

Holiday Arrangements of Domestic Tourists in Kyrgyzstan: Sample of Bishkek City

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Abstract

In our days, just as tourism industry has the same importance in world economy as oil and automobile industry, tourism sector also has a good potential for Kyrgyzstan. However, all tourism activities are for foreign tourists coming to our country, so domestic tourism and domestic tourists are ignored. For the development of the tourism sector in every respect, both international and domestic tourists holiday arrangements must be taken into account. In order to identify holiday arrangements of the country's domestic tourists and the types of holiday they prefer and to determine the famous destinations of domestic tourists, 100 domestic tourists were chosen by random selection method for a questionnaire.

1. Introduction

In the last years, the scope, value and context of international tourism and domestic tourism have transformed at a certain level. Economic benefits such as employment, foreign exchange inflow, income and taxes that are formed by domestic tourism and international tourism (Nowak et al., 2003) make the developed and developing countries dependent on tourism and incite them to realize every kind of development programs (Heidarabadi, 2008).

In many countries of the world, tourism is a sector which develops dynamically, and its role in the world economy constantly increases. Although tourism sector only has 7 % share of the world capital, its total endorsement comes just after the oil and automobile endorsement. The tourism budget involves about four trillion USD dollars in the world, and the tourism sector forms the main item in the budget of countries. International tourism is the most labour-intensive sector of the world economy. Today, one out of ever ten people works in the tourism sector (Драчева, 2010, 568). Tourism, in most of the developing countries, thanks to its characteristic of gaining foreign exchange, attracts attention as one of the most effective alternatives in financing the foreign trade and the industry (Yarcan, 1994).

It is known that there is a common view that has formed about domestic tourism. Domestic tourism doesn't bring foreign exchange as much as international tourism and it is very sensitive to domestic pricing, therefore the attraction of domestic tourism doesn't become appealing in this regard (Mendiretta, 2011). Namely, given domestic tourists, we should change our views which we utilize while looking at foreign tourists coming from abroad. The development of the country tourism depends on the development of domestic tourism as well as increasing the number of foreign tourists coming to the country. The domestic tourism trends form the industry's development dynamics. Success can not be expected from the countries which don't present holiday opportunity to its citizens within the country and don't meet holiday requirement of them. The presence and potential of the domestic tourism demand and the realization of the demand decrease the dependence of the tourism industry on foreign markets and firms, and provide assurance for healthy development and independence of the tourism industry (Gökdeniz, 2004)

The tourism industry is one of the fast developing and leading sectors of the economy of our country. Moreover, it is clear that the tourism sector may be a good alternative for Kyrgyzstan which hasn't got a developed production sector as in Japan, China or the USA. The tourism sector develops day by day. This development enlarges with the increase in the number of the accommodation companies and of the education centres giving tourism education. In addition, with supports given by various associations of the country, the development of tourism is aimed. For example, according to the information given by the National Statistics Committee, while the total 160 accommodation companies were working in 2011, this number was exceeding 190 in 2012. It's evident that Kyrgyzstan cannot completely use the tourism potential though it has got a certain development dynamic (SIAR research & consulting, 2012).

We can say that less work has been made for domestic tourism in forming the tourism policy carried out in our country. On the other side, it must be remembered that domestic tourism is underdeveloped is connected to cultural, social and political properties of the country as well.

2. Literature Review

According to the "Recommendations for Tourism Statistics" published in 1994 by the USA, tourism is generally classified as inbound (incoming foreign tourists) tourism, outbound (the country sends tourists to other countries) tourism and domestic tourism (<http://ianbek.kg/?p=1128>).

Domestic tourism includes the tourism actions made inside the boundaries of a country or inside a certain region. Why domestic tourism is prevalent in almost all countries of the world is that the preparation of visa operations is not necessary within the country.

The domestic tourism volume differs from country to country. The size of the country, the availability of unique touristic destinations within the country, the availability of historical places and the arrangements of the State make big impact on this difference (Александрова, 2002). The advertising activities carried out in the country, the availability of laws encouraging domestic tourists to travel inside the country and the support programs towards enterprises for domestic tourists affect the volume of domestic tourism.

The tourism researchers have recently started to develop the domestic tourism phenomenon especially in the developing countries (Scheyvens, 2002, Rogerson and Zoleka). Moreover, in the global economic crisis in the year 2008, when tourists preferred making holiday inside the country to holiday abroad, that domestic tourism is an important sector was proven once more (Доолотбекова, 2011).

According to the State Project the tourism development program until 2017 made by Department of Tourism the problems of the tourism sector in Kyrgyzstan are summarized below (deptourism.gov.kg/departamentom).

