
RECREATIONAL AND TOURIST DESTINATIONS FOR THE NEEDS OF OUTDOOR WINTER ACTIVITIES (ON THE EXAMPLE OF UKRAINIAN SKI RESORTS)

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Key words:

- recreation-touristic destination,
- active winter recreation,
- mountain-ski resort;
- system of criteria for description of resorts;
- comparative analysis;
- infrastructure provisions.

Abstract:

The paper considers organization and functioning of mountain recreation centers for active winter recreation. The model of a respective recreation-touristic destination is proposed and the analysis of its structural elements is done: resource and infrastructure provisions, additional services, management activities, attractiveness (as an integral index based on the above listed elements), and the consumer. The questions of resource potential, modern state and features of functioning of two mountain-skier resorts are examined. The system of criteria is offered for description of resorts, they are conducted comparative analysis.

INTRODUCTION

Outdoor winter activities are very popular in the Carpathian region countries. In recent years fast development of winter activities industry is observed even in Ukraine. Those who are fond of skiing and snowboarding have an opportunity to have a rest and to spend their free time in the ski resorts and tourist centers in the Ukrainian Carpathians. Because they are full of different natural and climatic resources. There are numerous ski resorts, among them: Bukovel, Slavske, Dragobrat, Plai, Tysovets, Vorokhta and other.

The aim of the research is explanation of territorial and functional organisation of tourist destinations for the needs of outdoor winter activities; development of criteria for ski resorts characteristics; implementation of a comparative analysis of the modern state, planning, functional and organizational structure, opportunities for future Ukrainian Carpathians resorts development (on the example of “Slavske” and “Bukovel”).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The issue of ski resorts is a very popular and perspective subject for research. Theoretical model of recreational and tourist destinations for the needs of outdoor winter activities is based on various sources. In particular the following methodological works were used in this research: T. Tkachenko [7], A. Zorina and I. Zorina [9], A. Kuskova and Y.A. Dzhaladyana [4].

In this research we use theoretical model of recreational and tourist destinations for the needs of outdoor winter activities [1, 2]. Approbation of this model was based on two ski resorts in the Ukrainian Carpathians (Fig. 1) using comparative analysis method. The following literature and internet sources were used for the development of a resorts evaluation criteria system: A. Pardo [8], Kathleen A. Cordes and Hilmi M. Ibrahim [3], YA. Rochnyak [5, 6].

Also numerous materials of own observations that were held on the territory of ski resorts and tourist centers of Bukovel, Dragobrat, Plai, Slavske, Migovo, Vorokhta, Pilipets were applied in the course of development of the concept of recreational and tourist destinations as well as for comparative analysis. As a result, recreational and tourist destination concept for outdoor winter activities and comparative analysis was based on these materials.

