



The Metatheoretical Study of the Tourism System of the Volgograd Region and the Study of Preferences of Consumers of Regional Tourism Products

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Abstract

The metatheoretical study of the tourism system of the Volgograd Region of the Russian Federation made it possible to determine the system characteristics of tourist relations of the region. Currently, an excursion type of tourism, in particular, war-historical and theological ones, is the main one in the region; this type is organized by two types of tourism products: tours (overnight) and excursions (without staying for the night). The focused interview with an expert group revealed the components and elements of the tourism product "excursion tour", which were grouped and listed in a questionnaire to assess the importance of each component and each element of the tourism product among consumers. 332 people divided into 6 age-sex groups took part in the survey. The survey results enable to form a methodology for the integrated assessment of regional tourism products: average estimates of the importance of each component and element of the tourism product for each group of respondents have been calculated; all the elements of the tourism product have been divided into two types (impression-forming and consumption-covering), to which essentially different evaluation scales are applicable.

Keywords: metatheoretical study, tourism system of the region, tourism product, excursion tour, consumer preferences, components of a tourism product, elements of a tourism product.

1. Introduction

Currently, in the scientific literature on the economy of tourism, a concept of "tourist attractiveness of the region" as the ability of a certain territory to attract tourists' attention due to various conditions and factors that provide the opportunity to use this territory for tourist purposes has become widely used [1]. However, from the economic point of view, tourists attracted to the region are consumers of specific tourism products offered in this territory [2]. Moreover, in the theory and practice of the tourism economy, there is no methodology for assessing the attractiveness of a tourism product, the demand for which influences all economic indicators characterizing the efficiency of the tourism industry of the region.

In this regard, the development of a universal methodology for assessing the attractiveness of tourism products of various types with the subsequent formation of an effective mechanism for using the results of the assessment to attract consumers and improve the supply of tourism products in the regional market is an important current trend in the development of the tourism economy [3].

To develop such methodology, it is necessary to define the nature of the regional tourist industry, identify the components and elements of regional tourism products, assess the significance of the components and elements of a tourism product for different categories of consumers; classify the elements of tourism products and develop the evaluation criteria.

2. Methods

As the recreational factors of the region develop through the use of its social, economic, cultural, historical, and institutional features, a problem of studying the integrated interdependence of the mentioned aspects of the economic environment is actualized. The comprehensive study of this multitude of interrelated aspects of the regional system is expedient to be conducted in accordance with the methodology of the metatheoretical system study of the Volgograd Region aimed at determining the system characteristics of the tourist relations in the region [4]. This metatheoretical synthesis of the category of regional tourism and imperatives of its development includes as follows:

- system analysis of known descriptions of regional tourism;
- identification of its main features and metatheoretical characteristics;
- to synthesize a relevant category of regional tourism;
- to identify the imperatives of implementing an effective regional tourism system.

A sociological survey was conducted to structure regional tourism products. It included several stages, each of which required the use of appropriate techniques:

- 1) the main types of regional tourism products in the Volgograd Region were identified by analyzing the indicators characterizing the structure and dynamics of the regional tourist market;
- 2) through the focused interview with the expert group, the components of tourism products were selected and within each component, specific elements forming this component were revealed; evaluation scales and criteria for each type of elements of a tourism product were formed;

- 3) the development of a questionnaire for the study of opinions of existing and potential customers on the importance of various components and elements of tourism products and the attribution of elements of tourism products to impression-forming and consumption-covering ones;
- 4) the required sample size for the questionnaire survey was calculated and the structure of the interviewed by age-sex groups was determined by means of statistical methods of summary, grouping and selective observation;
- 5) the conduct of the questionnaire and processing of its results. Interpretation and evaluation of the data obtained and the formation of a system for assessing regional tourism products.

3. Results

The conduct of the analysis of known content descriptions of regional tourism makes it possible to specify: a set of properties of the regional system under study, as well as a category and imperatives of its development.

Table 1 presents a systemic basis of characteristics that should be used when conducting a comprehensive metatheoretical analysis of the tourism system of the region.

Table 1: Basis of metatheoretical characteristics of the description of the region

Identifier of a characteristic	Informatory description of the system characteristic
<i>P</i>	Classification characteristic of the described aspect of the region, defining it as a relationship, system, complex, mechanism, industry, etc.
<i>A</i>	Properties of subjects of the region interacting on the objects of their interests
<i>B</i>	Description of objects, concerning which the subjects of the region enter into relations
<i>C</i>	System-forming properties of the described aspect of the region
<i>D</i>	Description of the net effect of the studied aspect of the regional system
<i>E</i>	Dynamic properties reflecting the direction of development of the studied aspect of the regional system in time
<i>F</i>	Description of cause-effect impacts on the studied aspect of the regional system, the dynamic changes in it and the results of its functioning
<i>G</i>	Limiting conditions, under which the studied regional system exists and without which its existence is problematic.

In accordance with the noted symbols, a category of the subject will be presented as a verbal function from the system characteristics: a classification feature of the described aspect of the region; subjects forming the subject matter; objects, concerning which the subjects interact; system-forming properties; a net effect; dynamic properties of the direction of development; cause and effect relations of the regional tourism system with the environment; limiting conditions. In accordance with the above-mentioned system characteristics of regional tourism, its category will have the following verbal expression:

$$S = f(P, A, B, C, D, E, F, G). \tag{1}$$

The system analysis of the properties of regional tourism allows conducting the subsequent verbal synthesis of its characteristics and category, as well as formulating the corresponding imperatives.

A number of descriptions of the tourism system of the Volgograd Region were analyzed, in particular:

- A concept of development of domestic and inbound tourism in the Volgograd Region for the period until 2020 [5]; Museum-Reserve "Old Sarepta" [6];
- Regional Tourist Information Center [7];
- Welcome to the Volgograd Region [8];

- The tourist potential of the Volgograd Region is presented at the international exhibition in India [9];
- Tourist patriotic routes [10];
- Law of the Volgograd Region No. 358-OD of December 27, 1999 "On the Development of Tourism in the Volgograd Region" adopted by the Regional Duma on November 25, 1999 [11];
- Law of the Volgograd Region as amended on June 2, 2000 No. 409-OD "On Tourist Activities in the Territory of the Volgograd Region" adopted by the Regional Duma on November 25, 1999 [12].

The analysis of these descriptions was aimed at identifying a multitude of integrated sets of attributes of the relevant improvement of the tourism system of the Volgograd Region. The use of the obtained features will make it possible to obtain the properties of system characteristics of the tourism system of the Volgograd Region and imperatives of its improvement [13].

Based on the indicated sources of information, let us analyze the properties of the subject under study. The attributes of the properties of the classification characteristic of the aspect of tourist activities in the Volgograd Region will be analyzed. As a result, the following attributes of classification properties will be obtained:

- the sphere of tourism of the Volgograd Region;
- domestic and inbound tourism in the region;
- domestic and inbound tourism of the Volgograd Region;
- the variety of tourist routes in the Volgograd Region;
- tourist industry;
- domestic, inbound, social and independent tourism;
- the tourism industry of the Volgograd Region;
- domestic, inbound, independent and social tourism (for the youth, retirement-age people, physically disabled persons).

The following characteristic is advisable as a classification characteristic of the tourism system of the region:

P: The tourism industry of the Volgograd Region focused on domestic, inbound, independent and social tourism.