- After 2010, in tourism market of Kyrgyzstan, with respect to the number of visitors to Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Russia take the first two places, and Uzbekistan comes after them as the third. In the summer season of the year 2013, it was seen that the flow of Kazakhstani tourists forming the basic tourist flow of the summer term decreased. This event depends on that Kazakhstan carries out operations to turn its domestic tourists into its own domestic tourism destinations by using every kind of administrative-technical sets and also on information campaign it carried out to decrease the competitive power of Kyrgyz tourism. Russian Federation has been making important works to develop its own new touristic regions such as "Golden ring" and "Green ring". This leads to Kyrgyz tourism to lose its tourists coming from these countries.

- The touristic activity of neighboring countries reveals the threat of decreasing the flow of tourists who will come to Kyrgyzstan. Political and social events in other countries directly affect the formation of the image of Kyrgyzstan and its touristic attractiveness.

- Effective works have not been performed for Kyrgyzstan to gain new tourism markets since the beginning of the independence period. Due to the inadequacy of the State budget, advertising activities for introducing Kyrgyzstan as a touristic destination outside the country boundaries can not be made commercially.

- At the present day, negative information about Kyrgyzstan is available in terms of the internet connections. This shows Kyrgyzstan as unstable and dangerous country from the viewpoint of other countries.
- That it is geographically placed far from countries producing tourists, that transportation and communication are underdeveloped, that it hasn't got its own airport and that it has high costs of transportation in arranging the tour packages prevent the tourism sector from actively developing.
- The inadequacy of the middle class accommodation companies, the lack of the service enterprises along the road (motel, food and drink enterprises, public areas and road signs) and the incompetency of the specialization accommodation companies for people who like adventure and the inadequacy in tourism and of sport and entertainment mega-centres and transportation tools create complexity in the development of tourism.
- Underdevelopment of the tourism infrastructure in regions. The large part of them is not in satisfactory level. The quality of services cannot respond to the desired price and to the demanded standards.
- The problems mentioned above are not only one of the tourism sector. By eliminating these problems and changing our weak sides to the strong way, to develop the tourism sector in our country is possible.

Importance of Domestic Tourism for Kyrgyzstan

As we mentioned above, the efforts of neighbouring countries, which form the main tourist flow of Kyrgyzstan, to develop their domestic tourism cause the tourist flow to our country to greatly decrease.

Even if domestic tourism can't give significant flow of foreign exchange as much as the inbound tourism, it presents many advantages like the facility of forming new business places, the development of the general infrastructure, the development of rural regions, the increase in taxes due to economic activity and the chance of native population to arrive in new and interesting destinations.

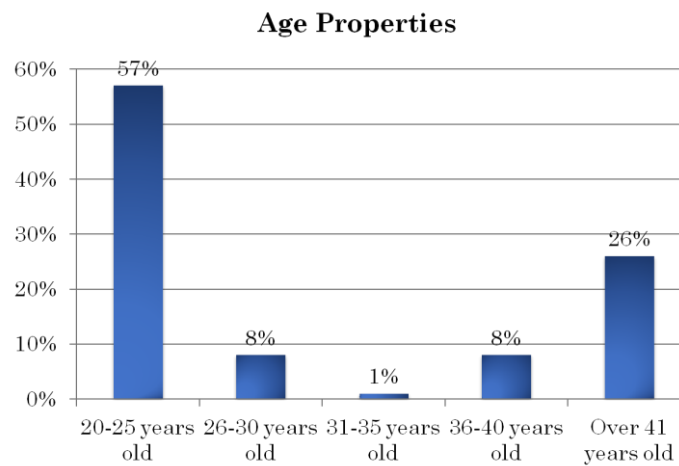
If foreign tourists are to choose the types of "home holiday" as in global economic crisis in 2008, the tourism enterprises in our country will be obliged to look for new market. Hereby domestic tourists will form new market for the tourism enterprises. Another way of developing domestic tourism is to provide the importance of tourism to be understood among native population, to provide them to understand that Kyrgyzstan is a beautiful destination and to be proud of their country.

3. Methodology and Model

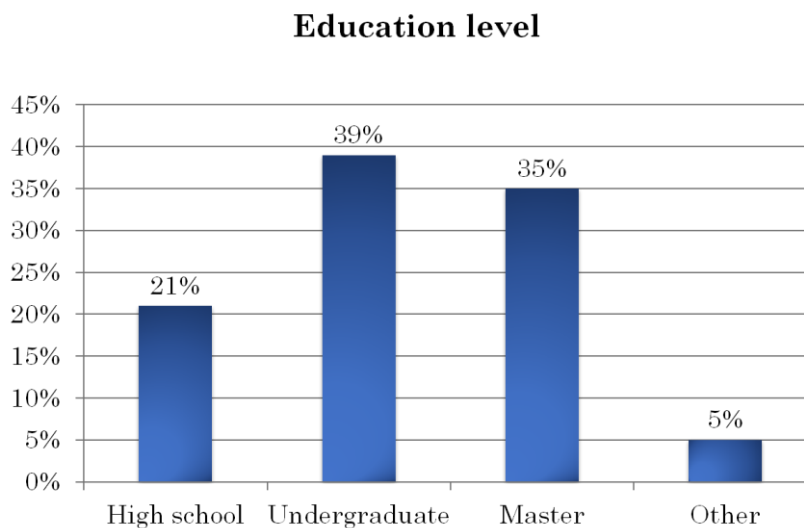
In this study, by taking the importance of the tourism sector for Kyrgyzstan into consideration, we will try to determine the holiday habits of domestic tourists and to show the development dynamics of domestic tourism. In addition, it is aimed to explain changes in requests of domestic tourists and to make some recommendations to enterprises serving in the tourism sector. The research is in descriptive model. The subject matter of the research is the potential tourists of Kyrgyzstan. The questionnaire was applied to 100 potential tourists selected with the convenience sampling method. In the research, tendencies of people living in the city of Bishkek towards holiday arrangements were tried to be determined by applying the data set composed of 18 questions and getting primary data.

