree to pay more for such components as: leadership skills, public speaking, etc.

The further development of Kazakhstan’s children’s tourism requires ensuring the affordability of mass recreation of children to all the levels of the country’s population and not only through subsidies but also through economically reasonable low prices. To reduce the cost of children’s recreation, first of all, it is necessary to reduce the cost of services since the cost of recreation sometimes amounts to a significant part of prices for tickets to camps. To solve the problem of reducing their cost, the state may act as a major tour operator or regulate these issues through various economic instruments. In addition the coming of big tour operators will open the way to create an
independent or joint tourist product, the cost of which will be significantly lower and it will ensure low prices for mass recreation of children in camps. The present stage faces also a problem of differentiation of the services offered for children. We think the solution of this problem lies in the creation of a variety of children’s tourist products and the further development of new places for children’s recreation.

Conclusion

The study made on the children’s tourism market allows us to draw the conclusion that the successful organization of children’s tourism is the basis for improving the health of children and teenagers, it contributes to increasing their intellectual potential and strengthening their connection with the social environment. Children’s camps are a background, on the basis of which a child and a teenager will learn to take creative decisions, to love and protect nature, to be tolerant towards others.

For a child to have summer recreation of high quality is not so easy and here very often everything depends not on the cost of a ticket or a tour but on many other factors. First of all, you should pay attention to the compliance with sanitary conditions in recreation areas, children’s safety, food and cleanliness of the surrounding space and also leisure and entertainment activities. If children spend vacations without their parents, they should be divided into small groups and each group should have a tutor. It is the logic and analysis of all living conditions and meal arrangements that help parents choose the best resort for children of different ages.

One of the reasons for the underdevelopment of the tourism industry in Kazakhstan is that it did not have a proper state level as the state did not focus on it as a branch of the economy. No attention was paid to complex forecasting, long-term planning and territorial organization of tourism and non-state tourist structures. The other factor hindering the development of the industry is that local authorities do not recognize tourism activities as a priority despite the fact that most of the income from tourism goes to the local budget.

The analysis of the theoretical foundations of the management system of children’s and youth tourism has revealed that the organization of children and youth tourism today is an important component in the education of modern children and teenagers. In so far as the state exercises control over it, it works out concepts for the development of children’s and youth tourism. Children’s and youth tourism is a competitive type of economic activity in the field of tourism and also has a future for further development. The main tasks of further development are to improve the infrastructure of the territories and to improve the logistical support of children’s camps.

References


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