

**GUIDELINES FOR OVERCOMING THE IMPACT OF SEASOSONALITY FACTOR IN
UKRAINIAN SKI RESORT BUKOVEL**

M. Zhumbei

**ОСНОВНІ ПРИНЦИПИ ПОДОЛАННЯ ВПЛИВУ ФАКТОРА СЕЗОННОСТІ НА
УКРАЇНСЬКОМУ ГІРСЬКОЛИЖНОМУ КУРОРТІ БУКОВЕЛЬ**

М. М. Жумбей

Державний вищий навчальний заклад

«Прикарпатський національний університет імені Василя Стефаника»

Abstract. The article provides an overview of the main principles for overcoming the impact of seasonality factor and presents optimization ways to the increase of tourism demand at the Ukrainian ski-resort Bukovel in off-season.

The essence of the phenomenon “seasonality” is defined. It is seen as a universal and problematic factor in tourism. The problem of determining seasonality has been studied by the Ukrainian - O.Beidyk, M.Malska, O.Davidova and foreign scientists R.Butler, R.Hartmann, J. Connell, S. Page, D. Meyer, M.Bigovic, A.Phelps, J.Y.Chung.

The development of the Ukrainian ski-resort Bukovel is compared to the most popular and significant European resorts such as France, Switzerland, Austria and Italy.

The reasons of seasonality are viewed for optimizing ways of attracting tourists to spending their holidays in Bukovel.

Among the actions which can be taken to mitigate the effects of seasonality as offered by Professor Richard Butler (2014) we stress that the intensity of the visitation to the resort can be strengthened by a) extending the season and b) adding a second main season. Both of the ways are aimed at the attracting a wider market to the resort Bukovel.

The importance of rural green tourism in the process of transforming a ski resort Bukovel into a year-round destination is demonstrated. The positive influence of rural green tourism on the revival, preservation and development of local folk customs, crafts, historical and cultural heritage monuments is described.

As a conclusion we suggest to deal with the surface of the problem of seasonality factor by introducing a new discipline “Green Tourism in Precarpathia with Culturological Aspects” on the basis of the Faculty of Tourism, Vasyl Stefanyk National Precarpathian University. This is the effective way for successful development of green tourism in the Ukrainian Carpathians.

The objective of the course is to train the future tourism managers with the ability to perform the culture-oriented professional activity; to discover the peculiarities of supervising personnel, to train skills of green tourism management and marketing.

Keywords: seasonality, tourist demand, resort, off-season, green rural tourism, managers of tourism.

Анотація. У статті представлено огляд основних принципів подолання впливу фактора сезонності та запропоновано оптимізаційні шляхи збільшення туристичного попиту на українському гірськолижному курорті Буковель у міжсезоння.

Визначено сутність феномену «сезонність», що розглядається як універсальний і проблемний фактор у туризмі. Проблему визначення поняття «сезонність» вивчали українські - О.Бейдик, М.Мальська, О.Давідова та зарубіжні вчені Р.Батлер, Р.Хартманн, Дж.Коннелл, С.Пейдж, Д. Мейер, М.Бігович, А.Фелпс, Дж.Чанг.

Розвиток українського гірськолижного курорту Буковель порівнюється з найбільш популярними та значними європейськими курортами, такими як Франція, Швейцарія, Австрія та Італія.

Причини сезонності розглядаються для оптимізації шляхів залучення туристів до відпочинку на курорті Буковель.

Серед способів, які можуть бути вжиті для пом'якшення наслідків сезонності, запропоновані професором Річардом Батлером (2014), ми підкреслюємо, що інтенсивність відвідування курорту може бути посилена: а) продовженням сезону і б) додаванням другого основного сезону. Обидва шляхи спрямовані на залучення більш широкого ринку до курорту Буковель.

Продемонстровано важливість сільського зеленого туризму в процесі перетворення гірськолижного курорту Буковель на цілорічну відпочинкову дестинацію. Описано позитивний вплив сільського зеленого туризму на відродження, збереження та розвиток місцевих народних звичаїв, ремесел, пам'яток історичної та культурної спадщини.