4. Findings

It turned out that the 32 % of respondents meeting the questionnaire were male and 68 % of them female. If we take demographical situation in the country into account, this information is not surprising.

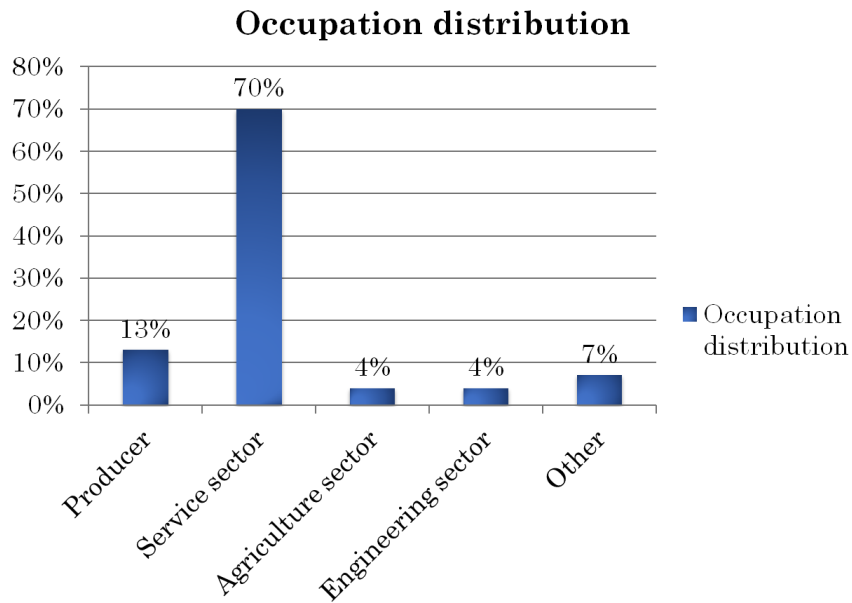


1st Graphic: Age properties of respondents



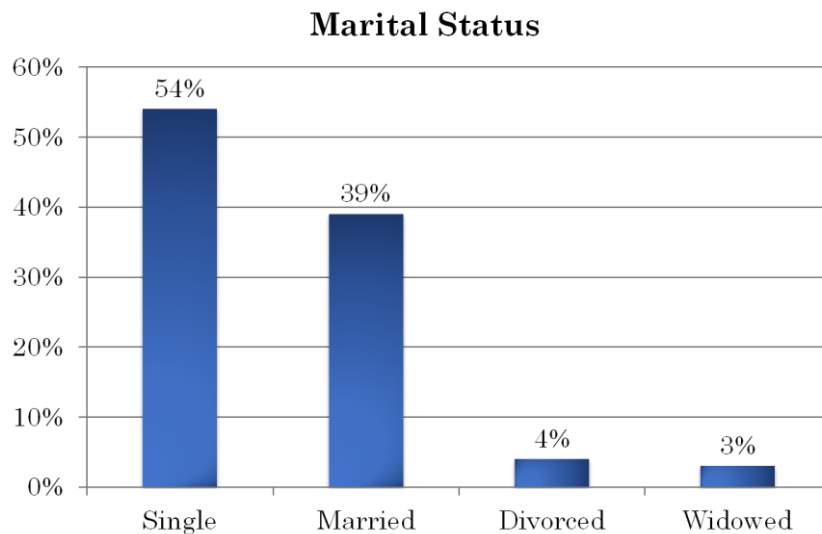
2nd Graphic: Education level of respondents

We can see that 35 % and 39 % of those attending the questionnaire are respondents who have undergraduate and master degree. This information shows that the citizens of the country have high education level. This situation greatly affects the travelling habits and travelling properties. In addition, we can see that the large part of the respondents is the young. In terms of tourism, we can say that this situation leads to new travelling and the development of holiday making habits and especially the potential of increasing the level of service in tourism sector.