Let us analyze the attributes of properties of the characteristic *A* of the subjects entering into relationship concerning the maximization of the efficiency of tourism products. As a result, the following attributes of the subjects will be obtained [14]:

1. Hotels, tourist and health centers.
 2. Restaurants.
 3. Air service enterprises: Volgograd International Airport.
 4. Automobile service enterprises: Central and South Bus Stations.
 5. Shipping service enterprises: River Port.
 6. Tourist-entertainment, sports and fitness centers.
 7. Business centers.
 8. Cultural and recreational facilities and places of public entertainment.
 9. Excursion-information services.
 10. Museum complexes:
 - Museum-Reserve "The Battle of Stalingrad";
 - Mamayev Kurgan Memorial Complex "To the Heroes of the Battle of Stalingrad" and the sculpture "Motherland Calls!";
 - Pavlov's House, Gerhardt Mill, Memorial in Rossoshka Village, Soldiers' Field;
 - Historical-Ethnographic and Architectural Museum-Reserve "Old Sarepta";
 - I.I. Mashkov Volgograd Museum of Fine Arts;
 - Ilovinsky Museum of Culture and Everyday Life;
 - Center of National Cultures "Altyn-Nur";
 - Volga Hydroelectric Power Station.
 11. Orthodox monasteries of the Volgograd Region:
 - Ust-Medveditsky Savior-Transfiguration Nunnery;
 - Kremensko-Voznesensky Monastery;
 - Kamlenno-Brodsky Holy Trinity Monastery;
 - Gusevsky Akhtyrskaya Mother of God Nunnery;
 - Dubovsky Holy Ascension Nunnery;
 - Holy Spirit Monastery.
- ✓ Tourism organizers:

- Committee for Physical Culture and Sports of the Administration of the Volgograd Region;
- "Tourism Center" subordinate to the Committee for Physical Culture and Sports of the Administration of the Volgograd Region.
- "Tourism Development Agency" with the regional tourist web-portal [7];
- regional tourist information centers, creating a comfortable information environment for guests and residents of the region, providing advisory services and promoting a regional tourism product in the Russian and international tourist markets;
- "Agency for the Development of Tourism and Socio-Cultural Projects" aimed at launching new excursion routes;
- Organizations engaged in tour operator and travel agency activities.
- ✓ Tourists:
 - Russian citizens;
 - school groups and students from the constituent entities of the Russian Federation;
 - family tourists;
 - descendants of the participants of the Battle of Stalingrad and the Great Patriotic War;
 - transit tourists staying for visiting the Mamayev Kurgan Memorial Complex.

Having considered many attributes of the subjects entering into relationship concerning the maximization of the efficiency of tourism products, one can get the following informatory description of the properties of the corresponding characteristic:

A: The main segments of tourists are as follows: school groups and students from the constituent entities of the Russian Federation; family tourists; descendants of the participants of the Battle of Stalingrad and the Great Patriotic War; transit tourists. They are served in the region jointly by: accommodation, food, transport enterprises; tourist-entertaining, museum, sports and fitness centers; religious monasteries; business centers; cultural and recreational facilities and places of public entertainment; excursion-information services. The activities of these enterprises are optimized by organizations that control tourism activities in the region.

In accordance with the descriptions of activities of enterprises of the tourism industry in the Volgograd Region, let us identify the attributes of the objects, concerning which tourists, tourism service providers and organizations regulating their activities enter into relations with each other [15].

The following attributes of the objects have been revealed, concerning which subjects of the tourist industry of the Volgograd Region enter into relations:

1. Tourists have a demand for emotionally charged high-quality tours.
2. Enterprises of the infrastructure for the organization of tours in the Volgograd Region are focused on meeting the corresponding client demand.
3. Organizations regulating tourism activities contribute to:
 - an increase in the tourist flow and improvement of the quality of the tourism services provided;
 - monitoring of the use of the natural and cultural-historical heritage of the Volgograd Region;
 - the creation in the Volgograd Region of the developed tourism industry that meets the needs of citizens in tourism services;
 - the adoption of laws, other laws and regulations of the Volgograd Region on the development of tourism and monitoring of their execution.

Having considered a set of identified features of the objects of relations on the maximization of the efficiency of tourism products of the Volgograd Region, one can obtain the following informatory description of the properties of the corresponding characteristic:

B: There is a demand for emotionally charged high-quality tours. Enterprises of infrastructure for the organization of tours in the Volgograd Region are focused on meeting the corresponding

client demand. Organizations regulating tourism activities contribute to: increasing the tourist flow and improving the quality of the provided tourism services; monitoring of the use of the natural and cultural-historical heritage of the Volgograd Region; the creation in the Volgograd Region of the developed tourism industry that meets the needs of citizens in tourism services; adoption of laws and regulations on the development of tourism and control over their execution.

The analysis of conceptual descriptions of the tourism system of the Volgograd Region made it possible to identify the attributes of the characteristic C of system-forming properties that determine the interrelationships of subjects in the tourism industry of the Volgograd Region:

- Availability of the tourist potential, which is defined by: natural parks; developed tourist infrastructure; orthodox monasteries; natural cultural-historical and ethnographic sights; the presence of a large number of military-historical sites;
- The Volgograd Region is an intersection of civilizations, through which the most important trade routes passed since ancient times.
- In due time, in this territory there was a political center of the Golden Horde, later the history of the Cossacks began.
- Crucial events of the Civil and Great Patriotic wars took place in the territory of the Volgograd Region.

Using the attributes of system-forming properties of the tourism industry in the Volgograd Region, one can obtain the following informatory description of the corresponding characteristic:

C: System-forming properties of the tourism industry of the Volgograd Region are determined by the tourist potential: natural parks; tourism infrastructure; cultural-historical and ethnographic sights; orthodox churches, Muslim mosques, Catholic churches, Lutheran churches, synagogues; the presence of a large number of military-historical sites. The Volgograd Region is an intersection of civilizations, through which the most important trade routes passed since ancient times. Here was a political center of the Golden Horde and later the history of the Cossacks began. Crucial events of the Civil and Great Patriotic wars took place in the territory of the Volgograd Region.

Let us reveal the attributes of the net effect of the tourism industry of the Volgograd Region, which it has on the socio-economic system of the region:

- The institutionalization of the idea of patriotism, around which the worldview, moral ideals, rules of a person's behavior manifested in his/her actions and activities are formed;
- Creation of new jobs;
- Promotion of employment of the population;
- Increase in budget revenues;
- Preservation and restoration of the historical-cultural and natural heritage;
- Development of internal sub-sectors of hotel-tourist and spa-resort complexes, transport and restaurant business, sports and fitness centers and business centers.

The revealed attributes of the net effect of the tourism industry of the Volgograd Region allow formulating the following informatory description of the properties of the corresponding characteristic:

D: The idea of patriotism is institutionalized and the worldview, moral ideals, rules of a person's behavior manifested in his/her actions and activities are formed around this idea. New jobs are created; employment of the population is promoted; budget revenues are increased; historical-cultural and natural heritage is preserved and restored; the sub-sectors of hotel, spa-resort, transport and restaurant business are developing.

The following attributes of the characteristic of dynamic direction [16] of the development of the tourism industry in the Volgograd Region have been revealed:

- Orientation to the best domestic and international practices in order to improve the organizational and legal mechanisms for the development of tourism in the Volgograd Region.

