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SOCIAL NETWORKS IN THE CONTEXT OF CURRENT TRENDS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TOURISM INDUSTRY

Sieci społecznościowe w kontekście aktualnych trendów w rozwoju branży turystycznej

Abstract

The article examines the role of social networks in promoting tourism products and services in a competitive environment to increase the efficiency of economic entities and meet the needs of consumers. It has been proven that the use of social networks allows for the implementation of the communication policy of travel companies, maximizes the functionality of the current communication system and reduces communication costs, which significantly increases efficiency and raises business to a new, higher level of development. The activity in social networks of different demographic groups is analyzed and the directions of popularization of tourist services depending on the audience of users are determined. It is substantiated that social networks are an effective marketing tool for promoting tourist services.

Keywords: *tourism, social networks, social media marketing, communications, digital technologies, Facebook, Instagram.*

Streszczenie:

W artykule przeanalizowano rolę sieci społecznościowych w promowaniu produktów i usług turystycznych w konkurencyjnym środowisku w celu zwiększenia efektywności podmiotów gospodarczych i zaspokojenia potrzeb konsumentów. Udowodniono, że wykorzystanie sieci społecznościowych pozwala na realizację polityki komunikacyjnej firm turystycznych, maksymalizuje funkcjonalność obecnego systemu komunikacji i obniża koszty komunikacji, co znacznie zwiększa efektywność i wznosi biznes na nowy, wyższy poziom rozwoju. Przeanalizowano aktywność w sieciach społecznościowych różnych grup demograficznych i określono kierunki popularyzacji usług turystycznych w zależności od grupy odbiorców. Uzasadniono, że sieci społecznościowe są skutecznym narzędziem marketingowym do promocji usług turystycznych.

Słowa kluczowe: *turystyka, sieci społecznościowe, komunikacja, marketing w mediach społecznościowych, technologie cyfrowe, Facebook, Instagram.*

Introduction

In the conditions of rapid development of innovative information and communication technologies, social networks are one of the effective strategic

tools for promoting tourist services in the tourist market. The image of tourist enterprises and destinations is formed through social networks, operative communication and exchange of information between the subjects of the tourist industry and consumers of tourist services are provided, which contributes to the quick satisfaction of the personal requirements of tourists. The use of digital technologies has led to global changes in the business environment, which help to improve business activity, reduce the duration of individual cycles of business processes, reduce costs and more. Participants in the tourism market interact in conditions that are dynamically changing and require constant adaptation.

The Internet has become a mass phenomenon with wide business opportunities due to the growing audience of Internet users, the number of media access to the network, expanding the capabilities of Internet providers, increasing the speed of the Internet, and stabilizing traffic. In recent years, the number of users of the global Internet has grown significantly, and the volume of the Internet services market has increased accordingly. According to World Telecommunication, in 2021 4,9 billion people are Internet users. The number of Internet users in the world in 2021 compared to 2005 increased by 3,8 billion people and 900 million people exceeded the level of 2020, which indicates an increase in interest in the Internet environment. The use of Internet technologies allows for the implementation of the communication policy of travel companies, maximizes the functionality of the current communication system, and reduces communication costs, which significantly increases the efficiency of the tourism industry and raises the business to a new, higher level of development.

Research on problems of the urgency of use of social networks in the tourist industry, their role, and influence on the development of branches in current conditions are devoted to scientific achievements of many known scientists, among which V. Papp, N. Boshota¹, O. Radchenko², M. Rudneva³, M. Senkiv, O. Shubelyak⁴, Yu. Felenchak, I. Shevchuk⁵ and others. Given that information technology determines the further development of tourism,

¹ Papp V. V., Boshota N. V., *The role of social and business networks in the activities of tourism enterprises*, "Economics and society: electronic scientific professional journal", Mukachevo, 2018, No. 14, p. 619-625.

² Radchenko O. M., *Social networks in tourism of Ukraine*, "Geography and tourism", 2012, № 22, p.119-126.

