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SWOT ANALYSIS OF ETHNIC TOURISM COMPETITIVENESS IN THE PRIAZOVIE REGION

The article outlines the prospects for the development of ethno-cultural tourism in Ukraine in order to support the economic and cultural development of the regions and at the same time to provide help for the cultural heritage of national minorities' preservation. Socio-cultural prerequisites for the formation of ethno-tourism in the Azov region are investigated. It is proved that Mariupol, as the leading center of Hellenic development in Ukraine and the local Greek community, undertake great efforts to preserve the identity of the Greek diaspora with its history and culture as a part of the Ukrainian nation. The use of SWOT analysis has identified the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the Azov ethno-tourism market and developed a number of recommendations for its further development.

Keywords: *ethnic tourism, competitiveness, SWOT analysis.*

Relevance of research topic. Ukraine has a strong basis for the development of ethnic tourism due to its distinctive traditions, unique national cuisine and hospitality of Ukrainians and the availability of ethno-tourism resources [4]. In the crisis realities of today (the synergistic effect of military, political, economic, demographic-migration, psycho-emotional upheavals) ethno-tourism of Ukraine has recently embarked on the path of revival [6]. It is precisely now that mass ethno-cultural events, which attract thousands of visitors from different, partly Russianized and disappointed by state-building process of Ukraine's regions, are the cement that consolidates modern Ukrainians from Uzhhorod to Mariupol, stirs the hearts of indifferent Ukrainians, and therefore insights them to change Ukraine for better.

Mariupol has been recognized in Ukraine and abroad as a leading center for Hellenic development in Ukraine and for the development of Ukrainian-Greek relations in general [7]. Therefore, research into the development prospects and competitiveness of Greek ethno-tourism, aimed at preserving the identity of the Greek diaspora with its history and culture as a part of the Ukrainian nation, is relevant in the context of the development of the hospitality and tourism industry in Mariupol.

Formulation of the problem. Ethnic tourism in many countries is used to support the economic and cultural development of the regions and at the same time to provide help for cultural heritage [3]. Ethno-tourism also helps to solve the socio-economic problems of the regions, creates a favorable macro-environment, which is manifested in the expansion of employment in the service sector, formation of additional earnings, stimulating the development of infrastructure (transport communications, communications, trade networks, hotels, catering establishments, recreational establishments complexes) [9].

Currently, the tourism industry in Ukraine is developing mainly in the Black Sea coast, in the Carpathians and in Kyiv [8]. However, there are regions where there is great potential for the development of inland and inbound tourism, but they are not disclosed and therefore not appreciated [1]. Donetsk region has such a potential with a real pearl – the Azov coast, where you can develop tourism with family vacations and recreation, radial tourist excursions, sea cruises and walks, organize both romantic, wedding, photo and gastronomy tours and industrial, geological, extreme tours and to develop ethno-tourism.

Radical restructuring of economic activity in the Azov region is required under market relations formation. It is necessary not only to expand the sphere of recreational activity, but also to take a new approach to the prospect of its functioning in this region. It is imperative to create favourable conditions for increasing the efficiency of the tourism potential of the Azov region. The tourism business can and should become a profitable investment in the Azov region, which has a direct economic effect. Despite the fact that over the last five years Mariupol has transformed itself from an industrial and tourist center into an outpost of Ukraine, the government of Mariupol has recognized the development of culture, tourism and hospitality industry in the city as a part of the drafting of the «Mariupol: Development Strategy – 2021» project. Therefore, studies of the competitiveness of ethno-tourism in the Azov region have a certain perspective in the direction of solving the problem of development of the tourism industry in the region.

Analysis of recent researches and publications. Ethno-tourism in many countries is used to help preserve cultural heritage and support the economic and cultural development of the regions [11]. This type of tourism is interesting for both local residents, which allow them to travel around their country, combining holidays with a deep knowledge of culture and traditions, as well as for foreigners who want to learn the national traditions of the Ukrainian people and national minorities [5].

The Azov region is not only seashore, but also a place with a well-known historical past; it is also a country of Amazonian women warriors and Lukomor'ye from the famous work of O. S. Pushkin. The present-day Ukrainian Azov region is a historical site with reserves, museums, a multinational population, which has preserved its ethnic and cultural traditions, rich historical and cultural heritage with a historical Scythian past, places of historical battles of the Polovtsian troops with the

Tatars and Mongols. The Azov region is a very multinational region. In addition to the Ukrainians, Russians, Jews, there live entire settlements of the Greeks, who carefully retain their original customs, national culture and culinary traditions, which can be offered to tourists in the form of ethnic and gastronomic activities [13].

Azov Greeks (Greek Έλληνες της Αζοφικής) is the third largest ethnic group of Donetsk region and the largest community of Greeks compactly living in the entire post-Soviet space. The Azov Greeks (the so-called «Mariupol Greeks») are the largest ethnic group with Greek self-identification in the territory of Ukraine, according to official 2001 census data of the Diaspora numbering 91.5 thousand Greeks, 77.5 thousand of whom live in the Donetsk region in the Azov region. Today's Mariupol is rich in its ethnic palette and belongs to the Greek diaspora.