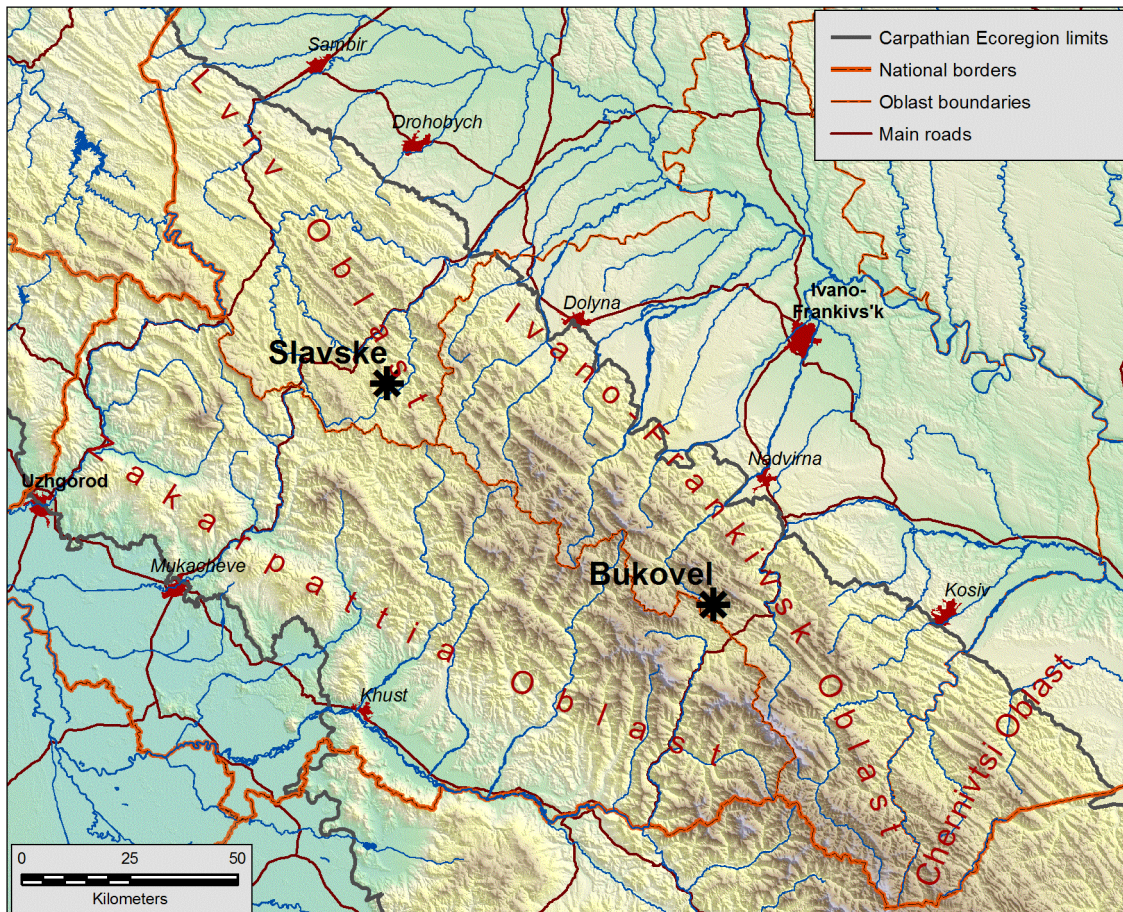


Figure 1. Location of Bukovel and Slavske ski resorts
Source: own elaboration

PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH MATERIAL

Very often when we are talking about tourist centers in scientific literature we can find a term 'ski resort'. This term doesn't have "resort" status due to (legislative) regulation. In this research work we used the terms 'mountain tourist centre for winter rest' or 'ski center' (specializes only in skiing).

The term "Destination" has numerous definitions. In our opinion one of them reflects the content in the best way. It tells that destination is a geographically limited area, which can attract and meet the needs of a tourist group. Therefore tourist product requires a lot of investment and service workers efforts.

Theoretical model of recreational and tourist destinations includes such elements: mountain tourist centre provision of resources and infrastructure, range of additional services, management activity, attractiveness, which play a great role in the influence on the customer.

Customer plays the main role in this theoretical model. He effects it's development to meet his recreational and tourism needs. Recreational and sports profile is determined by numerous elements: by the type of equipment, means of skiing (skiing, snowboarding, cross-

country skiing, free-ride); by the level of training (professionals, athletes, amateurs, beginners); by the geography and by the sex-age structure of tourists.

Resources provision for mountain tourist centre is a basis for the recreational and tourism activities organization, which is influenced by natural and climate potential of the territory. Relief and climatic conditions are the most important concerning outdoor winter activities. The relief is characterized by shape, length and steepness of slopes, and therefore determines the length and complexity of the ski slopes (medium, heavy and beginners). Consideration of the impact of contemporary geomorphic processes, including avalanches is important element in the design of routes.

Climatic conditions are expressed by the following meteorological parameters: duration favorable for driving period (usually November-April), by the number of sunny days, air temperature (average, minimum and maximum), by the amount of precipitations (monthly season), by the amount of days without precipitations, by the thickness level of snow-cover, by the amount of frosty days, by the middle speed and direction of wind.

Vegetation (or rather the lack of it in winter) defines the dimensions and limitations (in the form of belts) of ski areas and fields. Certainly, mountain tourist centers of winter rest have different skiing or snowboarding zones. Ski zone is an area which is suitable for mountain tourism and sport organization that is localized within the limits of one mountain formation (mountain, ridge, etc.). Several ski fields forming ski area - parts of surface limit natural (forest belts, ridges, ravines, etc.) or artificial obstacles. Within the limits of the skiing field one or a few skiing routes can be arranged.

The basis of customer satisfaction is infrastructure provision, which is determined by transport accessibility and mountains tourist centers infrastructure of winter rest. Transport connection is characterized by the use of railway or highway, by the further transfer and by the possibility of direct entrance to the ski lifts. Availability of parking places near the lifts with enough space for vehicles plays an important role in infrastructure.