³ Rudneva M. G., *Information methods and technologies in tourism*, "Development strategy of Ukraine", 2019, No. 1, p. 145-151.

⁴ Senkiv M., Shubelya O., *Influence of social networks on the tourism industry*. "Young scientist", 2019, 11 (75), p. 817-820;

which is forced to operate in new economic conditions and take into account new challenges of time, it is advisable to further generalize theoretical developments and develop practical recommendations to improve the industry through the use of social networks.

The article aims to study the peculiarities of promoting tourism products and services in a competitive environment through social networks to increase the efficiency of economic entities and satisfy the needs of consumers.

Own research

In the current conditions of development of the tourism market and the online travel market, the demand for digital travel services from both producers and consumers is growing rapidly. To meet the needs of consumers offline and online, travel service providers need to provide continuous and consistent communication, using different channels of interaction and following current trends in the industry and digital technology. Accordingly, the introduction of digital technologies at all stages of promoting tourism services is a necessary condition for the further effective development of the tourism industry. Therefore, social networks created for communication and information exchange are an effective multifunctional tool that helps intensify this process.

The need to use social networks by all participants in the tourism market is determined by the following factors: coverage of a significant proportion of the population; rapid dissemination of information; high level of social ties; a sense of a certain psychological closeness; the emergence of integrated interactive communication; mobility and accessibility; rigidity of registration policy; growth of economic influence⁶.

Through social networks, manufacturers of travel products and services have the opportunity to keep in touch with interested users, build long-term relationships with their customers, build their loyalty and manage their reputation. For tourists, social networks that contain content created by travelers are

<https://doi.org/10.32839/2304-5809/2019-11-75-172>.

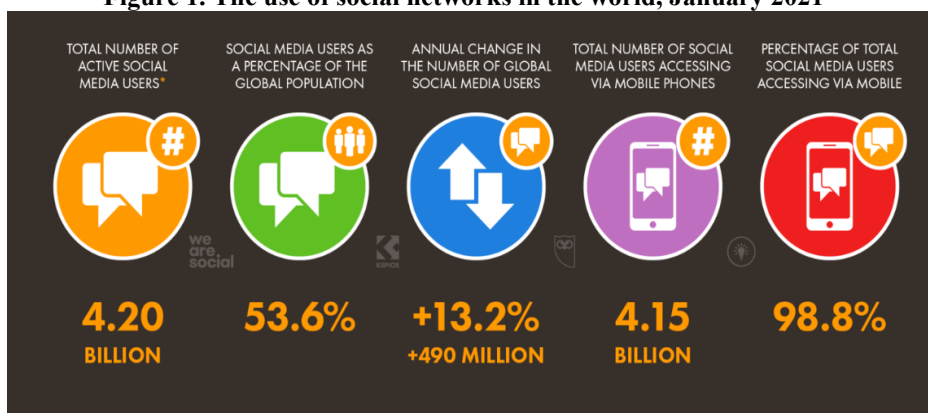
⁵ Felenchak Yu. B., Shevchuk I. B., *New directions of using information and communication technologies in the field of tourism*, "Market infrastructure", 2019, No. 36, p. 69-75.

⁶ Dobrovolska V. V., Peleshchyshyn A. M., Vus V. A., *Factor of social networks in the tasks of protection of public information image of cultural institutions*, "Bulletin of the National Academy of Management of Culture and Arts", No. 4, 2018, p. 132-148.

one of the important sources of information that greatly influences their decisions when planning a trip. Social networks give tourists the opportunity to join thematic travel communities and blog platforms, where they can find like-minded people, meet, discuss all issues related to travel, share impressions, present and view photo reports, travel itineraries, help each other choose travel directions.

It should be noted that in social networks, users have the opportunity to communicate in an environment not limited by geographical boundaries, political and economic conditions, respectively, between them a certain atmosphere of trust, which helps to increase targeted traffic ⁷. The use of social networks in the world is growing rapidly (figure 1).