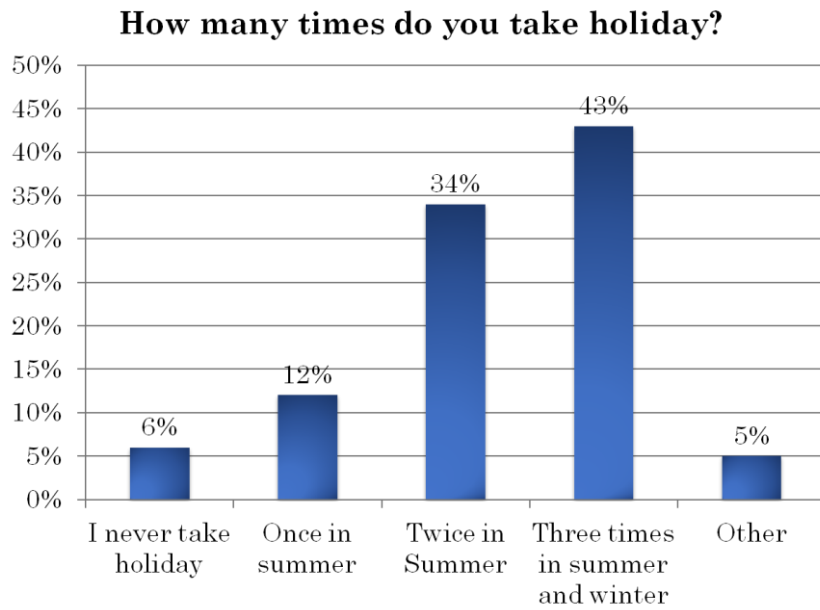


3rd Graphic: Occupation distribution of respondents

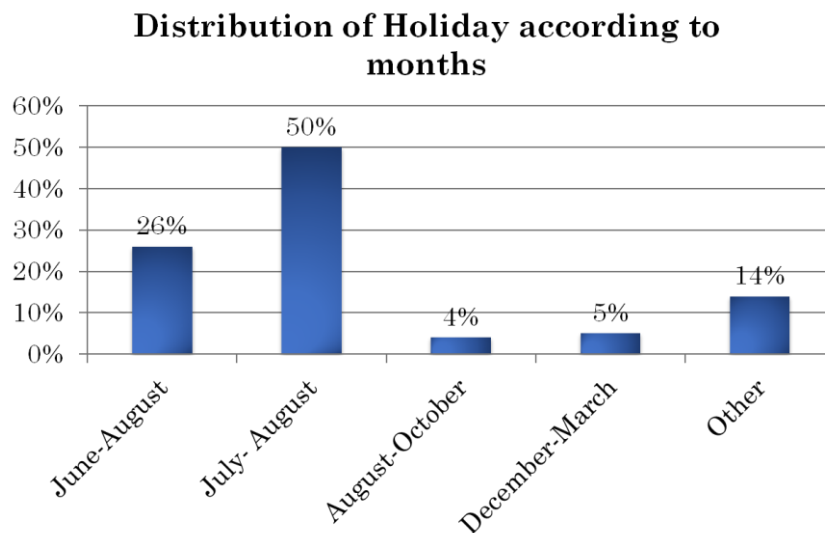
It is apparent for everybody that the agriculture and animal feeding sector is superior in Kyrgyzstan. However, it's seen that most of attendants of the questionnaire are those working in service sector. This situation can be explained with that the city-dwellers have mostly attended the questionnaire.



4th Graphic: Marital statuses of Respondents

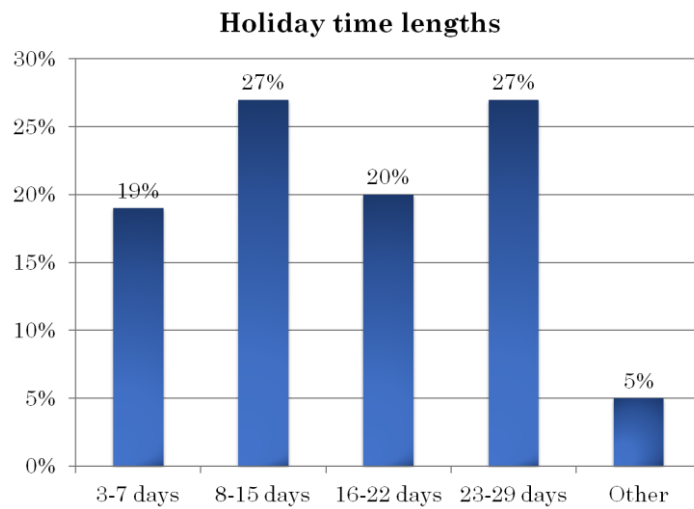


5th Graphic: How many times do domestic tourists take holiday in a year?