У результаті ми пропонуємо вирішити у корені проблему фактора сезонності шляхом запровадження нової дисципліни «Зелений туризм на Прикарпатті з культурологічними аспектами» на базі факультету туризму ДВНЗ «Прикарпатський національний університет імені Василя Стефаника». Це ефективний шлях для успішного розвитку зеленого туризму в Українських Карпатах.

Метою курсу є підготовка майбутніх менеджерів у сфері туризму з можливістю виконувати культурно-орієнтовану професійну діяльність; дослідити особливості управління персоналом; привити навички управління у зеленому туризмі та маркетинзі.

Ключові слова: сезонність, туристичний попит, курорт, міжсезоння, зелений сільський туризм, менеджери туризму.

Introduction. The phenomenon “seasonality” has long been defined as the unique and widely used aspect of the world tourism industry. The seasons of winter holidays and summertime are among the most popular times of the year for travelling. While these seasons are desirable times for holidays in many ways, there are also many benefits to travelling in the off-season. The article provides an overview of the main principles for overcoming the impact of seasonality factor and presents optimization ways to the increase of the activity development of the Ukrainian ski-resort Bukovel in off-season.

Despite the utter importance of seasonality for tourism businesses, there has been a lack of studies undertaken in the past that discuss the impact of seasonality on the Carpathian accommodation resorts, and more specifically that focus on Ukrainian location.

Gradually, the world skiing tourism turns into one of the most popular types of active recreation. Mountain skiing is a sign of prestige and even life's success.

The Alps in winter are among the most visited regions in Europe. About 60-80 million people visit the Alps each year as tourists. There are over 600 ski resorts and 10.000 ski installations in the Alps. France,

Switzerland, Austria and Italy provide over 85% of Europe's skiing area. France has the highest winter season turnover of all these four countries [1].

Ukraine is not considered to be the exception. Bukovel is the largest ski resort in Eastern Europe situated in Ukraine, Ivano-Frankivsk oblast (Western Ukraine). The resort is located almost on the ridge-lines of the Carpathian Mountains at the height of 900 m (3,000 ft) above the sea level near the village of Polianytsia (Yaremche municipality). Bukovel comprises facilities situated at five peaks: Dovha (1372 m), Bukovel (1127 m), Bulchiniokha (1455 m), Babyn Pohar (1180 m), and Chorna Kleva (1241 m) thus giving it 53 km of ski runs of various difficulty levels. In 2012 the resort Bukovel was named the fastest-growing world ski resort.

Studying the statistics, in 2001, when the resort began its work, it was visited by 10.000 people. Now it welcomes this number of tourists every day. In the peak season of 2015-2016, the resort was visited by about 1.6 million tourists, which is 20% more than the previous season 2014-2015. According to the quite expected trend, the season of 2016-2017 calculated 1.7-1.8 million tourists [8].

Climate conditions of the resort are truly unique. Mountains surrounding Bukovel protect it from severe winter winds thus creating comfortable conditions for unforgettable winter activities.

Skiing season lasts from December till April. The trails are equipped with snowmaking machines and protected from the direct sunlight. Due to these conditions snow remains on the slopes much longer than in other surrounding [8].

The **objective** of the article is to explore the impact of seasonality factor and to offer the rational ways to increasing tourist demand in the Carpathian ski-resort Bukovel in off-season.

Literature Review. The problem of determining seasonality and its impact on tourist demand has been studied by the Ukrainian - O.Beidyk, M.Malska, O.Davidova and foreign scientists R.Butler, R.Hartmann, J. Connell, S. Page, D. Meyer, M.Bigovic, A.Phelps, J.Y.Chung. According to their studies tourist seasonality makes it possible to navigate the irregularity of tourist demand.

"Tourism demand" is often defined as "the total number of persons who travel or wish to travel to use the tourist facilities away from their places of work and residence" [7]. In our research the term "tourism demand" is used alternatively with the synonym "tourist visitation".

The Problem-Setting. Therefore the seasonality impact on the development of the resort Bukovel can be studied after we have found out some basic concepts.