Figure 1. The use of social networks in the world, January 2021⁸



According to statistics, at the beginning of 2021 there were 4,2 billion registered users of social networks in the world, which is 53,6% of the world's population. In recent years, there has been a trend to increase users of social networks, in particular: in 2021 compared to 2020 their number increased by 490 million people, which is 13,2% of annual growth, in 2020 compared to 2019 – by 321 million, or 9%. Relevant changes in digital user behavior have occurred through social exclusion and the introduction of restrictive quarantine measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19. On average, during 2020,

⁷ Kyryliuk I. M., *The use of modern information technologies in the tourism industry*, in: *Innovative development of tourism and hospitality industry: problems and prospects*, collective monograph: Povoroznyuk I. M., Chirva O. G., Kirilyuk I. M. etc., Uman, Vizavi, 2022, p. 28-44.

⁸ *Digital 2021: global overview report*; <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2021-global-overview-report>. (date of application 14.04.2022).

more than 1,3 million new accounts were created on social networks every day, which is almost 15,5 new users per second⁹.

The growing interest in social networks is evidenced by the fact that the period of time that users spend browsing content has increased. According to the Global Web Index (GWI) over the past 5 years, the average daily stay of users on social networks has increased by more than half an hour. Regular users aged 16-64 spend 2 hours and 25 minutes a day on social networks, and users aged 16-24 almost 3 hours per day¹⁰.

Consumers of travel services mostly use social networks to find relevant information about future travel. To expand the online audience, the tourism industry needs to keep in mind that the search behavior of Internet users is changing. In addition to traditional search engines, other information retrieval tools are now actively used: voice search, image recognition tools on mobile devices, and social media search. Social networking is the second most important research channel after search engines. 43% of people learn about products or services that interest them through social networks. Reviews of a product or service, and loyalty programs posted on social networks, significantly influence users' decisions to purchase them and increase the effectiveness of advertising. According to GWI research, the probability of buying goods online increases by 39% of users with a discount or coupon, 33% – the product has customer reviews, 26% – accrue loyalty points, 22% – the product received many marks «liked» or good comments¹¹.

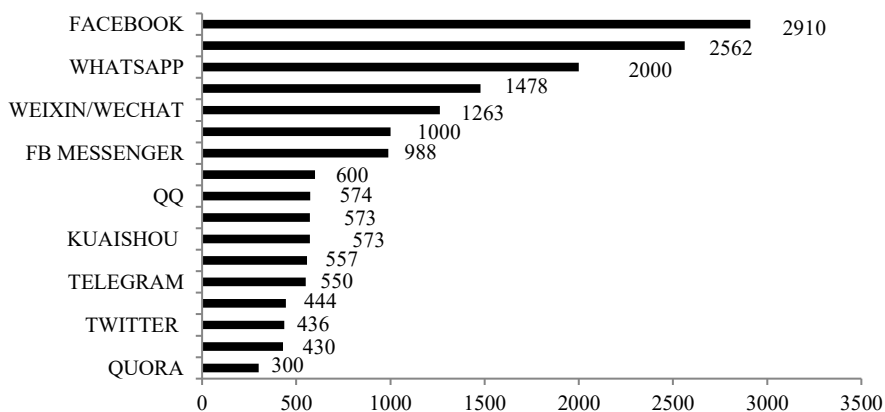
In view of this, manufacturers of tourism products and services should use social networks as advertising platforms to promote their services. Online advertising is an effective tool for increasing the competitiveness of businesses in the tourism industry. Its use helps to: increase the target audience; receive additional channels for disseminating information and selling tourist products and services; increase the effectiveness of promotional activities and reduce their costs; improve the image of companies; expand communication with customers in real-time; simplify the consultation and booking process.

When posting information on social networks, the tourism industry must take into account the number of active users of each network (figure 2).

⁹ Ibidem.

¹⁰ *Social media use by generation*; <https://www.gwi.com/reports/social-media-across-generations>. (date of application: 22.04.2022).

¹¹ *How effective are ads on social media?*; https://blog.gwi.com/trends/ads-on-social-media/?_ga=2.118074701.538959049.1652622017-1348560296.1651516053&_gac=1.195817054.1651516137 (date of application: 18.04.2022).