Each ski tourist center is marked by its own features of the technical infrastructure. Route characteristic (type, length), lift categories (type, capacity, carrying capacity) are the basic indexes. Therefore we are offering you to review the technical component of infrastructure provision of mountain ski resorts and tourist centers on the example of Lviv and Ivano-Frankivsk regions in Ukraine (Table 1-2).

The possibility to buy tickets directly in place (in pay desk or machine) or using the orders of previous sale (order book), the unification of the ticket (the use of a single ticket for all extracts) and speed of tourists' services are among important things.

Sport shops (where you can buy the goods for any taste), appropriate tourist gear and equipment rentals are among important infrastructure elements. They can be characterized by a choice, service, price, and availability of suitable places for changing shoes. If rentals will be located next to the lifts it will have positive effect on clients and the price will be higher (as a rule).

The sport industry of tourism today offers a wide variety of winter sports goods, among them - traditional skiing, extreme snowboarding, ordinary sledges, snow scooter and other. Skiing and snowboarding are considered to be the most popular winter activities all over the world. All this equipment may be of different types according to the individual skating style.

Each mountain tourist center should provide the following services: rescue service, ski school (general instructing services, beginners and professionals trainings), the provision of insurance services, medical and technical maintenance.

There is one condition, which is very important for ski tourism centers functioning. It is the condition of provision. All ski tourism centers should have the provision of artificial snow (snow cannons) and aids (means for ramming the slopes).

Catering establishments can be characterized by the following: number and capacity, work time, dishes variety, including local cuisine), speed of customer service, by the price, as well as by the equipment storage possibility. Recently one of the catering establishments so-called «exit trade» became very popular. Visitors are offered numerous services: herbal teas, hot wine, mushroom soup, dumplings, pancakes or shish kebab with baked potatoes. All this services have become the part of local residents` income.

Table 1. Ski resorts` technical equipment in Lviv region

№	Resort name / MTC*	Administrative region	Lift type, m	Length, m	Difficulty	Through put people/h	Elevation, m	Mountain location
1	Slavske	Skole district	RT	700	AM	200	200	Trostyan Politechnik Pogar Grabovets Crocus
			RT	700		200	200	
			RT	600		230	180	
			RT	200		200	41	
			RT	1000		400	230	
			RT	300		200	85	
			BB	700	BG, AM	250	210	
			DC	2750	AM	400	550	
			RT	1100	PR	250	320	Trostyan
			RT	1300	250	200		
RT	1000	AM	250	210				
RT	900		250	220				
RT	700		250	130				
2	Tysovets	Skole district	RT	800	AM	200	250	Oryavchik
			RT	1000		250	250	
			RT	700		200	450	
			DC	2000	-	-	450	
3	Volosyanka	Skole district	RT	600	AM	230	180	-
4	Plai	Skole district	RT	300	BG BG,	150	240	-
			DC	1050	AM	450	270	

Source: own elaboration

Legend: *MTC – mountain-tourist centres

RT – rope tow, DC – Detachable chairlift

BG – beginners, PR – professionals, AM – amateurs

Facility location plays very important role in recreational and tourist destinations` structure. It can be characterized by number, capacity, exploitation duration (as a rule whole year), price policy and availability of extra conditions for families with children. Also in the hotels and agro houses you can find special domestic rooms due to the rest specificity, where you can store your equipment and dry your clothes or shoes. One of the main hotel`s feature is their accommodation on the territory of mountain array. That`s why hotels became the part of picturesque landscapes and are characterized by high prices due to the availability of competitors.

For overnight you can use agro houses with high comfort level, delicious cuisine, safe rest and numerous extra services, which can be given here by hospitable house` owners.

Vacationers are also very interested in leisure and entertainment institutions for having interesting rest in the evening (as a rule lift works only till 4-5 p.m.). These institutions can be classified by the: species diversity, amount, capacity, time of work, availability of appropriate children programs.

During vacation recreants use different services: sleigh ride, snowmobiling, ski trips, skiing and snowboarding, providing tour sightseeing services, museums and historical or cultural sites visiting, sauna relaxing, massage treatments. Museums and historical or cultural sites visiting isn't the main goal during vacation because recreants spend their main time skating. The same thing we can tell about excursions. Except excursions next to the territory of natural objects. They are very popular in case of close location.(For example, "Shypit" waterfall in Pylypets village). Nowadays numerous tour firms offer tours with visiting cultural objects and mountain tourist centers.