- Creation of new accommodation facilities for the reception of participants and guests of the FIFA World Cup in 2018.
- Improvement of transport accessibility of recreation facilities, cultural-historical sites, hotels, etc.
- An increase in the number of tourists from China, who are attracted by tours associated with the Soviet past and military history.
- Development of rural, event, ethnographic, cruise and social tourism, which is due to the favorable features of the region.
- Improvement of the quality of the provided tourism services under the influence of the regional administrative initiative.

In accordance with the revealed attributes, let us formulate the following informatory description of the dynamic direction of the development of the tourism industry in the Volgograd Region:

E: The development of the regional tourism industry is based on the best domestic and international practices: the improvement of organizational and legal mechanisms; creation of new accommodation facilities for the reception of participants and guests of the world championships; improvement of transport accessibility of recreation facilities, cultural-historical sites, and hotels. The regional tourism industry is oriented towards the development of rural, event, ethnographic, cruise and social tourism, which is due to the favorable features of the region; an increase in the number of tourists from China, who are attracted by tours associated with the Soviet past and military history; improvement of the quality of the provided tourism services under the influence of the regional administrative initiative.

The attributes of the characteristic *F* of cause-effect impacts on the regional tourism industry, the dynamic changes in it and the results of its functioning, form the following set:

- Restoration of berths and piers will increase the flow of motor ships, which, in turn, will increase the tourist flow.
- Creation of a spiritual-patriotic tourist cluster "Territory of Victories" in the territory of the Volgograd Region will promote the creation of facilities for supporting and tourism infrastructure: berths and piers, communications networks, bicycle paths, conveniences for people with limited mobility, beach areas, and museum expositions.
- Inspections of the quality system of tourism enterprises make it possible to regularly assess their effectiveness and compliance with the established requirements; to receive the information necessary to ensure the effective functioning of the regional system [17].

Using the attributes of cause-effect impacts on the regional tourism industry of the Volgograd Region, one can obtain the following informatory description of the corresponding characteristic:

F: The creation of a spiritual-patriotic tourist cluster "Territory of Victories" in the territory of the Volgograd Region will promote the development of tourism infrastructure facilities: berths and piers, communication networks, bike lanes, conveniences for people with limited mobility, beach areas, and museum expositions. Restoration of berths and piers will increase the flow of motor ships, which, in turn, will increase the tourist flow. Inspections of the quality system of tourism enterprises will enable to regularly assess their effectiveness and compliance with the established requirements; to receive the information necessary for the maintenance of effective functioning of the regional tourism industry of the Volgograd Region.

The analysis revealed the following attributes of the limiting conditions, under which the tourism industry of the Volgograd Region effectively functions and without which its existence is problematic:

- The tourism potential and developed tourism infrastructure.
- Ensuring the safety of life, the health of tourists, the safety of their property and non-damage to the natural environment during the travel.
- Respect for the existing social order, customs and religious beliefs of the place of temporary stay; careful attitude to the

natural environment, monuments of history and culture of the place of temporary stay.

- Promotion of the regional tourism product in the domestic and foreign markets (information and consulting services in the tourism-information center of the Volgograd Region, presentation of the regional tourism product at tourism exhibitions and events).
- Development and adoption of basic legal acts ensuring the effective regional policy in the sphere of tourism.

Using the attributes of the necessary conditions, under which the tourism industry of the Volgograd Region can effectively function, one can obtain the following informatory description of the relevant characteristic:

G: The necessary conditions for the effective functioning of the tourism industry of the Volgograd Region are as follows: the tourism potential and developed tourism infrastructure; adoption of basic legal acts ensuring the safety of life, health of tourists, the safety of their property, as well as respect for the existing social order, customs and religious beliefs of the place of temporary stay; careful attitude to the natural environment, monuments of history and culture of the place of temporary stay. It is necessary to promote the tourism product of the region in the domestic and foreign markets (information and consulting services in the tourism-information center of the Volgograd Region, presentation of the regional tourism product at tourism exhibitions and events).

The system characteristics of the tourism industry in the Volgograd Region have been obtained as a result of the metatheoretical analysis of conceptual descriptions of the relations of the formation of an effective tourism system. The revealed characteristics allow formulating the corresponding category.

In general, the system of a certain subject matter is the relationship of subjects concerning the objects, which enable to obtain the integrative quality of the system that undergoes certain cause-effect changes and progresses due to its inherent dynamic direction of development, which exists subject to the limiting conditions. In the case of such interpretation of the system, the arguments of the function (1) should be used in the following order:

$$S = f(P, A, C, B, D, F, E, G). \quad (2)$$

In accordance with this formalized expression, using the above-stated system characteristics of the tourism system, one can obtain the following informatory description of the studied subject matter of the tourism industry of the Volgograd Region.

S: The tourism industry of the Volgograd Region is focused on target groups of Russian schoolchildren and students, descendants of participants of the Great Patriotic War, as well as family and transit tourists who see the Volgograd Region as an intersection of civilizations, through which the most important trade routes passed since ancient times. Here was a political center of the Golden Horde, and later the history of the Cossacks began. In the territory of the Volgograd Region, the turning events of the Civil and Great Patriotic Wars took place. The services are rendered by accommodation, food, transport enterprises; tourism-entertaining, museum complexes, sports and fitness centers; religious monasteries; business centers; cultural and recreational facilities and places of public entertainment; excursion-information services that are based on the tourist potential of natural parks; cultural-historical and ethnographic sights; Orthodox churches, Muslim mosques, Catholic churches, Lutheran churches, synagogues; a large number of military-historical sites. Infrastructure enterprises are focused on satisfying the corresponding clients' demand for emotionally charged, demanded quality tours. The activities of these enterprises are optimized by organizations that control tourism activities in the region. They contribute to: an increase in the tourist flow and improvement of the quality of the provided tourism services; the monitoring of the use of the natural and cultural-historical heritage of the Volgograd Region; the creation in the Volgograd

Region of the developed tourism industry that meets the needs of citizens in tourism services; adoption of regulatory acts on the development of tourism.

The tourism industry of the Volgograd Region institutionalizes an idea of patriotism, around which the worldview, moral ideals, rules of a person's behavior manifested in his/her actions and activities are formed. Due to the development of the industry, new jobs are created; the employment of the population is promoted; budget revenues are increased; the historical-cultural and natural heritage is preserved; the sub-sectors of hotel, spa-resort, transport and restaurant business, berths and piers, communication networks, bike lanes, conveniences for people with limited mobility, beach areas, museum expositions are improved.

The quality system of tourism enterprises is aimed at regular assessment of their compliance with the established requirements; obtaining the information necessary to ensure the effective functioning of the regional tourism industry in the Volgograd Region.

The regional tourism industry is oriented towards the development of rural, event, ethnographic, active, cruise and social tourism, which is due to the favorable features of the region; the improvement of the quality of the provided tourism services under the influence of the regional administrative initiative. The improvement of the tourism industry is based on the best domestic and world practices. The necessary conditions for the effective functioning of the tourism industry in the Volgograd Region are as follows: modern tourist infrastructure; ensuring the safety of life, health of tourists, the safety of their property; careful attitude to the natural environment, monuments of history and culture, to the existing social structures, customs and religious beliefs of places of temporary stay of tourists.