Figure 2. The most popular social networks in the world as of January 2022, ranked by number of active users per month, million people*

*Source: built by the author according to the data ¹²

The leading position among social networks is occupied by Facebook. Today, the network has more than 2,9 billion active users per month. Facebook attracts 1,8 billion unique visitors to its website each month, which is more than two-thirds of the monthly active user base. The company also owns the four largest social networking platforms, each with more than 1 billion active users per month: Facebook (the main platform), WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger and Instagram. According to Statista, in the first quarter of 2022, 3,64 billion people used at least one of the company's main products every month¹³.

More than 1 billion active users are registered in six social networks, which must be taken into account by travel service providers when planning marketing events. When determining the platform for the promotion of their services, the tourism industry should pay attention not only to the number of accounts but also to the active use of accounts by users. Activities on the most popular platforms make it possible to reach the majority of social network users. However, this should take into account the high level of competition for consumer attention, as at least 98% of users of any social platform use at least

¹² *Most popular social networks worldwide as of January 2022, ranked by number of monthly active users* <http://www.statista.com/statistics/272014/global-social-networks-ranked-by-number-of-users/> (date of application: 20.04.2022).

¹³ *Cumulative number of monthly Meta (formerly Facebook Inc.) product users as of 1st quarter 2022*: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/947869/facebook-product-mau/> (date of application: 20.04.2022).

one other social network, and on average one, user has accounts in eight different social networks, which use different frequency and activity depending on the purpose of the visit¹⁴. Therefore, tourism service providers should take into account not only the criterion of audience reach, but also apply a strategic approach taking into account other factors, including: specific creative tools offered by the platform, ways to attract users and their interactions available on more «niche» platforms.

To successfully promote services on social networks, the tourism industry should choose the right target audience, create unique content for the page and adapt its services to the needs of consumers¹⁵. It should be borne in mind that the habits of users in social networks are formed depending on individual preferences and interests, and the choice of the network to some extent depends on age.

According to the theory of generations, there are several generations of people who differ in the type of thinking, in particular, on the use of the Internet and social networks: Generation Z (1997–2012), millennial (1981–1996), Generation X (1965–1980) and baby boomers (1946–1964). Today, millennial and Generation Z are the dominant demographic groups in the tourism segment. With the advent of the online travel market, which includes online travel agencies through which tourists can book online travel services and travel review websites, consumer demand for digital travel services is growing. The size of the global sector of online travel agents in 2020 was approximately 432 billion dollars¹⁶.

Given that the vast majority of tourists of these generations are technically experienced, creative, and able to experiment, they to some extent identify new trends in the tourism industry. A personalized approach to travel planning is important for these demographic groups. Therefore, they actively use digital technologies for independent research and formation of future travels, the study of tourist objects, routes, and their adaptation according to their interests. According to a study conducted by the Expedia study, 84% of millennials surveyed and 77% of Generation Z used information posted on social

¹⁴ *Digital 2021: global overview report*: <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2021-global-overview-report> (date of application: 14.04.2022).

¹⁵ Kyryliuk, I. M., *Virtualization as an innovative direction of tourism*, “Ukraine in world globalization processes: culture, economy, society”, Kyiv, Vyd. tsentr KNUKiM, Volume 2, 2022, p. 111-114.

¹⁶ *Market size of the global online travel agent sector 2020-2025*; <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1179020/online-travel-agent-market-size-worldwide/> (date of application: 24.04.2022).

networks that influenced their decisions when planning their travels¹⁷. Depending on the age, users prefer different social networks (table 1).