Table 2. Ivano-Frankivsk`s ski resorts technical support characteristic

№	Resort name / MTC*	Administrative region	Lift type, m	Length, m	Difficulty	Through put people/h	Elevation, m	Mountain location
1	Verkhovyna	Verkhovinskiy	RT	320	AM	100	72	Pushkar Zapidky
			RT	550		150	200	
2	Vyshkiv	Dolinsky	RT	350	AM	250	150	Cheremshina Zaloma
			RT	1000		400	300	
3	Kosiv	Kosovo	RT	1000	SP, AM	600	250	Mikhalkov
			RT	250		100	75	
4	Sheshory	Kosovo	RT	800	BG, AM	500	150	Pasichna
5	Yaremcha	Yaremchanskiy	RT	300	BG	100	70	tract Bahrivets
6	Vorokhta	Yaremchanskiy	DC	2000	-	400	270	-
			RT	250	BG	100	50	
			DC	200	SJ	400	75	
			DC	200	SJ	400	75	
7	Bukovel	Yaremchanskiy	RT	750	AM	2300	275	Dovga Corna Kleva Bukovel
			ECL	1150	BG, AM	2000	266	
			M 1	280	BG	300	15	
			M 2	250	BG	300	18	
8	Yablunitsa	Yaremchanskiy	RT	900	BG, AM	450	280	Dil Mykulynka
			RT	900	BG, AM	450	280	
			RT	860	BG, AM	600	250	
			RT	400	BG	250	150	

Source: own elaboration

Legend: *MTC – mountain-tourist centres

RT – rope tow, DC – Detachable chairlift

ECL – even-chair lift, M – multilift

BG – beginners, PR – professionals, AM – amateurs

SP – for sportsmen, SJ – ski jumpers

Another important part of recreational and tourist destination is management which forms future mountain tourist centers` development.

Mountain tourist centers` attractiveness depends on different elements and their combinations: landscape location system (mountain range altitude, exposition diversity, slopes` size and steepness) and development, picturesque landscapes, resources and infrastructural provision, skiing security, providing respective service with modern opportunities, as well as on its values, image and reputation.

Nowadays fun parks are very popular among mountain tourist centers. They unite active and extreme tourism lovers. Fun parks often use medical insurance, included into price for increasing it's attractiveness. But the main factor of attractiveness is hospitality of local people who provide services to tourists. Now we will shortly tell you about future ski resorts "Slavs'ke" and "Bukovel" and illuminate the information about development features, potential, tourists` service conditions, problems, which exist and the possible ways to overcome them, and future plans (Table 3).

Table 3. Comparative analysis of the Ukrainian Carpathians` ski resorts

Criteria	Ski resorts	
	Bukovel	Slavske
Resorts overview		
Location	Ivano-Frankivsk region	Lviv region
Area	600 ha	524,4 ha
Population	v. Palianytsia – 810 people	3254 people
Altitude	850-1372 m	590-750 m
Resort foundation (year)	2003	1997
Season duration	late November - mid-April	December 15 - March 30
Resorts tops	M. Chorna Cleves, M. Bukovel	M. Trostyan, M. Polytechnic , M. Pohar, M. Grabovets M. Crocus
Resort value	national	regional
The location in relation to the compass	South of Ivano-Frankivsk	South-West of Lviv
The location in relation to the tourist routes	Ivano-Frankivsk-Yaremche-Vorokhta-Kolomyia-Bukovel-Manyava	Lviv-Mykolaev-Skole-Dovzky-Slavske-Maidan-Borislav-Drohobych-Lviv, Bicycle route Skole-Klyuch-Dovbush Rocks Bolehiv-Stryi
The location in relation to the settlement system	110 km from Ivano-Frankivsk, 30 km from Yaremche	120 km from the city, 20 km from Skole
Orography		
Slopes` form	convex-concave, straight rock	straight-concave, straight rock
Slopes` length	M. Bukovel – 1150 m M. Chorna Cleva 1700 m M. Dovga 1372 m	M. Trostyan (2500 m), M. Polytechnic (600–1000 m), M. Pohar (900 m), M. Grabovets (850 m), M. Crocus (1050 m).
Slopes` steepness	M. Bukovel – 10-15°	M. Pohar – 25°
Climate		
The number of sunny days	121 days	90-100 days
Average, max (and) min t of January	max -2°C, min -10°C	max -1°C, min -8°C
The number of frosty days	100-110 days	90 days
Rainfall (by monthes)	December – 41 mm, January – 31 mm, February – 32mm, March – 35mm, April – 54mm, November–37mm	January – 42 mm, February – 43 mm, March – 43 mm, December – 57 mm
Days without precipitation per year	210 days	191 days
Snow cover thickness	3 m	3–7 m
The average wind speed (month season)	December - 2.9 m/sec, January - 2.9 m/s February-3.2 m/s March-3,4 m/s April-3.2 m/s	December-4.0 m/s, January-4.1 m/s February-4.1 m/s March-4.1