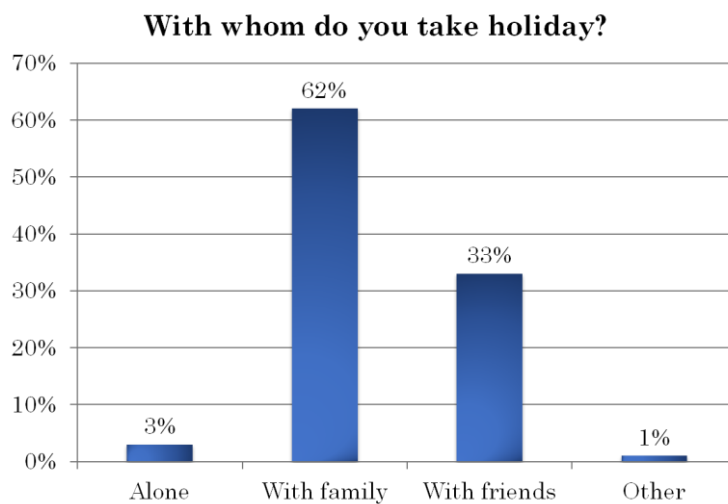
6th Graphic: Distribution of holiday according to months

A great majority of respondents have stated that they take holiday in the summer. This situation can be explained with that all schools and universities take holiday in the summer. As seen below, since the family vacation is adopted in our country, the elder members of the family try to arrange holiday when children take holiday. Another reason is that the most suitable holiday time for Kyrgyzstan, which lives four seasons, is the summer season.



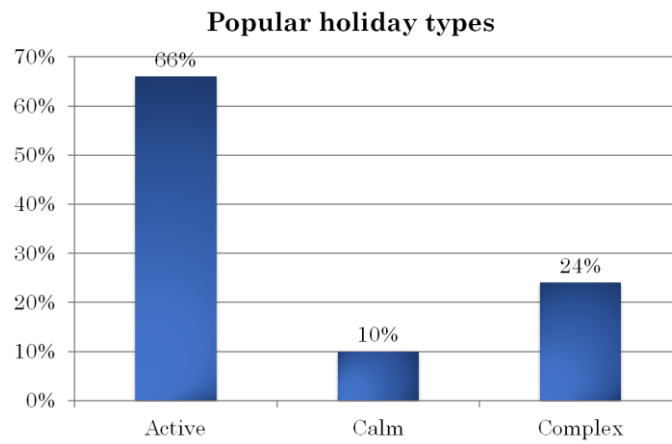
7th Graphic: Holiday time lengths of respondents

It was determined that the longest holiday was that of the young group between 20-25 years old. The group of those taking holiday more than 1 month is shown in the other part having the least percentage. When we take the country economy into consideration at the present day, it's apparent that the citizens of the country haven't got enough money to take long time holiday.

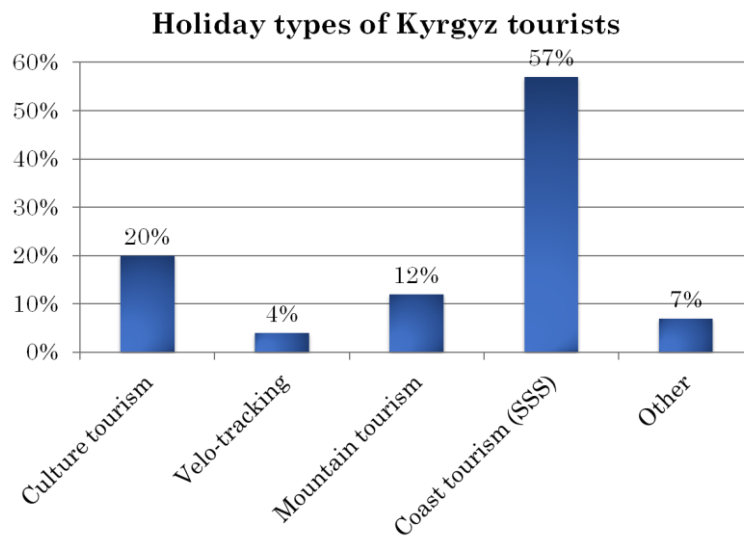


8th Graphic: With whom do domestic tourists take their holiday?

As we have mentioned above, Kyrgyzstan is a country regarding the value of family as high. The information that 62 % of the attendants take holiday with their family proves this, but we must state that in the last times the young and our divorced citizens take their holiday mostly with their friends.