This informatory description reflects a restrictive part of the verbal formula of the subject of research, reflecting its known properties. The analysis of statistical indicators characterizing the dynamics of the development of the tourism market in the Volgograd Region revealed that the main attractions for tourists in the region are the sights related to the Great Patriotic War (primarily the Mamayev Kurgan and the Panorama of the Battle of Stalingrad) and religious sites (primarily monasteries). Thus, military-historical and theological types of tourism are the main ones in the region [18]. Accordingly, the general orientation of tours aimed at visiting these attractions can be designated as *excursion tours*, when tourists, first of all, come to see the sites of cultural/historical and/or spiritual significance. Excursion tourism in the Volgograd Region is organizationally represented by two types of tourism products:

- Tours that are organized for people from other regions and, as part of the tourism product, in addition to the excursion program, include at least one overnight stay and road to the region and back.
- Excursions for local residents of the region, which do not involve overnight stays in collective accommodation facilities and transfers among regions.

An expert group consisting of 12 people was formed to identify the components and elements of these tourism products; it included representatives of the target segment of consumers, i.e. citizens, at whom, according to the metatheoretical study, the tourism industry of the Volgograd Region is targeted: groups of Russian schoolchildren and students, descendants of participants of the Great Patriotic War, as well as family and transit tourists who perceive the Volgograd Region as a crossroads of civilizations.

As a result of a focused interview with the expert group, the following components of the tourism product "excursion tour" were identified:

1. Excursion sites
2. Guide's work
3. Tour organization
4. Infrastructure

As part of the tourism product "excursion", the following components were distinguished:

1. Excursion sites
2. Guide's work
3. Excursion organization

Consequently, forming elements within each component were identified, the assessment of which influences the perception and impression of consumers. These elements are presented in a structured way in Tables 2 and 3.

Table 2: Structure of the tourism product "excursion tour"

Item No.	Characteristic
1	Excursion sites
1.1	Educative/cultural/spiritual value of sites
1.2	Accessibility of sites for review
1.3	Selection of sites for display
1.4	Logical order of showing excursion sites
2	Guide's work
2.1.	Contents of presentation:
2.1.1	Information richness and content-richness of the guide's speech
2.1.2	The information is given in an aurally perceptible form.
2.2.	Manner of presentation:
2.2.1	Optimal clarity and loudness of speech
2.2.2	Figurative and impressive speech
2.2.3	Getting feedback from tourists
3	Tour organization
3.1	Tour time
3.1.1	Enough free time at sites
3.1.2	Time spent at excursion sites
3.2.	Means of transport (for transporting tourists to the region)
3.2.1	Level of vehicle comfort
3.2.2	Vehicle and route safety
3.3	Organization of transfer and transportation during excursions
3.3.1	Timeliness of transfer
3.3.2	Level of vehicle comfort
3.3.3	Vehicle safety
3.4	Attendant's work
3.4.1	Organization of the route for the tourist group
3.4.2	Organization of accommodation and meals along the route
3.4.3	The manner of the attendant's interaction with tourists and employees of the sites
4	Infrastructure
4.1	Accommodation facilities
4.1.1	Overall comfort level of the hotel
4.1.2	Quality of the hotel room
4.1.3	Quality of service in the hotel
4.1.4	Convenience of the hotel location
4.1.4	Additional services in the hotel
4.2.	Catering facilities
4.2.1	Quality of meals and catering services in the hotel
4.2.2	Quality of meals and catering services during the tour
4.2.3	Additional meals at the request of a tourist
4.3.	Organization of leisure time for tourists
4.3.1	Possible leisure activities (theatre, circus, etc.)
4.3.2	Organization of leisure activities in the hotel
4.4.	Other elements of tourism infrastructure
4.4.1	Accessibility of facilities necessary to meet the tourists' hygienic needs near the sites
4.4.2	Points of sale of tourism products near the sites

Table 3: The structure of the tourism product "excursion"

Item No.	Characteristic
1	Excursion sites
1.1	Educative/cultural/spiritual value of sites
1.2	Accessibility of sites for review
1.3	Selection of sites to show
1.4	Logical order of showing excursion sites
2	Guide's work
2.1.	Contents of presentation:
2.1.1	Information richness and content-richness of the guide's speech
2.1.2	The information is given in an aurally perceptible form.

2.2.	Manner of presentation:
2.2.1	Optimal clarity and loudness of speech
2.2.2	Figurative and impressive speech
2.2.3	Getting feedback from tourists
3	Excursion organization
3.1	Excursion time
3.1.1	Enough free time at sites
3.1.2	Time spent at excursion sites
3.2.	Transport
3.2.1	Level of vehicle comfort
3.2.2	Vehicle and route safety
3.3	Attendant's work
3.4.1	Organization of the route for the excursion group
3.4.3	The manner of the attendant's interaction with tourists and employees of the sites
3.4	Infrastructure
3.4.1	Accessibility of facilities necessary to meet the tourists' hygienic needs near the sites
3.4.2	Points of sale of tourism products near the sites
3.4.3	Available catering facilities near the sites

When discussing evaluation criteria with the members of the expert group, it became obvious that various elements of the tourism product are differently evaluated by consumers:

- in terms of their importance to a particular person;
- in terms of the "intended purpose" of a certain element in the tourism product: it can be designed to create conditions for the execution of the tour program or intended to generate impressions from the tour.

Accordingly, it was suggested to use the following evaluation scales when conducting a questionnaire survey:

- The importance of each component of the tourism product (excursion sites, guide's work, tour organization and infrastructure) to consumers should be assessed on the following scale: very important/important/indifferent/not important.
- The importance of each element of the tourism product was assessed on a 10-point scale (0 – *absolutely not important*, 10 – *very important*)

When evaluating specific tourism products:

- A score is given to each impression-forming element of the tourism product on a ten-point scale (from 0 to 10 scores).
- A score is given to each consumption-covering element of the tourism product on a five-point scale (from -5 if this element spoiled the tourists' impression to 0 if it did not spoil the impression and created the necessary conditions for its receipt).

During the questionnaire survey, the following tasks were set:

1. The assessment of a degree of importance of each of the components of tourism products for consumers;
2. The assessment of a degree of importance of each element of the tourism product;
3. The division of the elements of the tourism product into impression-forming and consumption-covering ones.

It is obvious that the tourism product "excursion" by composition is a certain "truncated" form of the tourism product "excursion tour". Therefore, when conducting the questionnaire, respondents were asked not two but one questionnaire, in which homogeneous

and repetitive elements presented in Tables 2 and 3 were grouped for the purpose of simplification. For example, in the structure of the tourism product "excursion tour", five characteristics characterizing the hotel service were identified in Clause 4.1:

- 4.1.1 General level of hotel comfort
- 4.1.2 Quality of the hotel room
- 4.1.3 Quality of service in the hotel
- 4.1.4 Convenience of the hotel location
- 4.1.5 Additional services in the hotel

These elements were grouped in Clause 2.13 of the questionnaire – "Quality of Hotel Services".

Similarly, in the structure of the tourism product "excursion tour", three elements characterizing catering facilities that provide services to tourists were identified. They can get different scores when evaluating specific tours, but, in terms of their importance for consumers, they are homogeneous and were grouped in Clause 2.14 of the questionnaire "Quality of meals and catering services".