The term "seasonality" is viewed as a universal and problematic factor in tourism experienced by most destinations. In general, seasonality means special annual dependence, or more precisely "tourism seasonality has been described as a temporal and spatial imbalance that can for example be seen in the tourist flow during the year" [4].

Professor Richard Butler offered a widely-recognized definition of tourism seasonality: "the temporal imbalance in the phenomenon of tourism, which may be expressed in terms of dimensions of such elements as numbers of visitors, expenditure of visitors, traffic on highways and other forms of transportation, employment and admissions to attractions" and stressed that seasonality is a problem "that limits the economic returns that can be obtained from tourism and prevents the optimum economic benefits that might be gained if a destination were able to attract tourists year round" [3].

We empathize that seasonality is a permanent characteristic of tourism. In our research the phenomenon of seasonality is studied as a challenge facing the number of tourist visitation to the ski resort Bukovel.

In 2015, 3 June the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) organized the 3rd UNWTO Conference on Overcoming Seasonality. The objective of the conference was to create a platform for the participants to collaborate on the analysis of an integrated approach to seasonality from the perspective of the public-private sector. Since this issue affects many destinations around the world the participants have concluded that seasonality is not always a problem, but it is always an opportunity. Some resorts wouldn't be able to sustain year-round mass tourism. Low seasons can even be beneficial to the sustainability of tourism destinations [6].

Discussion. To optimize ways of attracting tourists to spending their holidays in Bukovel (leading directly to the tourist demand) there appears a necessity to view the reasons of seasonality. Koenig and Bischoff (2005) have stated that the natural and institutionalized factors are generally recognized as the two major causes for tourism seasonality [5].

According to Hartmann (1986), the natural category refers to the variations in natural phenomena such as the climate, weather and seasons of the year. Variables include cycles or differences in temperature, hours of sunlight, levels of rainfall and snowfall. Institutional factors are not under the control of the customer. They may as well be termed as social, in that they are created and established by human social, political, religious, and economic agencies [2].

Seasonality in ski resort Bukovel caused by natural factors (temperature differences, amount of precipitation) influences the dominant winter outdoor activities. Seasonality caused by social factors corresponds with school or public holidays, religious events and celebrations, festivals (e.g. Christmas, New Year, Easter, Kupala Night, National holidays etc.). Both factors result in fluctuations of the amount of visitors to the resort.

Analyzing the fact of temporality as one of the characteristics of the phenomenon of seasonality we single out the four tourist-active seasons as distinguished by professor O.Beidyk:

- peak season - the most favorable time for the recreational activities of the population. It is characterized by the maximum density of people and the most comfortable conditions for recreation;

- high season - the period aimed at business activity in the tourist market, while the highest tariffs for tourist services are operating;

- low season - the time when business activity in the tourism market decreases, characterized by the lowest prices for a tourist product and services;

- "dead" season - the period that is most unfavorable for the organization of recreational activities (for example, uncomfortable climatic conditions) [9].

Summing up the above mentioned definitions we can combine the terms "low-season" and "dead-season" in one term "off-season" which is actual for our research.

The off-season in the ski resort Bukovel is therefore a matter of opinion.

Nowadays, Bukovel is no longer associated with a ski vacation among its visitors. Its format is in the process of expanding. A broad culture, rich traditions and authentic cuisine that blend with green rural mountain landscapes, are the strengths that have made the Ukrainian Carpathians the all year round holiday destination.

In 2014, the largest artificial lake in Ukraine was created. It is named as Lake of Youth and has the surface area of almost 7 hectares, depth of 15 m, length of the beach – 2 km (similar to the area of the Carpathian lake Synevyr), with the average temperature of water of 20-23°C throughout summer. Lake of Youth functions as a luxurious spa resort providing a complete spectrum of water activities: jacuzzi, swimming pool, diving, jet skiing, catamarans, waterskiing, wakeboarding, water trampoline etc.