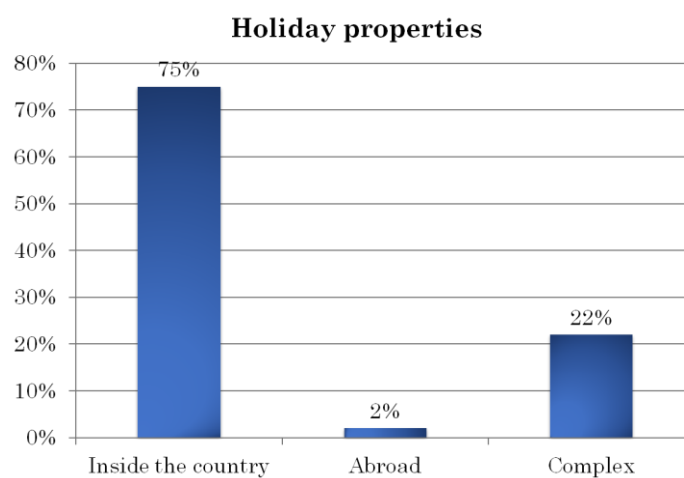


9th Graphic: Holiday types of Kyrgyz tourists



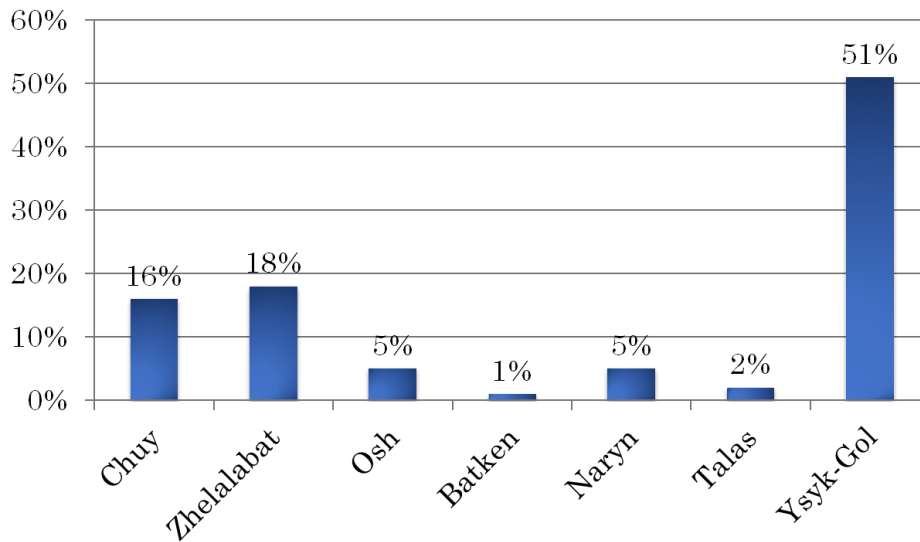
10th Graphic: Popular tourism types among domestic tourists

The sea, sun and sand tourism come first with a great portion (57 %). Now that our citizens choose the complex of active and calm holiday types, it means that this holiday type can response to their wishes.



11th Graphic: Domestic and foreign holiday numbers

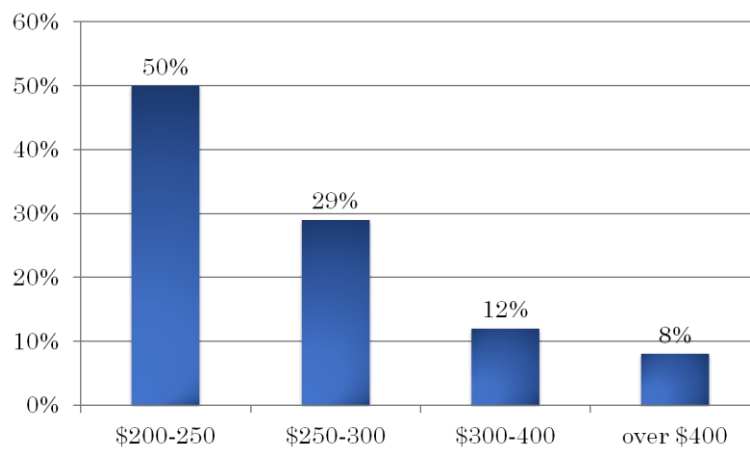
Distribution of holiday



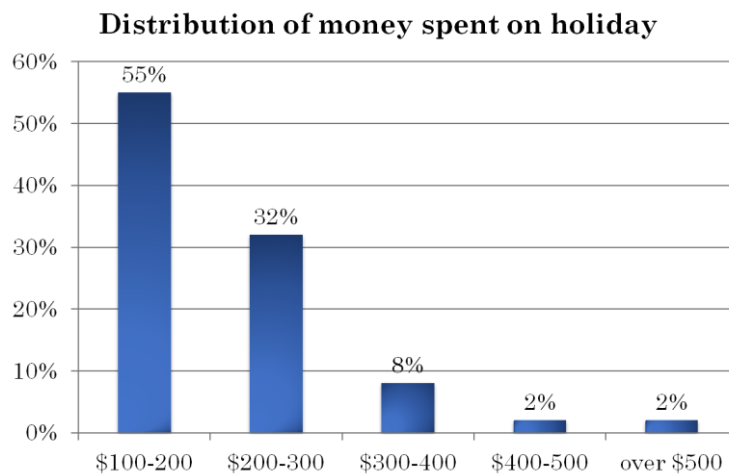
12th Graphic: Distribution of holiday according to regions of Kyrgyzstan

Since the favorite of popular tourism types given above and the largest region having coastal holiday facilities are Isık-Göl (Isık Lake), it has turned out that Isık-Göl is the dearest holiday destination of our citizens. This situation can be explained with that in our country the most popular holiday type is coastal tourism. For domestic tourism to develop balancedly, to introduce the holiday destinations taking place in other regions of Kyrgyzstan is compulsory as well.