Table 1. Use of social networks by different demographic groups

Indicators	Facebook	Instagram	TikTok	Twitter	LinkedIn	Pinterest	Snapchat	YouTube
Number of active users per month, billion people	2,9	2,0	1,0	0,211	0,810	0,431	0,319	2,0
The largest group of users by age: age, years	25-34	25-34 18-24	10-19	18-29	25-34	50-64	15-25	15-35
%	31,5	31,2 31,0	25	42	58,4	38	48	
Gender of users, %								
female	43	48,4	61	38,4	48	78	54,4	46
male	57	51,8	39	61,6	52	22	44,6	54
Network usage time per day, min	33	29	89	31		14,2	25	30

Source: built by author based on data¹⁸

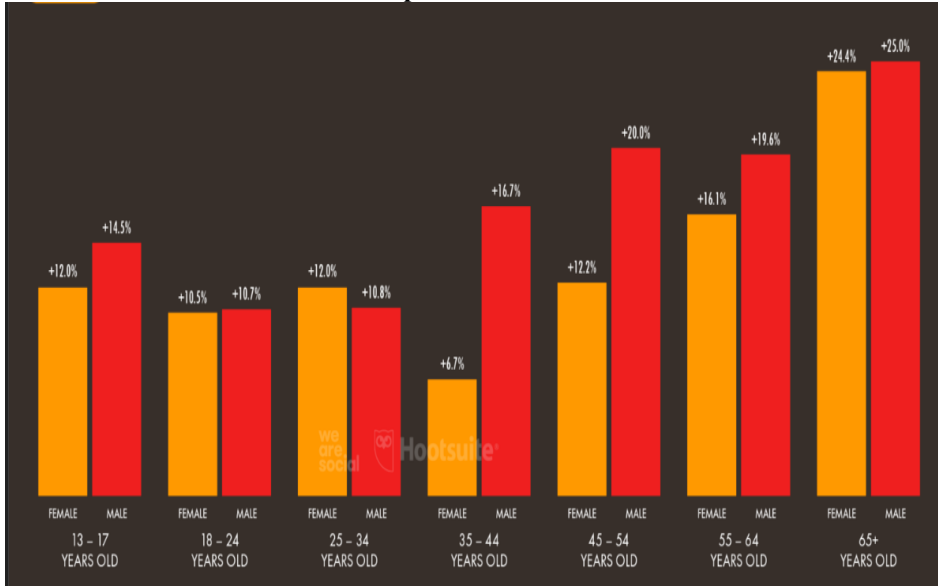
Analysis of activity in social networks of different demographic groups shows that millennials and Generation Z occupy the largest share in the structure of users of most platforms. Despite the high competition, Facebook still remains the most popular social platform that travel companies should use to attract potential customers through advertising. The total audience that can reach travel service providers through the Facebook advertising office is 2,9 billion users. The most active demographic group in the network are men aged 25–34. However, it should be noted that in 2021 the number of Facebook users over the age of 65 has increased by almost 25% (figure 3). Compared to the previous year, this figure almost doubled the average increase –

¹⁷ *A look ahead: how younger generations are shaping the future of travel*; https://info.advertising.expedia.com/hubfs/Content_Docs/Premium_Content/pdf/2018%20-%20Gen%20Z%20Travel%20Trends%20Study.pdf?hsCtaTracking=a63196b4-62b8-4673-93e2-7d3ad0dc73e3%7Cfd9915c8-dc7f-492d-b123-265614cef08a (date of application: 24.04.2022).

¹⁸ *Social media demographics to inform your brand's strategy in 2022*; <https://sproutsocial.com/insights/new-social-media-demographics/#instagram-demographics>. (date of application: 26.04.2022).

13% for all age groups, which indicates an increase in interest in the network from the older generation.

Figure 3. Changes in the age structure of Facebook users in 2021 compared to 2020¹⁹



Although Instagram is a younger platform, its popularity is also growing, especially among users aged 18–34 due to the availability, ease of use of the application, and the availability of extensive tools for photo editing, simultaneous text, photo, and video in one post, conciseness, use of hashtags and geolocation, the ability to create business accounts, analytics of statistical information, and dissemination of embedded targeted advertising. Tourist photo reports posted on Instagram greatly influence millennials and Generation Z's choice of future travel. Interesting locations published online attract users, and encourage them to repeat popular photos and post them in your profile.