Therefore, general sightseeing, mountaineering, biking, quadrocycling, river rafting, trout fishing, horse riding, berry and mushroom picking, swimming, trekking, hot air ballooning, sporting events, spa, meeting friends and relatives, night clubbing, different business purposes, festivals are the main reasons of tourist visitation in the ski resort in off-season.

Analyzing the report for UNWTO by Professor Richard Butler (2014) there appears a number of actions which can be taken to mitigate the effects of seasonality [3].

In our research we emphasize that the intensity of the visitation to the resort can be strengthened in two ways:

Firstly, by *extending the season* - lengthening the main season at the resort by reducing prices charged for accommodation and services in the months immediately before and after the peak season. The attractiveness of the resort itself will increase through price reduction.

Secondly, by *adding a second main season* – introducing a summer season to an established winter sports destination. Such natural opportunities as lakes, rivers, wildlife for a summer season do exist in the Carpathian mountains for such a step to be successful.

Both of the above set ways are aimed at the attracting a wider market to Bukovel.

The role of rural green tourism shouldn't be underestimated in transforming a ski resort Bukovel with the peak season in December – April into a year-round destination with no off-season.

Rural green tourism has recently become widespread and continues to grow actively. Therefore, much attention is paid to its study. Among the scientists who researched this type of tourism we distinguish: T. Luzhanska, M. Rutynsky, P. Gorishevsky, V. Vasiliev, Ya. Maievsky and others.

Rural green tourism positively influences the revival, preservation and development of local folk customs, crafts, historical and cultural heritage monuments. Expressing interest to these achievements of national culture the inhabitants of cities having leisure in the countryside, reveal the true value of the Ukrainian culture to the locals, popularize it in their home towns and cities thus preserving it morally and materially [12].

The development of rural green tourism raises the cultural and educational level of the local population. For holidaymakers to be satisfied with the quality of being served the local hosts have to improve their knowledge of running household, promoting hygiene and sanitation practices, maintaining cooking standards. Communicating with guests expands their conception of the world, makes it possible to connect new acquaintances and make friends in other cities. Rural green tourism contributes to the development of demographic processes in the countryside and preservation of rural locations.

Due to the preservation of ethnographic originality rural vacation in the Carpathians should acquire national significance. Firstly, it gives impetus to the rebirth and development of traditional culture: folk architecture, art, crafts representing local color thus attracting more holidaymakers. Secondly, because of rural vacation inhabitants of urbanized territories with mass culture have an opportunity to learn the true

Ukrainian traditions. Thirdly, the ethnoculture of the village represents Ukraine to the world and attracts foreign tourists [11].

The rural population of Ukraine is able to generate income from the following rural tourism activities:

- organization of tourist routes;
- exploitation of tourist sites;
- tour guide job;
- transport services for tourists;
- game-keeping activities (hunting, amateur and sport fishing);
- tourist equipment hire;
- tourist receiving services;
- culinary services;
- folk crafts;
- healthy food-production and sale to tourists;
- realization of berries and mushrooms to tourists [11].

The development of rural green tourism expands the employment of the local population [10].

For successful development of green tourism in the Ukrainian Carpathians (precisely in Bukovel) on the basis of the Faculty of Tourism, Vasyl Stefanyk National Precarpathian University a new discipline “Green Tourism in Precarpathia with Culturological Aspects” was developed and introduced in pedagogical process [13].

The objective of the given course is to train managers with the ability to perform a culture-oriented professional activity; to discover the peculiarities of supervising personnel, of management and marketing of green tourism with culturological aspects.

As a result of mastering the course “Green Tourism in Precarpathia with Culturological Aspects” the future tourism managers are supposed to possess the knowledge of:

- green tourism as a type of economic activity;
- the leading world scientific and educational tourism schools;
- the main legal and regulatory framework for organizing the activities of natural or legal persons in the sphere of green tourism in Ukraine;
- communicative and informational-innovative technologies of green tourism organization;
- organizational and methodical principles of formation and development of the rural cottage personnel;
- peculiarities of the managerial work of the owner of the rural cottage;
- types of hazards and internal safety factors of tourists in rural cottages;
- problems and prospects for further development of green tourism in the Carpathian region.