Monthly wages of respondents

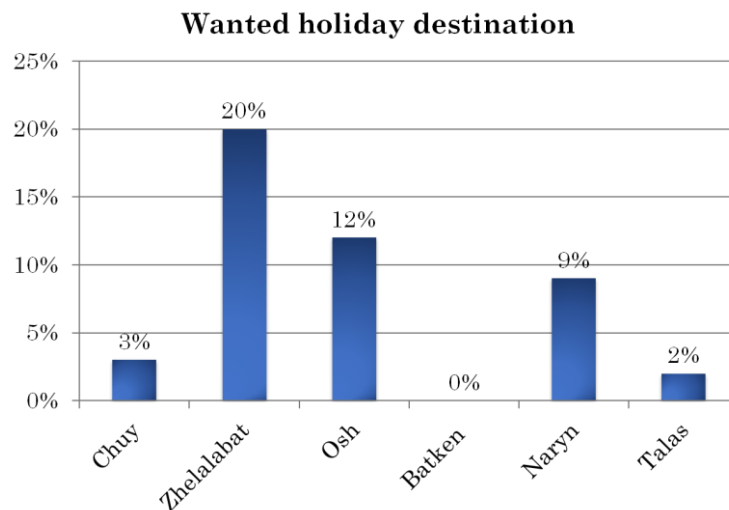


13th Graphic: Monthly wages of respondents



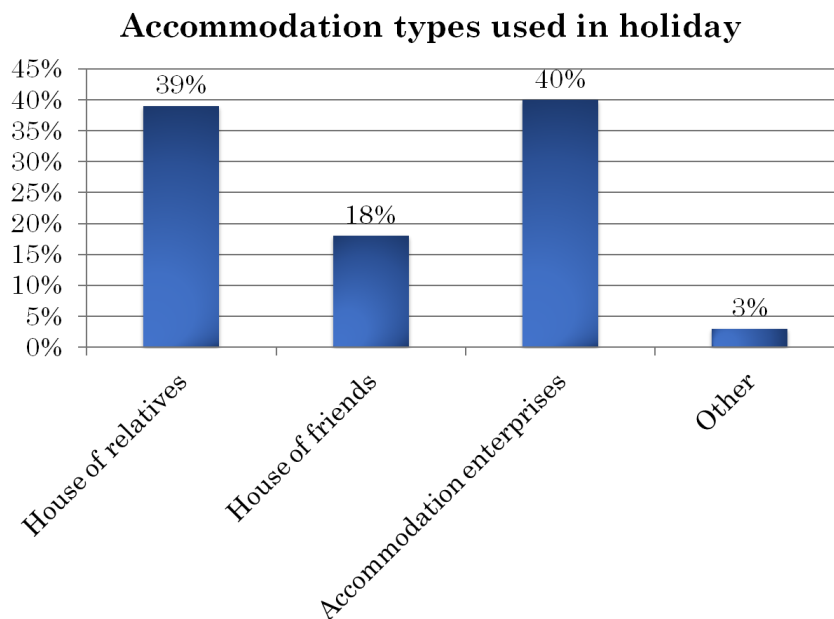
14th Graphic: Distribution of money spent on holiday

When we take into account that monthly wages in the country are more or less 200 dollars, it’s very normal that monthly budget of the large part of the people is 200-250 dollars. This number also provides the money spent on holiday to be around 100-200 dollars.



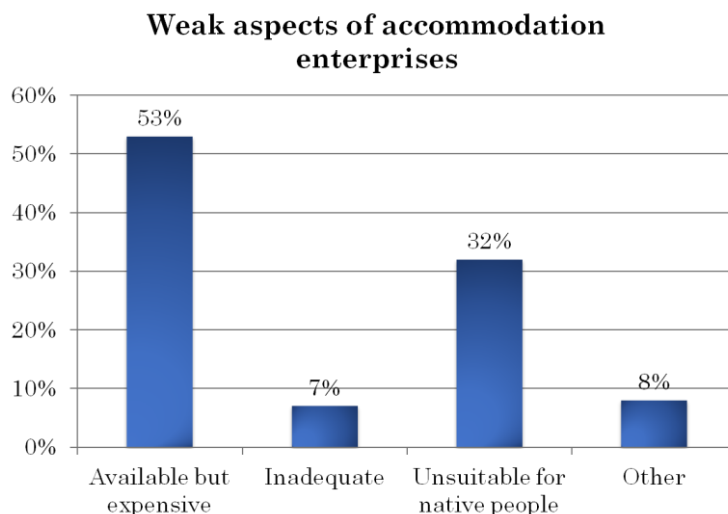
15th Graphic: Holiday areas wanted to go

We see that as destinations wanted to go Isık-Göl comes first and after that, Celalabat comes. Just as residents of almost all southern regions have shown desire to take holiday in ısık-Göl, residents in the north of the country have shown desire to travel to southern regions.