Given the interactivity and wide reach of the audience of these social networks, travel service providers should place ads on both platforms, taking

¹⁹ *Digital 2021: global overview report*; <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2021-global-overview-report> (date of application: 26.04.2022).

into account that some types of ads work better on Facebook, and others – on Instagram depending on the audience and age of users (table 2).

Table 2. Types of advertising to promote travel services on social networks Facebook and Instagram

Facebook	Instagram
Video ads: high-quality videos up to 15 seconds with subtitles	Photo Ads: Allow you to showcase your products with images.
Image ads: An image that attracts attention and is accompanied by a compelling message	Video Ads: Allow you to showcase your products with video images. Can last up to 60 seconds.
Ad Collection: Cover or video images that feature multiple product photos.	Carousel Ads: Users can scroll up to 10 images or videos that contain a button with a direct link to the site.
Carousel Ads: A user can display up to 10 images (or videos) in a single ad, each with its own link.	Stories Ads: Full-screen ads where you can share photos and videos with your audience.
Slideshow: An ad that uses motion, sound, and text for detailed information.	
Facebook Instant Experiences / Canvas Ads: Mobile-optimized advertising featuring all videos, photos, carousels and images in one ad.	
Ads to create leads: collecting user information.	
Advertisements: Allow you to create and distribute timely discounts and promotions to your target audience.	
Boosted Posts: Help share company information with users.	
Event announcements: help to tell about events related to the company's activities.	
Like: Used to engage your audience with your Facebook page.	

*Source: built by author based on data*²⁰

It should be noted that the use of social media applications to create and distribute TikTok video files and online broadcasts is growing in popularity

²⁰ *Facebook vs. Instagram advertising: which one's better for your business?;* <https://www.smartinsights.com/social-media-marketing/instagram-marketing/facebook-vs-instagram-advertising-which-better-for-b2b/> (date of application: 30.04.2022).

among Generation Z. Not only the number of users of the platform has increased, but also the time they spend online. According to Apptopia research, in 2021 TikTok was the most downloadable application on both iOS and Android devices²¹. Video content is quite popular among young people, so marketers should use TikTok to present and promote travel services to this audience. Interesting, high-quality content for consumers is generated by algorithms that can process large amounts of data in real-time and present them to the user in the appropriate format. Focusing on the audience of TikTok users, travel companies need to develop an appropriate concept, using a creative approach to create viral content that will find a response from consumers of services.

Analysis of demographic data of users of social networks by travel companies is an important criterion in determining the priority platforms for the implementation of marketing strategies, the formation of the target audience, ensuring long-term and regular communication with consumers.

Given the changes in the structure of Internet access in favor of mobile devices, the creation and maintenance of appropriate versions for mobile devices is a necessary condition for retaining potential and attracting new consumers of travel services.

In 2021, the number of unique users of the mobile Internet amounted to 4,32 billion people, which indicates that more than 90% of the world's population who use the Internet, use mobile devices to access the Internet. Mobile Internet traffic accounts for almost 55% of total web traffic²². These trends have had a positive impact on revenues from tourism and related industries. According to Statista's Digital Market Outlook in 2021, the total revenue from the use of mobile applications in the tourism sector amounted to 296 million dollars. US, which is 38% more than in 2020²³.

The use of mobile applications provides tourists with additional opportunities, in particular: to get convenient and fast access to the necessary information; provide personalization and increase loyalty by maintaining your own settings, forming preferences, obtaining personal information, setting convenient notification formats; make quick online reservations and purchase services.

²¹ *Apptopia*; <https://apptopia.com/free-competitive-intelligence-report> (date of application: 30.04.2022).

²² *Mobile internet usage worldwide – statistics & facts*; <https://www.statista.com/topics/779/mobile-internet/#dossierKeyfigures> (date of application: 3.05.2022).

²³ *Digitalization of the travel industry – statistics & facts*; https://www.statista.com/topics/7589/digitalization-of-the-travel-industry/#topicHeader__wrapper (date of application: 3.05.2022).