- 4.2.1 Quality of meals and catering services in the hotel
- 4.2.2 Quality of meals and catering services during the excursion program
- 4.2.3 Additional meals at the request of a tourist

As a result of all similar groupings, 31 elements of the tourism product "excursion tour" and 17 elements of the tourism product "excursion" were grouped into 17 elements included in the questionnaire to study consumer preferences about the importance of each of these elements for the formation of consumer attractiveness and determining a type of each element:

1. Educative/cultural/spiritual value of sites
2. Accessibility of sites for review
3. Selection of sites and logical ordering of their display
4. Information richness and content-richness of the guide's speech
5. Optimal clarity and loudness of the guide's speech
6. Figurative and bright speech of the guide
7. Getting feedback from sightseers
8. Sufficient time spent at sites
9. The level of comfort of vehicles used for transporting tourists to the region and excursions
10. Safety of vehicles used for transporting tourists to the region and excursions
11. Organization of the route for the tourist group, accommodation and meals along the route
12. The manner of the attendant's interaction with tourists and employees of the sites
13. Quality of hotel services
14. Quality of meals and catering services
15. Possible leisure activities
16. Accessibility of facilities necessary to meet the hygienic needs of tourists
17. Points of sale of tourism products near the sites

In accordance with the tasks, the questionnaire included three stages:

At the first stage, respondents were asked to assess a degree of importance for them of each of the components of the excursion tour, putting a tick in Table 4.

Table 4: Fragment of the questionnaire for the assessment of the significance of various components of the tourism product "excursion tour"

Component of the excursion tour	Very important	Important	Indifferent	Not important
1.1. Excursion sites Did you like the sites you've seen at the excursions during the tour? How much do they meet your educative and/or spiritual needs?				
1.2. Guide's work What the guide told you and how he/she did it. The text of the excursion, manner of presentation, manner of interaction with sightseers.				
1.3. Tour organization How clearly the excursion program, accommodation and meals, tourists' leisure time were arranged. How optimal was the tour time in general and the time spent at specific sites, how comfortable and safe were the vehicles used for transporting tourists to the region and transfers.				
1.4. Infrastructure Quality of hotel and catering services rendered to tourists. Whether the sites are equipped with the necessary tourism infrastructure facilities (cafes, restrooms, souvenir stalls, etc.).				

At the second stage, it was necessary to assess the significance of each of the elements that make up the tourism product "excursion tour". For this purpose, the respondents were to give scores from 0 to 10 (0 – completely unimportant, 10 – very important) to each

element depending on how important it is for a respondent personally and affects whether the tour is attractive to him/her. The table given in the questionnaire also contained the transcripts of each element (Table 5).

Table 5: Fragment of the questionnaire for assessing the significance of various elements of the tourism product "excursion tour"

Element	Significance score (0-10)
2.1. Informative/cultural/spiritual value of the sites How interesting/fascinating/informative it was to see the sites you were shown at excursions.	
2.2. Accessibility of sites for review How convenient was the access road and the location of the site, so that you could hear and view all that was interesting to you.	
2.3. Selection of sites and logical ordering of their display Whether the number of sites shown during the tour was sufficient. Was the tour overloaded with the places of interest? Whether the places of interest had a common idea, the concept or sequence of their display was spontaneous (you were showed everything that was of interest during the tour).	
2.4. Information richness and content-richness of the guide's speech The content of the guide's speech, whether the information is interesting, informative, refers to the places of interest. Whether the information is given in an aurally perceptible form.	
2.5. Optimal clarity and loudness of the guide's speech Did the guide's speech complicate the perception of information?	
2.6. Figurative and bright speech of the guide Whether the guide's speech was a boring retelling of historical and scientific facts or contained epithets, metaphors, quotations, proverbs, etc.	
2.7. Getting feedback from sightseers Did the guide manage to engage in a lively dialogue with the sightseers, did he/she ask them rhetorical questions, did the sightseers have the opportunity to specify the details of interest or the excursion was conducted in the form of a monologue without feedback?	
2.8. Sufficient time spent at sites Whether there was enough time for the sites, so that tourists could see everything, take photos if they wanted and did not stand idle waiting for another site. Did tourists have enough free time during the tour to meet their personal needs?	
2.9. The level of comfort of vehicles used for transporting tourists to the region and excursions How comfortable it was in the vehicle and whether its shortcomings caused discomfort to the tourists.	
2.10. Safety of vehicles used for transporting tourists to the region and excursions Did you feel safe in the vehicle? Did the features of the vehicle or the driver's manners cause discomfort to the tourists?	
2.11. Organization of the route for the tourist group, accommodation and meals along the route The way the attendant of the tourist group clearly and effectively arranged a meeting and seeing-off of tourists, accommodation and meals along the route, transportation of people to the sites, resolved current technical issues.	
2.12. The manner of the attendant's interaction with tourists and employees of the sites How friendly and polite was the attendant with the tourists, how effective was his/her interaction with the employees of the sites.	
2.13. Quality of hotel services The extent to which the general level of hotel comfort, the quality of the hotel room, the quality of service, the range of services met the requirements of tourists. How convenient was the location of the hotel both for organizing leisure activities and transfers to the sites.	
2.14. Quality of meals and catering services The extent to which the quality of meals, menu and catering services in the hotel and during the excursion program met the requirements of tourists.	
2.15. Possible leisure activities Was it possible for tourists to engage in leisure activities at their option (theater, circus, etc.) in their free time?	
2.16. Accessibility of facilities necessary to meet the hygienic needs of tourists Are there restrooms and wash-hand basins near the main excursion sites?	
2.17. Points of sale of tourism products near the sites Are there souvenir shops and points of sale of other tourist goods near the main excursion sites?	

At the third stage, the task was to divide all the elements into two groups: impression-forming and consumption-covering elements. For this purpose, respondents were asked to choose from among the entire list of elements of the tourism product "excursion tour" those, which, in their opinion, form an impression of the tour most of all, determine how much they liked it, by ticking the box in the common list.

At the end of the questionnaire, respondents were asked to leave brief information about themselves, indicating their gender, age range, level of education and residence area.

At the next stage of the study, the necessary sample size was determined. The calculation was made using an online calculator presented on the website of the Center of Marketing Competitions Marketolog.Biz [19].

To make calculations, 3 variables should be entered in the calculator:

- confidence probability shows how likely a random answer falls within the confidence interval. It is understood as the reliability of sampling, confidence. 95% is usually used. This probability is taken for calculations;
- the confidence interval can be understood as an error, it specifies the sweep of a part of the distribution curve on either

side of the selected point, where the answers may fall. Let us take a confidence level equal to 5%.

- The general population is understood as the total number of Russian citizens who determine the demand for tours and excursions in the Volgograd Region. The most relevant data on the number of tourists and sightseers in the Volgograd Region at the time of the survey were available for 2016, which amounted to 2,446 people.

The sample size is calculated in the calculator by the following formula:

$$SS = \frac{Z^2 \times p \times (1-p)}{c^2} \quad (3)$$

where:

Z is the Z-factor (for example, 1.96 for the 95% confidence interval);

p is the percentage of respondents or answers of interest, in decimal form (0.5 by default);

c is the confidence interval, in decimal form (for example, 0.05 = ± 5%).

Based on these data, the size of the general sample was 332 people. Then it is necessary to divide this totality into age-sex groups of interest. In particular, in terms of differentiation of tourist preferences, the division of men and women of the following age categories is of interest:

- youth (aged 15-34);
- middle-aged (aged 35-54);
- elderly (aged 55 and over).