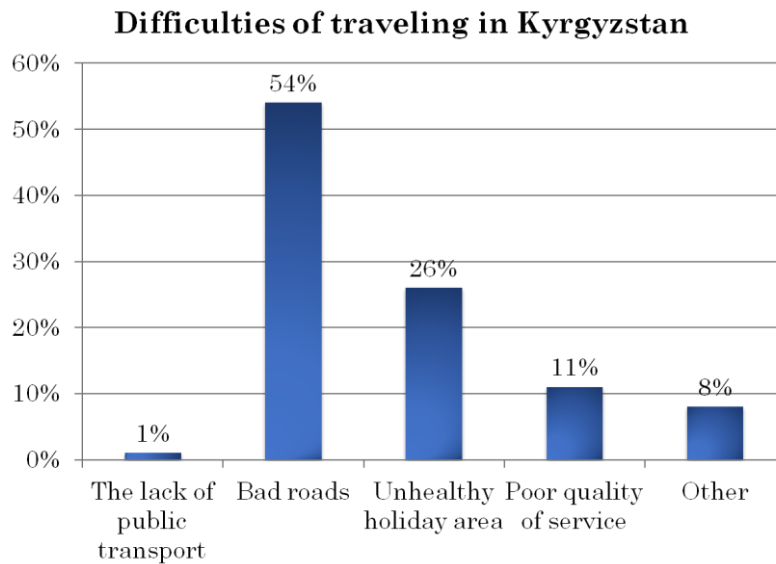
16th Graphic: Accommodation types used in the course of holiday

To explain one reason why the volume of the money spent in the course of holiday is not much is possible with this graphic. We can see that during holiday the numbers of tourists staying in accommodation enterprises and in the house of relatives are almost the same. Although the selection of the accommodation enterprises increases with each passing day, the great majority of tourists still prefer houses of their relatives and friends.



17th Graphic: Weak aspects of accommodation enterprises in our country according to respondents

As we stated in theoretical part of the research work, we see that the accommodation enterprises have been made convenient for foreign tourists rather than domestic tourists. One reason why domestic tourists have not preferred the accommodation enterprises during holiday can be this situation. It is understood that staying in the accommodation enterprises would cost much for domestic tourist.



18th Graphic: Difficulties of travelling in Kyrgyzstan

We read from all publications that touristic infrastructure of Kyrgyzstan is in low level. In the State tourism development programs, plans for developing infrastructure are made every year. However, the situation of roads is shown as a great difficulty of travelling in Kyrgyzstan. It is clear that the situation of roads create difficulties not only for domestic tourists but also for foreign tourists.

5. Summary and Conclusions

The participation of Kyrgyz people in tourism activities shows development in every respect. It is observed that these events increase, for example, in hospitalizing foreign tourists, in sending tourists abroad and in attending domestic tourism. Oil and automobile industry and information technologies being giant sectors of developed economies are almost unavailable in Kyrgyzstan. Developing tourism sector multi-directionally can be stated as one of the most important decisions for Kyrgyzstan.

As the analysis of the research data has shown, in our day it shows up that domestic tourism doesn't provide enough profit to the government and tourism enterprises. Because all tourism activities are foreign tourists oriented, domestic tourists try to arrange their holidays with their own efforts. Whereas, the large part of the people is oblivious of what beautiful and wonderful destinations are available in our country. When a few destinations are selected for holiday, prices are held high since these destinations' rivals are not available.

As a result, the potential of domestic tourism is great for the country, but the State and private enterprises have to work together to realize this potential through a comprehensive plan. The introduction of holiday areas of Kyrgyzstan should be made. As we can see from the results of the research, our citizens haven't got enough information about destinations other than major touristic places of Kyrgyzstan. The accommodation enterprises and tourism companies, which can response to needs of native people, should be established.

Another reason why domestic tourism potential is in inadequate level is that the country economy is in weak level. That the people may take holiday for long time and increase their expenses depend on that they can increase their income in the country they work. So wages of people working in the public sector should be increased.

Other than this, education should be advanced to be able to understand what the people regard as holiday and what the native people expect from holiday, which forms the basis of holiday arrangements of people. The State should make more detailed research about this subject and make similar studies in other cities as well, and focus on introducing touristic and cultural values.

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