

SPACE TOURISM AS A NEW DIRECTION OF MODERN TRAVEL

The aim of this paper is to analyze the concept of space tourism, its main characteristics, development prospects, and its potential influence on the global tourism market.

Space tourism is one of the most innovative and promising areas of the modern tourism industry. In recent years, technological progress has allowed private companies to organize commercial space flights for civilians. Unlike traditional tourism, which is limited to destinations on Earth, space tourism offers travel beyond the planet. This direction combines elements of adventure tourism, luxury tourism, and scientific exploration [1, c. 214].

Space tourism refers to commercial travel into outer space for recreational purposes. Participants are not professional astronauts but private individuals who wish to experience space travel. Such journeys allow tourists to observe the Earth from space, experience weightlessness, and participate in a unique and exclusive activity. The first private space missions proved that space tourism is becoming a real component of the international tourism industry [2, c. 97].

There are several types of space tourism. Suborbital flights involve short trips beyond the Earth's atmosphere and provide a few minutes of zero gravity. Orbital flights are longer and more complex, allowing tourists to stay in space for several days. Some companies are planning to develop commercial space stations and space hotels. In the future, experts predict the possibility of lunar tourism and missions around the Moon. These projects demonstrate that tourism continues to expand its geographical boundaries and search for new destinations [1, c. 229].

The development of space tourism requires significant financial investments and advanced technologies. Private aerospace companies invest in spacecraft construction, safety systems, and pilot training. This stimulates innovation and scientific research. As a result, space tourism contributes not only to the tourism sector but also to technological progress and economic development [2, c. 112].

Despite its advantages, space tourism faces serious challenges. The main problem is the extremely high cost of space flights. Currently, only a limited number of wealthy individuals can afford such travel. However, experts believe that ticket prices may decrease in the future as technology improves and competition increases [1, c. 241].

Safety is another important issue. Space travel involves technical risks and physical pressure on the human body. Therefore, tourists must complete special training and medical examinations before the flight. Companies are responsible for maintaining strict safety standards and providing professional support during the entire mission [2, c. 118].

Environmental impact is also a significant concern. Rocket launches produce emissions that may affect the atmosphere and climate. For this reason, the principles of sustainable development should be applied to space tourism. The use of environmentally friendly technologies can help reduce negative ecological consequences [1, c. 254].

In conclusion, space tourism is a rapidly developing sector of modern travel that represents a new stage in the evolution of the tourism industry. Although it is currently accessible only to a small group of people, technological progress may make it more

available in the future. Space tourism reflects humanity's desire to explore new horizons and demonstrates the transformation of tourism in the twenty-first century.

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