Since tourists and sightseers in the Volgograd Region can be representatives of all regions of the Russian Federation, the breakdown of the sample into age-sex groups will be based on the data on the structure of the population throughout the Russian Federation. This structure is presented in the table "Distribution of the population of the Russian Federation by age-sex groups (as of January 1, 2017)", published on the official website of the Federal State Statistics Service in the Official Statistics\Population\Demography Section.

Table 6: Distribution of the population of the Russian Federation by age-sex groups as of January 1, 2017, thousand people

Age (years old)	Entire population		
	Men and women	Men	Women
Entire population, incl. the elderly (years old)	146,804	68,044	78,760
under 1 year	1,880	966	914
1-4	7,702	3,958	3,744
5-9	8,558	4,389	4,169
10-14	7,408	3,791	3,617
15-19	6,690	3,418	3,272
20-24	7,828	3,993	3,835
25-29	11,879	6,035	5,844
30-34	12,537	6,270	6,267
35-39	11,194	5,505	5,689
40-44	10,381	5,008	5,373
45-49	9,280	4,439	4,841
50-54	9,835	4,545	5,290
55-59	11,155	4,947	6,208
60-64	9,610	3,964	5,646
65-69	7,637	2,942	4,695
aged 70 and over	13,230	3,874	9,356

Based on the data presented, let us group the population for the age groups of interest to us and calculate the specific weight of each age group, taking the total population of the studied age (aged 15 and over) for 100% (Table 7).

Table 7: Number and age structure of the population of the Russian Federation (without children) by age-sex groups, thousand people

Group	Specific weight of the group, %	Women, thousand people	Men, thousand people
Youth	32.11	19,217	19,717
Middle-aged	33.56	21,193	19,497
Elderly	34.33	25,905	15,727
In total:	100.0	66,316	54,940

This grouping makes it possible to calculate the specific weight of each age category of interest to us, taking the number of people of

this age 100%, and to determine the number of respondents in each age-sex group (Table 8).

Table 8: Calculation of the number of respondents by age-sex groups, taking into account the average distribution of the population by sex and age for the Russian Federation

Group	Number of respondents, people	Share, %		Number of respondents	
		Women, %	Men, %	women, people	men, people
Youth	107	49.36	50.64	53	54
Middle-aged	111	52.08	47.92	58	53
Elderly	114	62.22	37.78	71	43
In total	332	-	-	182	150

Taking into account the calculated values of the number of respondents of each age-sex group, 332 people living in the Volgograd Region and in other constituent territories of the Russian Federation have been surveyed.

4. Discussion

Let us analyze the results obtained. At the first stage of the study, respondents were asked to assess a degree of importance of each of the components of the excursion tour. Consumers' estimates were converted into points on the following system:

- Very important – 4 points;
- Important – 3 points;
- Indifferent – 2 points;
- Not important – 1 point.

Based on these estimates, the average values of the importance of each component of the tourism product for each age-sex group were calculated. The results are shown in Table 9.

Table 9: Average values of evaluation of importance for consumers of components of a tourism product "excursion tour"

Components of the tourism product	Women			Men		
	15-34	35-54	aged 55 and over	15-34	35-54	aged 55 and over
1.1. Excursion sites	3.02	3.29	3.28	3.13	3.22	3.00
1.2. Guide's work	3.06	3.17	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.15
1.3. Tour organization	3.21	3.44	3.43	3.40	3.39	3.08
1.4. Infrastructure	3.19	3.25	3.26	3.23	3.14	3.00

The tour components, which obtained the highest average score for this category of consumers, are highlighted in yellow in the table. As is seen, for tourists of any sex and age the most important component of an excursion tour is the tour organization, including how clearly the excursion program, accommodation and meals, leisure activities for tourists were arranged, how optimal was the time of the tour as a whole and the time spent at specific sites, how comfortable and safe were the vehicles used for transporting tourists to the region and transfers.

This conclusion is of significant importance for travel agencies, since the tour organization depends on the agency's efforts more than the rest of the components of the tourism product. This makes it possible to form a competitive tourism product even when there is a shortage of places of interest or the tourism infrastructure is imperfect.

The guide's work is the second most important component of an excursion tour (table cells highlighted in blue) in the opinion of men of all ages. Middle-aged and elderly women chose excursion sites as the second most important component. The state of tourism infrastructure is not a particularly significant factor of the

tour attractiveness in the region, except for young women. Although, it should be noted that the differences among the estimates of the hotel components of the tour are not so significant for all consumers, ranging from 3 to 3.45 points, i.e. in general all components for their perception are assessed as important.

The next stage was to assess the significance of individual elements of the tourism product on a ten-point scale. The average values in the studied age-sex groups were also calculated. The results are shown in Table 10.

Table 10: Average estimates of significance for consumers of the elements of the tourism product "excursion tour"

Item No.	Elements of the tourism product	Women			Men		
		Aged 15-34	Aged 35-54	Aged 55 and over	Aged 15-34	Aged 35-54	Aged 55 and over
1.	Educative/cultural/spiritual value of the places of interest	8.45	8.61	8.96	8.34	8.31	7.69
2.	Accessibility of sites for review	8.15	8.23	8.51	7.92	7.46	7.77
3.	Selection of excursion sites and logical order of their display	7.18	7.89	7.91	7.79	7.46	6.77
4.	Information richness and content-richness of the guide's speech	8.44	8.55	8.25	8.47	8.40	7.69
5.	Optimal clarity and loudness of the guide's speech	8.02	8.35	8.58	8.06	7.57	7.19
6.	Figurative and impressive speech of the guide	7.91	8.55	8.53	7.55	7.91	7.96
7.	Getting feedback from tourists	7.00	8.32	7.77	7.45	8.34	7.77
8.	Enough free time at sites	7.44	7.84	8.17	7.96	7.66	7.35
9.	The level of comfort of vehicles used for transporting tourists to the region and excursion transfers	7.95	9.73	8.55	7.77	8.00	7.85
10.	Safety of vehicles used for transporting tourists to the region and excursion transfers	8.56	8.69	8.72	8.53	8.20	7.92
11.	Organization of the route of the tourist group, accommodation and meals along the route	8.38	8.44	8.57	8.02	7.94	8.04
12.	The manner of the attendant's interaction with tourists and employees of the sites	8.36	8.39	8.47	8.45	7.71	7.77
13.	Quality of hotel services	8.55	8.27	8.11	7.79	7.54	7.58
14.	Quality of meals and catering services	8.42	8.32	8.30	8.28	7.54	7.50
15.	Possible leisure activities	7.13	6.68	7.34	7.30	6.77	6.38
16.	Accessibility of facilities necessary to meet the tourists' hygienic needs near the sites	8.07	8.19	8.38	8.19	7.46	8.27
17.	Points of sale of tourism products near the sites	6.16	6.39	6.00	7.17	6.57	5.81

The presented data show gender differences of consumers in the evaluation of the same elements of tourism products. For clarity, the highest average estimates given by consumers of a particular age-sex group to the estimated element of the tourism product are highlighted in orange, and the lower ones – in green.

The table shows that 16 out of 17 elements of the tourism product "excursion tour" are much more important for women as a whole than for men. Moreover, in most cases, the difference between the highest and lowest estimates is more than one point.

The results of the study show that for women the significance of most elements of the tourism product increases with age, while for men it decreases with age. For example, women of the retirement age assessed the importance of 10 out of 17 tour elements higher than all other categories of consumers, while men aged 55 and over assessed the importance of 9 out of 17 elements lower than

all other respondents. At the same time, young women assessed the importance of only two elements higher than all other respondents, while young men assessed only two elements lower than the others.