To analyze the effectiveness of the promotion of travel services in the travel market, travel companies need to use social analytics tools to monitor user content. Social networks are a powerful research tool to study consumer demand and implement appropriate measures to improve performance, including creating attractive messages, content, services, and loyalty programs personalized for consumers in the tourism market. Analysis of the results of online reviews allows you to determine the attendance of the platform, and the degree of satisfaction of visitors, to make business decisions to improve performance.

An important tool for researching the competitive environment and identifying strengths and weaknesses in the own activities of producers of tourism products and services is the analysis of consumer comments in online communities. Through research on the actions of page visitors, in particular: the number of keyword queries, ad traffic, the ratio of clicks and views of information, and contextual ads, travel companies can study their goals, and determine whether they match the company's strategies to localize experience, increase engagement, and conversion. Infrastructures can take many forms but must include web technologies that help manage web content, contextual relevance, and localization²⁴.

Conclusions

The promotion of tourism products and services through social networks has changed both the process of communication and the process of conducting tourism business. The use of the potential of social networks in the activities of the tourism industry contributes to the increase in the number of consumers of tourist services, rapid dissemination of information and communication, diversification of forms, methods of offering and providing services, development of new opportunities for competitive services. Social networks are an effective research tool through which travel companies can study consumer demand, identify strengths and weaknesses in their activities, analyze the competitive environment and develop and implement appropriate measures to improve their performance.

Social networks are an important tool of marketing communication and an effective means of promoting tourism products and services in the tourism market. Given the demographic changes in the structure of social network users, it is important for travel service providers to take into account the age

²⁴ *5 Travel Trends Shaping the Future of Digital Experience*;
<https://bizibl.com/marketing/download/5-travel-trends-shaping-future-digital-experience> (date of application: 8.05.2022).

of consumers and determine the content that will form the target audience, ensure long-term and regular communication with consumers.

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HEALTH TOURISM AS AN OBJECT OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

Turystyka zdrowotna jako obiekt badań naukowych

Abstract

The theoretic fundamentals of the geography of health tourism as a new approach for tourism science and scientific investigations are disclosed. The new direction of tourism research in the field of health improvement and rehabilitation is substantiated. The factors in the development of health tourism in the frames of time spent on leisure activities (including health care), over-burdened health care, urbanization, cross-border mobility, the concept of brain drain, technological development, protection of personal health data are explored. The different types of health tourism such as Wellness and medical tourism are substantiated. The difference between wellness tourism and medical tourism is shown. The main characteristics of medical and wellness tourism in the frames of travelling overseas involvement of medicine, main push and pull factors is proposed. The main healthcare facilities both Multi-profile and Single-profile are explored. Classification of health facilities in the frames of their profile, specialization, the main profile of treatment (medical profile), type, functions, period of operation, target segment, location, duration of stay as well as of their form of ownership and the purpose and character of commercial activity is described.

Keywords: health tourism, rehabilitation tourism, Wellness and Spa, spa tourism, classification of health care facilities

Streszczenie

Ujawniono teoretyczne podstawy geografii turystyki zdrowotnej jako nowego podejścia do nauki o turystyce i badań naukowych. Uzasadniono nowy kierunek badań nad turystyką w zakresie poprawy stanu zdrowia i rehabilitacji. Omówiono czynniki rozwoju turystyki zdrowotnej, takie jak: czas spędzany na wypoczynku (w tym na opiece zdrowotnej), nadmierne obciążenie służby zdrowia, urbanizacja, mobilność transgraniczna, koncepcja drenażu mózgow, rozwój technologiczny, ochrona danych osobowych dotyczących zdrowia. Uzasadniono różne rodzaje turystyki zdrowotnej, takie jak turystyka wellness i turystyka medyczna. Przedstawiono różnice między turystyką wellness a turystyką medyczną. Zaproponowano główne cechy charakterystyczne turystyki medycznej i wellness w kontekście podróży zagranicznych, zaangażowania medycyny, głównych czynników wypychających i przyciągających. Omówiono główne placówki służby zdrowia, zarówno wieloprofilowe, jak i jednopro-