All the multifaceted activities of the Mariupol Greeks of the Azov Sea is a kind of thread between the present Greek generation and the ancient ancestors – the bearers of classical civilization as the only part of national culture. The revival of the language, culture and traditions of the Greek people is facilitated by the nationwide associations of the Greeks in recent years: the Federation of Greek Societies of Ukraine, the Union of Greeks of Ukraine and the Mariupol Society of Greeks. Even though the Consular Section of the Embassy of Greece in Ukraine is located in Kyiv, the Consulate General of Greece is located in Mariupol. The Independence Day of Greece is celebrated annually in Mariupol, and there are four support schools for the study of Modern Greek. Modern Greek and Macedonian are studied at Mariupol State University.

There are many national creative groups in Greek villages, where traditional festivals are held, such as the festival named after the famous Greek singer Tamara Katsi and «Mega Yorth» («Big Holiday»), «Okhi» («No») (is Anti-Fascism Day), Independence Day, when The Greeks from all over Ukraine come to the Azov Sea. The Days of Greek Culture have been repeatedly held in Ukraine.

Despite the multinationality of the Azov region, the Greeks managed to retain their culture and identity, one of the material elements of which is traditional cuisine. The national cuisine of the Azov Greeks inherited features of different civilizations and is inseparable from the history of the peoples of the Balkans, Asia Minor, Crimea and the Azov region [14]. Dishes such as tel-tel alva, hut mayor, hashihya can only be tasted in the Azov Sea, and the famous Greek Chiburekki (chir-chir) are considered the hallmark of this cuisine. Such distinctive cuisine could easily become a culinary trend [12] and shape the ethno-tourist appeal of Mariupol. However, there are almost no culinary festivals in the Azov region and the Donetsk region, and there is almost no gourmet tourism [10].

Realizing this, the authorities of Mariupol have organized the financing of the Public Budget Program, which will implement a series of mini-projects in 2020, such as the Wine and Cheese Festival and the Days of Greek Cuisine, which should be the

start of prerequisite formation in the region for development of ethnic and gastronomic tourism in the region. Thus, in the Azov region there are unique geographical, natural-climatic, historical-cultural, national-ethnographic and gastronomic resources for the involvement of event and ethno-cultural tourism

Presenting main material. Assessment of existing competitive advantages is an important analytical and informational basis for the formation and implementation of successful strategic activities on the basis of modern marketing tools. SWOT analysis is used to analyze the advantages and disadvantages of different businesses, regions and countries around the world. SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.

SWOT analysis as a method of conducting analytical studies of the state of an object is widely used in the practice of strategic planning and has a number of advantages that follow from its algorithm. This universal method is especially effective in analyzing the advantages and disadvantages of the tourism market, helps to clarify the circumstances in which the tourism market develops, to balance the impact of internal advantages and disadvantages with the impact of favorable opportunities and threats [2]. This analysis helps to identify not only the capabilities of the region, but also all the available advantages over competitors.

Table 1

Criteria for conducting a SWOT analysis of the competitiveness of ethno-tourism activities in the Azov region

<i>Strengths</i>	<i>Opportunities</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The rich history, distinctive culture and authentic cuisine of the Azov Greeks can be positioned as a distinctive Azov brand 2. Rich natural resource base (Sea of Azov, sandy beaches, nature reserves) 3. The high potential of Mariupol as a modern cultural, economic and educational center of the Azov region 4. Many festivals (Greek culture «Mega York», theatrical «StartUp GogolFest», musical (in the format «open-air» on the beach) «MRPL City Fest», classical music «Mariupol Classic») 5. Relatively inexpensive rest 6. Active involvement to the Donetsk region of international financial assistance projects supported by united communities and business 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Restart of the tourism industry in the Azov region (within the framework of the Memorandum of Cooperation with the USAID Economic Support for Eastern Ukraine Project) 2. Development of hotel infrastructure and restaurant industry in the Azov region 3. Improvement of the environmental situation (cleanliness of air, seawater, coast) 4. Creating an image of the region as stable and secure 5. Attraction of investments for development of city infrastructure 6. Increase in local patriotism, self-identity and social motivation 7. Development of new types of tours (ethno-cultural with visits to ethnographic objects, ethno-festival, cultural workshops of folk craftsmen, culinary master classes, gastronomy, wellness tours with pelotherapy)