The obtained data allow drawing a conclusion that, in general, women become more demanding consumers with age, demanding of many aspects of a tourism product and services, while men, on the contrary, become less demanding tourists with age.

Based on the same data, let us analyze the significance of various elements of the tourism product for the studied categories of consumers. For this purpose, for each age-sex group, one can select the elements that obtained the lowest average estimates of significance (green color), as well as three elements that obtained the highest estimates of significance (yellow, blue and violet in 1, 2 and 3 places, respectively) in Table 11.

Table 11: Average estimates of significance for consumers of the elements of the tourism product "excursion tour"

Item No.	Elements of the tourism product	Women			Men		
		Aged 15-34	Aged 35-54	Aged 55 and over	Aged 15-34	Aged 35-54	Aged 55 and over
1.	Educative/cultural/spiritual value of the places of interest	8.45	8.61	8.96	8.34	8.31	7.69
2.	Accessibility of sites for review	8.15	8.23	8.51	7.92	7.46	7.77
3.	Selection of excursion sites and logical order of their display	7.18	7.89	7.91	7.79	7.46	6.77
4.	Information richness and content-richness of the guide's speech	8.44	8.55	8.25	8.47	8.40	7.69
5.	Optimal clarity and loudness of the guide's speech	8.02	8.35	8.58	8.06	7.57	7.19
6.	Figurative and impressive speech of the guide	7.91	8.55	8.53	7.55	7.91	7.96
7.	Getting feedback from tourists	7.00	8.32	7.77	7.45	8.34	7.77

8.	Enough free time at sites	7.44	7.84	8.17	7.96	7.66	7.35
9.	The level of comfort of vehicles used for transporting tourists to the region and excursion transfers	7.95	9.73	8.55	7.77	8.00	7.85
10.	Safety of vehicles used for transporting tourists to the region and excursion transfers	8.56	8.69	8.72	8.53	8.20	7.92
11.	Organization of the route of the tourist group, accommodation and meals along the route	8.38	8.44	8.57	8.02	7.94	8.04
12.	The manner of the attendant's interaction with tourists and employees of the sites	8.36	8.39	8.47	8.45	7.71	7.77
13.	Quality of hotel services	8.55	8.27	8.11	7.79	7.54	7.58
14.	Quality of meals and catering services	8.42	8.32	8.30	8.28	7.54	7.50
15.	Possible leisure activities	7.13	6.68	7.34	7.30	6.77	6.38
16.	Accessibility of facilities necessary to meet the tourists' hygienic needs near the sites	8.07	8.19	8.38	8.19	7.46	8.27
17.	Points of sale of tourism products near the sites	6.16	6.39	6.00	7.17	6.57	5.81

Obviously, the availability of points of sale of tourism products near the sites is the least significant element of the tourism product absolutely for all categories of consumers. 5 elements were not assessed as priority ones by all the age-sex groups. These are as follows:

- accessibility of excursion sites for review;
- selection of excursion sites and logical order of their display;
- enough free time at the site;
- quality of meals and catering services;

- possible leisure activities.
- All other elements were assessed as priority ones by 1-4 groups of tourists. For clarity, let us display these elements in separate Table 12, where they are correlated with those components of the tourism product to which they relate and, instead of average points, assigned ranks reflecting significance for this group (1 – the most significant element, 2 – the second most significant element, etc.).

Table 12: The most significant elements of the tourism product for different categories of consumers

Elements of the tourism product	Women			Men		
	Aged 15-34	Aged 35-54	Aged 55 and over	Aged 15-34	Aged 35-54	Aged 55 and over
Excursion sites						
Educative/cultural/spiritual value of the places of interest	3	3	1		3	
Guide's work						
Information richness and content-richness of the guide's speech				2	1	
Optimal clarity and loudness of the guide's speech			2			
Figurative and impressive speech of the guide						3
Getting feedback from tourists					2	
Tour organization						
The level of comfort of vehicles used for transporting tourists to the region and excursion transfers		1				
Safety of vehicles used for transporting tourists to the region and excursion transfers	1	2		1		
Organization of the route of the tourist group, accommodation and meals along the route			3			2
The manner of the attendant's interaction with tourists and employees of the sites				3		
Infrastructure						
Quality of hotel services	2					
Accessibility of facilities necessary to meet the tourists' hygienic needs near the sites						1

Table 12 shows that most elements that determine the attractiveness of an excursion tour refer to the component "Tour organization". This is not surprising, since it was previously established that the tour organization is the most significant component of the tourism product for absolutely all categories of customers. The safety of vehicles used for transporting tourists to the region and transfers is among the elements of the organization that are of the greatest importance. This factor is the most significant for young people of both sexes. People of the retirement age of both sexes indicate the organization of the route of the tourist group, accommodation and meals along the route as the priority factors.

The educative/cultural/spiritual value of the excursion sites was assessed as one of the most significant elements by women of all

ages and this significance becomes paramount for them with age in comparison with other elements of the tourism product.

Various indicators of the guide's work are priority elements for men of all ages. Young and middle-aged men note the information richness and content-richness of the guide's speech as an important factor, while pensioners are demanding of figurative and impressive speech. The guide's work is not high-priority for women, only in the retirement age, they raise requirements for clarity and loudness of the guide's speech.

Infrastructure elements have the least impact on consumers' perception. Only young women consider the quality of hotel services particularly important, while elderly men – accessibility of facilities necessary to meet the tourists' hygienic needs near the sites.

The third task of the conducted sociological research was to divide all elements of the tourism product into impression-forming and consumption-covering. This task was the most difficult: in the conduct of pilot versions of the questionnaire survey, it became clear that the respondents do not always understand what is required of them. This part of the questionnaire was repeatedly processed and, as a result, respondents were asked to choose from the general list of elements those elements that most of all shape their impression of the tour and determine how much they liked it. But still in separate groups of consumers, where the survey was formalized and not accompanied by comments and explanations of the questionnaire developers, the results were not quite adequate. For example, the optimal clarity and loudness of the guide's speech cannot form an independent positive impression by definition: if this is only a necessary condition to bring the necessary information to the tourists. Tourists may like or may not like this information and the manner of its presentation. If the guide's speech was clear, it can only not spoil the impression.

Nevertheless, in each group from 11 to 24 people referred it to the number of impression-forming elements.

Therefore, it is proposed to divide the elements of the tourism product "excursion tour" into impression-forming and consumption-covering ones as a whole for the studied population without taking into account the division into age-sex groups. To implement such division, it is necessary to:

- calculate the total number of times that each specific element was identified by respondents as impression-forming;
- compare this number with the half of the studied population (166 people);
- if the difference is positive, i.e. more than half of the respondents noted this element, then it can be identified as impression-forming;
- if the difference is negative, i.e. less than half of the respondents identified it as impression-forming, then it can be identified as consumption-covering.

Let us summarize the results in Table 13.