The managers of tourism have to possess skills of:

- forming a list of the main types of professional activities of a green tourism manager;
- organizing plans and implementation of the program of service, as well as providing additional services to tourists in rural cottages;
- providing conditions for safe rest of guests in rural cottages;
- estimating general and territorial capacity of the market of hotel and tourist services in the sphere of green tourism in the Carpathians;

- possessing methodology of formation and regulation of prices for recreation services in rural cottages;
- designing programs of quality improvement services in the sphere of green tourism;
- developing models of new services and testing them in the market of green tourism;
- analyzing and developing competitive offers for the promotion of ecotourism products and their infrastructure in the Carpathian region (Bukovel).

The practical value of the discipline is, therefore, in the fact that the future tourism managers achieve factual knowledge and get some experience of green tourism organization, realize the humanistic aspects of their activity, develop creative abilities.

As a **conclusion**, due to the combination of theory and practice, the tourism managers successfully integrate the previously acquired knowledge in new specific situations of the professional activity in the process of rural green tourism development at the resort Bukovel.

Consequently, the impact of seasonality factor has been analyzed and the rational ways of transforming the Carpathian ski-resort Bukovel with the peak season in December – April into a year-round destination have been proposed in our study.

LITERATURE

1. Bätzing, W., 1991, *Die Alpen, Entstehung und Gefährdung einer europäischen Kulturlandschaft*, C.H. Beck, München, 431 p.
2. Baum, T., Lundtorp, S., 2001, [Electronic Source] / *Seasonality in Tourism*, London. URL: https://books.google.com.ua/books?id=5KAFMUdU8WMC&printsec=frontcover&dq=Tom+Baum,+Svend+Lundtorp.Seasonality+in+Tourism.&hl=uk&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjP_Y7a2PXgAhUyposKHd-mDiIQ6AEIKjAA (last access 12.02.2019).
3. Butler, R., 1994, [Electronic Source] / *Seasonality in tourism: issues and problems*. In Seaton, A. V.(ed.), *Tourism: The state of the Art*. John Wiley & Sons Ltd, pp. 332-339. URL: http://cf.cdn.unwto.org/sites/all/files/pdf/final_notes_richard_butler.pdf (last access 11.03.2019).
4. Connell, J., Page, S.J., Meyer, D., 2015, [Electronic Source]. / *Visitor attractions and events: Responding to seasonality*. *Tourism Management*, 46, pp. 283-298. URL: http://www.coris.uniroma1.it/sites/default/files/14.28.24_Visitor%20attractions%20and%20events%20Responding%20to%20seasonality.pdf (last access 15.02.2019).
5. Koenig, N., Bischoff, E., 2005, *Seasonality Research: the Seasonality in Tourism: The state of art*. University of Wales Swansea. P.5-22.
6. Materials of the 3rd UNWTO Conference on Overcoming Seasonality. 3-4 June 2015 in Torremolinos, Spain. URL: <http://affiliatemembers.unwto.org/event/3rd-unwto-conference-overcoming-seasonality> (last access 01.03.2019).
7. Mathieson, A., & Wall, G., 1982, [Electronic Source]. / *Tourism: Economic, physical, and social impacts*. London, New York: Longman, Harlow, 208 p. URL: <https://books.google.com.ua/books?id=5KAFMUdU8WMC&pg> (last access 28.02.2019).
8. Tours around Ukraine.[Electronic Source]. URL: <http://www.travel-to-ukraine.info/en/info/bukovel/> (last access 28.09.2018).
9. Бейдик О.О. Рекраційно-туристські ресурси України: методологія та методика аналізу, термінологія, районування. Київ, 2001. 395с.
10. Бойко Є.О., Бойко О.С. Роль зеленого туризму в розвитку сільських територій. *Економіка. Управління. Інновації*, 2010. №1(3).
11. Рутинський М.Й., Зінько Ю.В. Сільський туризм: Навчальний посібник, Київ: Знання, 2006. С.251.
12. Федорченко В.К., Дьорова Т.А. Історія туризму в Україні. Київ: Вища школа, 2002.195 с.