<i>Strengths</i>	<i>Opportunities</i>
7. Effective and transparent functioning of the city authorities of Mariupol 8. Adequate provision of the city with qualified personnel in the fields of tourism and hotel and restaurant business, as well as educational institutions of the relevant profile (2 lyceums, 1 college, 4 higher educational establishments)	
<i>Weaknesses</i>	<i>Threats</i>
1. Lack of a coherent Azov brand 2. Weak infrastructure outside Mariupol 3. Seasonality of rest 4. Lack of air traffic, insufficient rail support 5. Remoteness of many regions of Ukraine from the Azov region, poor quality of road surface between settlements 6. Negative attitude of a large number of Ukrainians to domestic tourism	1. The proximity of the demarcation line from the Separate areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions 2. Unstable political situation in Ukraine 3. Manmade load due to metallurgical plants and their infrastructure facilities 4. Further construction in recreational and security zones of the city 5. Declining population (due to negative socio-political, economic and environmental factors), outflow of able-bodied population 6. Continuation or freezing of the military conflict in eastern Ukraine

A pairwise comparison of all the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the Azov ethno-tourism market is provided in Table 2.

Table 2

Pairwise comparison of SWOT criteria

		Strengths								Weaknesses						Sum
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Opportunities	1	5	5	5	5	5	0	0	0	-5	0	0	-1	0	0	19
	2	3	3	3	1	0	5	4	0	0	-2	-3	-5	0	0	9
	3	0	0	1	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	-3	0	0	3
	4	4	4	5	0	0	0	5	0	-1	-2	-1	-1	0	0	13
	5	5	5	5	5	5	0	5	2	0	-1	-1	-3	-1	0	31
	6	1	0	0	0	0	5	0	1	-1	-5	-2	0	-5	-4	-10
	7	5	5	5	5	2	3	4	0	0	0	-3	-1	0	0	25
Threats	1	0	-2	0	0	0	0	-2	0	-1	0	0	-5	-5	0	-15
	2	0	1	-2	0	-1	0	-4	0	0	0	-1	-3	-2	0	-12
	3	0	-2	0	0	0	-3	0	0	0	0	0	-5	-3	0	-13
	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	-1	0	0	0	-4	-2	-5	-9
	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-1	-3	-5	-4	0	0	-13
	6	1	1	1	1	1	2	0	1	-4	-4	-5	-5	-5	0	-15
Sum		24	20	23	17	12	12	20	3	-13	-17	-21	-37	-23	-9	

The Azov region *strengths* as for development of ethno-tourism are the original Greek culture and rich natural resource base, and with a small margin are the high potential of Mariupol and sufficient availability of qualified staff in tourism and hotel and restaurant business.

The *weakest point* for the development of ethno-tourism and the tourism industry as a whole in the region is the lack of sufficient transport support (closed airport, small number of trains), on the second place is the remoteness of many regions of Ukraine from the Azov region (with poor quality of the road surface between small settlements) and on the third is the seasonality of the holiday (that is the average tourist comes for a short time and leaves a minimum of funds).

Among the main *opportunities* are the restart of the tourism industry in the Azov region; attraction of investments for development of city infrastructure is on the second place, development of new types of tours is on the third place.

The greatest *threats* are the proximity of the line of demarcation with the Separate areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions and the possibility of continuation or freezing military conflict, as well as separated by two points such threats as manmade load due to metallurgical plants and their infrastructural facilities and especially able-bodied population.

Thus, SWOT-analysis allows us to develop a series of recommendations for the development of ethnic and cultural tourism in the Azov region. So, in order to develop tourism, including ethnic tourism, in the Azov region it is necessary:

- to create a holistic brand of Azov through the development of new thematic tours based on ethnic, historical, geographical and landscape resources of the region, to develop the overall infrastructure of the region.

- to attract investment and formation on the basis of Mariupol and Greek settlement Volodarsky, Mangush, Volnovakha district, Donetsk region unified system of tourist and recreational zones, which have the ability to provide a full range of ethnic and cultural services for tourists (including accommodation, meals, cultural and domestic services, transport, entertainment, travel services, reference and information services);

- to conduct the creation of new innovative tourist offers diverse ethno-thematic nature (covering such items as accommodation, transportation, guide services, translator, as well as sightseeing, visits to museums, workshops, festivals etc.);

- to strengthen awareness of cultural events and activities and promotion of Greek culture as bases of ethnic and cultural tourism to increase the occupancy of hotels and the improvement of the tourism activity in the off-season.

The use of the developed recommendations will contribute to the evolvement of the tourism industry in the Azov region in general and cultural tourism in particular.

Conclusion. It is determined that Ukraine, as a multinational country, has great potential for the development of ethnic tourism due to the availability of ethno-resources, both Ukrainian and of national minorities. Ethnic tourism is of great importance for the involvement of regions and assistance in cultural heritage preservation. The socio-cultural preconditions for the formation of ethno-tourism in the Azov region were investigated and Mariupol, as a leading center of Hellenic development in Ukraine and the local Greek community, undertake a great deal of effort to retain the identity of the Greek diaspora with its history and culture as a part of the Ukrainian nation. The use of SWOT analysis has clearly identified the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the Azov ethno-tourism market and offered a number of recommendations for its further development.

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