Table 13: Distribution of the elements of the tourism product "excursion tour" into impression-forming and consumption-covering ones

Item No.	Elements of the tourism product	The number of respondents who identified this element as impression-forming, people	Half of the sampled population, people	Exceeding the half, people	Type of the element
1.	Educative/cultural/spiritual value of the places of interest	244	166	78	Impression-forming
2.	Accessibility of sites for review	176	166	10	Impression-forming
3.	Selection of excursion sites and logical order of their display	172	166	6	Impression-forming
4.	Information richness and content-richness of the guide's speech	205	166	39	Impression-forming
5.	Optimal clarity and loudness of the guide's speech	128	166	-38	Consumption-covering
6.	Figurative and impressive speech of the guide	171	166	5	Impression-forming
7.	Getting feedback from tourists	124	166	-42	Consumption-covering
8.	Enough free time at sites	136	166	-30	Consumption-covering
9.	The level of comfort of vehicles used for transporting tourists to the region and excursion transfers	191	166	25	Impression-forming
10.	Safety of vehicles used for transporting tourists to the region and excursion transfers	157	166	-9	Consumption-covering
11.	Organization of the route of the tourist group, accommodation and meals along the route	165	166	-1	Consumption-covering
12.	The manner of the attendant's interaction with tourists and employees of the sites	127	166	-39	Consumption-covering
13.	Quality of hotel services	214	166	48	Impression-forming
14.	Quality of meals and catering services	185	166	19	Impression-forming
15.	Possible leisure activities	115	166	-51	Consumption-covering
16.	Accessibility of	161	166	-5	Consumption-

	facilities necessary to meet the tourists' hygienic needs near the sites				covering
17.	Points of sale of tourism products near the sites	85	166	-81	Consumption-covering

Table 13 shows that the following elements of the tourism product "excursion tour" are impression-forming:

1. Educative/cultural/spiritual value of the places of interest
2. Accessibility of sites for review
3. Selection of excursion sites and logical order of their display
4. Information richness and content-richness of the guide's speech
5. Figurative and impressive speech of the guide
6. The level of comfort of vehicles used for transporting tourists to the region and excursion transfers
7. Quality of hotel services
8. Quality of meals and catering services

All other elements were identified as consumption-covering, in particular:

1. Optimal clarity and loudness of the guide's speech
2. Getting feedback from tourists
3. Enough free time at sites
4. Safety of vehicles used for transporting tourists to the region and excursion transfers
5. Organization of the route of the tourist group, accommodation and meals along the route
6. The manner of the attendant's interaction with tourists and employees of the sites
7. Possible leisure activities
8. Accessibility of facilities necessary to meet the tourists' hygienic needs near the sites
9. Points of sale of tourism products near the sites

5. Conclusion

The metatheoretical study of the tourism system of the Volgograd Region allowed determining the system characteristics of the tourism relations of the region. The tourism industry of the Volgograd Region is focused on target groups of Russian schoolchildren and students, descendants of participants of the Great Patriotic War, as well as family and transit tourists who perceive the Volgograd Region as a crossroad of civilizations through which the most important trade routes passed since ancient times. Here was a political center of the Golden Horde and later the history of the Cossacks began. The turning events of the Civil and Great Patriotic Wars took place in the territory of the Volgograd Region. They are served by: accommodation, food, transport enterprises; tourist-entertaining, museum, sports and fitness centers; religious monasteries; business centers; cultural and recreational facilities and places of public entertainment; excursion-information services that rely on the tourist potential: of natural parks; cultural-historical and ethnographic sights; Orthodox churches; Muslim mosques, Catholic churches, Lutheran churches, synagogues; a large number of military-historical sites.

Infrastructure enterprises are focused on satisfying the corresponding clients' demand for emotionally charged, demanded quality tours. The activities of these enterprises are optimized by organizations that control tourism activities in the region. They contribute to: an increase in the tourist flow and improvement of the quality of the provided tourism services; the monitoring of the use of the natural and cultural-historical heritage of the Volgograd Region; the creation in the Volgograd Region of the developed tourism industry that meets the needs of citizens in tourism services; adoption of regulatory acts on the development of tourism.

The tourism industry of the Volgograd Region institutionalizes an idea of patriotism, around which the worldview, moral ideals,

rules of person' behavior manifested in his/her actions and activities are formed.

The analysis of the scientific literature on tourism has revealed the lack of a common vision of the composition of a tourism product. As a result of the focused interview with an expert group, the following components of the tourism product "excursion tour" have been identified: excursion sites; guide's work; tour organization; infrastructure. The following components of the tourism product "excursion" have been selected: excursion sites; guide's work; excursion organization.

31 elements of the tourism product "excursion tour" and 17 elements of the tourism product "excursion" were revealed as part of each component. They were grouped into 17 elements included in the questionnaire to assess the importance of each component and each element of the tourism product, as well as to divide the elements of the tourism product into types.

332 people living in the Volgograd Region and in other constituent territories of the Russian Federation have been surveyed. The participants were divided into 6 age-sex groups: young men and women (aged 15-34), middle-aged (aged 35-54) and elderly (aged 55 and over) in accordance with the age-sex structure of the population characteristic of the Russian Federation as a whole.

Based on the results of the questionnaire survey, the following results have been obtained, which will allow formulating a methodology of the integrated assessment of regional tourism products:

- average estimates of the importance of each component of the tourism product for each group of respondents were calculated;
- average estimates of the significance of each element of the tourism product for each group of respondents were calculated;
- all the elements of the tourism product are divided into impression-forming (those elements, on the perception of which the tourist's impressions and his/her assessment of the tourism product as a whole largely depend) and consumption-covering ones (those "technical" elements that are necessary to achieve the purpose of a trip, but they do not form a positive impression of it).

Besides, the results of the questionnaire survey made it possible to identify gender and age-specific features of tourists' preferences, which should be taken into account when developing a competitive tourism product:

- For tourists of any gender and age, the tour organization is the most important component of the excursion tour. The guide's work is the second most important component of the excursion tour for men of all ages. Excursion sites are the second most important component for middle-aged and elderly women;
- Women become more demanding consumers with age, demanding of many aspects of tourism products and services, while men, on the contrary, become less demanding tourists with age;
- Safety of vehicles used for transporting tourists to the region and excursion transfers is among the elements of the organization that are of the greatest importance for young people of both sexes. People of the retirement age of both sexes identify the organization of the route of the tourist group, accommodation and meals along the route as the priority factors;
- The educative/cultural/spiritual value of excursion sites was identified by women of all ages as the most significant elements, and with age, this significance becomes high-priority for them in comparison with other elements of the tourism

product.

- Various indicators of the guide's work are priority elements for men of all ages. The guide's work is not high-priority for women, only in the retirement age, they raise requirements for clarity and loudness of the guide's speech.

The questionnaire made it possible to divide all the elements of the tourism product "excursion tour" into groups. Impression-forming elements are: the educative/cultural/spiritual value of places of interest; accessibility of sites for review; selection of excursion sites and logical order of their display; information richness and content-richness of the guide's speech; figurative and impressive speech of the guide; the level of comfort of vehicles used for transporting tourists to the region and excursions; quality of hotel services; quality of meals and catering services.

Consumer-covering elements include: optimal clarity and loudness of the guide's speech; getting feedback from sightseers; sufficient time spent at sites; the safety of vehicles used for transporting tourists to the region and excursions; organization of the route for the tourist group, accommodation and meals along the route; the manner of the attendant's interaction with tourists and employees of the sites; possible leisure activities; accessibility of facilities necessary to meet the hygienic needs of tourists; points of sale of tourism products near the sites.

Different evaluation criteria are applicable to each type of elements. These criteria will be used in the methodology for the integrated assessment of regional tourism products.

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