13. Чорна М. М. Зелений туризм на Прикарпатті із культурознавчими аспектами. Програма та методичні рекомендації з навчальної дисципліни (спецкурсу) для підготовки бакалаврів напряму підготовки 6.140103. Івано-Франківськ, 2015. 33с.

REFERENCES

1. Bätzing, W. (1991). *Die Alpen, Entstehung und Gefährdung einer europäischen Kulturlandschaft*, C.H. Beck, München, 431 p. (german).
2. Baum, T., Lundtorp, S. (2001). *Seasonality in Tourism*, London. Retrieved from https://books.google.com.ua/books?id=5KAFMUdU8WMC&printsec=frontcover&dq=Tom+Baum,+Svend+Lundtorp.Seasonality+in+Tourism.&hl=uk&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjP_Y7a2PXgAhUyposKHd-mDiIQ6AEIKjAA (last access 12.02.2019). (eng).
3. Butler, R. (1994). *Seasonality in tourism: issues and problems*. In Seaton, A. V.(ed.), *Tourism: The state of the Art*. John Wiley & Sons Ltd, pp.332-339. Retrieved from [http://cf.cdn.unwto.org/sites/all/files/pdf/final_notes_richard_butler.pdf] (last access 11.03.2019). (eng).
4. Connell, J., Page, S.J., Meyer, D. (2015). *Visitor attractions and events: Responding to seasonality*. *Tourism Management*, 46, pp. 283-298. Retrieved from http://www.coris.uniroma1.it/sites/default/files/14.28.24_Visitor%20attractions%20and%20events%20Responding%20to%20seasonality.pdf (last access 15.02.2019).(eng).
5. Koenig, N., Bischoff, E. (2005). *Seasonality Research: the Seasonality in Tourism: The state of art*. University of Wales Swansea. P.5-22. (eng).
6. Materials of the 3rd UNWTO Conference on Overcoming Seasonality. 3-4 June 2015 in Torremolinos, Spain. Retrieved from <http://affiliatemembers.unwto.org/event/3rd-unwto-conference-overcoming-seasonality> (last access 01.03.2019). (eng).
7. Mathieson, A., & Wall, G. (1982). *Tourism: Economic, physical, and social impacts*. London, New York: Longman, Harlow, 208 p. Retrieved from <https://books.google.com.ua/books?id=5KAFMUdU8WMC&pg> (last access 28.02.2019). (eng).
8. Tours around Ukraine. Retrieved from <http://www.travel-to-ukraine.info/en/info/bukovel/> (last access 28.09.2018).(eng).
9. Beidyk O.O. Rekratsiino-turystyski resursy Ukrainy: metodolohiia ta metodyka analizu, terminolohii, raionuvannia [Recreational and tourist resources of Ukraine: methodology and methods of analysis, terminology, zoning]. Kyiv, 2001. 395p.(ukr).
10. Boiko Ye.O., Boiko. O.S. Rol zelenoho turyzmu v rozvytku silskykh terytorii [The role of green tourism in the development of rural areas]. *Ekonomika. Upravlinnia. Innovatsii - Economics, Management, Innovations*, 2010, no1(3). (ukr).
11. Rutynskyi M.I, Zinko Yu.V. Silskyi turizm: Navchalnyi posibnyk [Rural tourism:tutorial]. Kyiv: *Znannia*, 2006. P.251. (ukr).
12. Fedorchenko V.K., Dorova T.A. Istoriia turyzmu v Ukraini [History of tourism in Ukraine]. Kyiv: *Vyshcha shkola*, 2002.195 p. (ukr).
13. Chorna M.M. Zelenyi turizm na Prykarpatti iz kulturoznachchymy aspektamy. Prohrama ta metodychni rekomendatsii z navchalnoi dystsypliny (spetskursu) dlia pidhotovky bakalavriv napriamu pidhotovky 6.140103 [Green tourism in the Carpathian region with culturological aspects. Program and methodical recommendations in discipline (special course) for training bachelors of the specialty direction 6.140103]. Ivano-Frankivsk, 2015. 33p. (ukr).