	November-3.1 m/s	m/s
(Technical characteristics of the Resort)		
Tracks` lengths	51 km	20 km
Slopes (categories)	12 blue 41 red 8 black	9 blue 8 red, black 3
Lift types	One ski lifts, 14 chair lifts (for 1-2- 3- 4 persons)	One chair lift, 12 ski lifts
Opportunities for beginners	12 tracks, which have an equipment for beginners	9 tracks, which have an equipment for beginners
Briefing presence	ski school, including ski school for children	training center for drive skiing
Lift tickets purchase	cash (no machines)	
Electronic calculation	ATMs location near Cash	No ATMs
Customer service	small bursts	Long queues at weekends
Equipment rental and prices	"Mykulyn Hutorok" from 50 USD., And rental rates of the resort (TC "Bukovel" hotel "Torba"), DZVIN-SKI from 60 USD.	41 mountain skis, snowboards and other equipment rental. For example, Ski rental "Guest" from 35 USD, "Good" 25-50 UAH. / Day, "In Oleg" - the cost of rental skis - 30-70 UAH. / day
Availability of service	repair shops	Ski repair and preparation service points
Accommodation facilities, food and leisure		
Tourist Hotel, the number and capacity	guest houses "Carpathia" (10 seats), "Chervona Polyana" (128) and "Gutsuliya" (14), cottages "Under the mountain" (18) and "Lisova Pisnya" (14) Hotel "Belvedere Castle" (16) "The Tower" (24) and "Lapland" (32), a set of "Blue Mountain" (28)	28 hotels, 200 private mini-hotels and cottages with a total capacity of 1,500 people, including Hotel "Chahari" (60 seats), hotel complexes "Parental Yard" (85) "Karpaty" (60) "Natalie" (50) "Bear Tower" (75), recreation center "Pearl of the Carpathians" (120) .
Agro houses, capacity	private sector "House-ski" (16 seats), "RA" (60) "Hrubova House" (45) "Mountain Prutets" (36) "Visiting Taras" (14) "Dovbushanka" (60)	687 private houses and 138 apartments including the private sector, "Ms. Eugenia", "Carpathian's Tale," "Kukulka" "In Demian" and others.
Leisure places	pension "Kaiserwald" (15km from Bukovelya), private pension "Yaroslav"	pension-hotel "Slavskii" campus "Alpenhof" pensionat "Karpaty"
Store gear and clothes dring opportunities	In the resort hotels (lockers)	
Functional use	Sport and healthy tourism	
Exploitation duration	All year round	
Catering facilities, capacity	restaurant "Kozachok" (60 places), restaurant "Hunter", "Edelweiss" (50), a pizzeria "Felicita" (35), Korchma "Filvarok"(40)	restaurants "Maxim" (100 seats), Kolyba (40), "Pearl of the Carpathians" (120), restaurants resort hotels
Recreants		
Number, age	In 2007-2008 - 850 thousand recreants age 20-45 y	100 thousand, mixed (children and adults)
Countries, where they came from	All over Ukraine and partly foreign tourists	Western regions of Ukraine
ABC – resort analysis		
Advantages	The winter season duration, favorable	Favourable economical resort

	climatic conditions for mountain tourism, the transport development, modern resort technical facilities (the large number of lifts), receipt of electronic payments for services (availability of ATMs)	location, relatively low prices, a large number of tourist accommodation facilities.
Disadvantages	High prices, availability of weekends queues, no spa facilities.	A small number of lines, imperfect hardware, lack of electronic payments, and payments for services, the need to repair city roads and communications
Controversial issues	Are imperfect roads and communications development is a threat to tourism development in the region? Is technical equipment attracts foreign tourists?	

Source: own elaboration

Slavsk is very popular ski resort in Ukraine (Fig. 2). It is located in 120 km distance from Lviv, at an 750 m altitude above sea level, next to the Opir and Slavsk rivers.

You can find here 28 big hotel complexes and pensions and about 200 private mini-hotels and cottages. The five peak of different complexity are located on the territory. And 2 chair lifts and 17 ski lifts, baby-lift, 6 snow cats, 2 snow guns, 41 mountain skis, snowboards and other equipment rental points, the learning center of ski ride are working here.

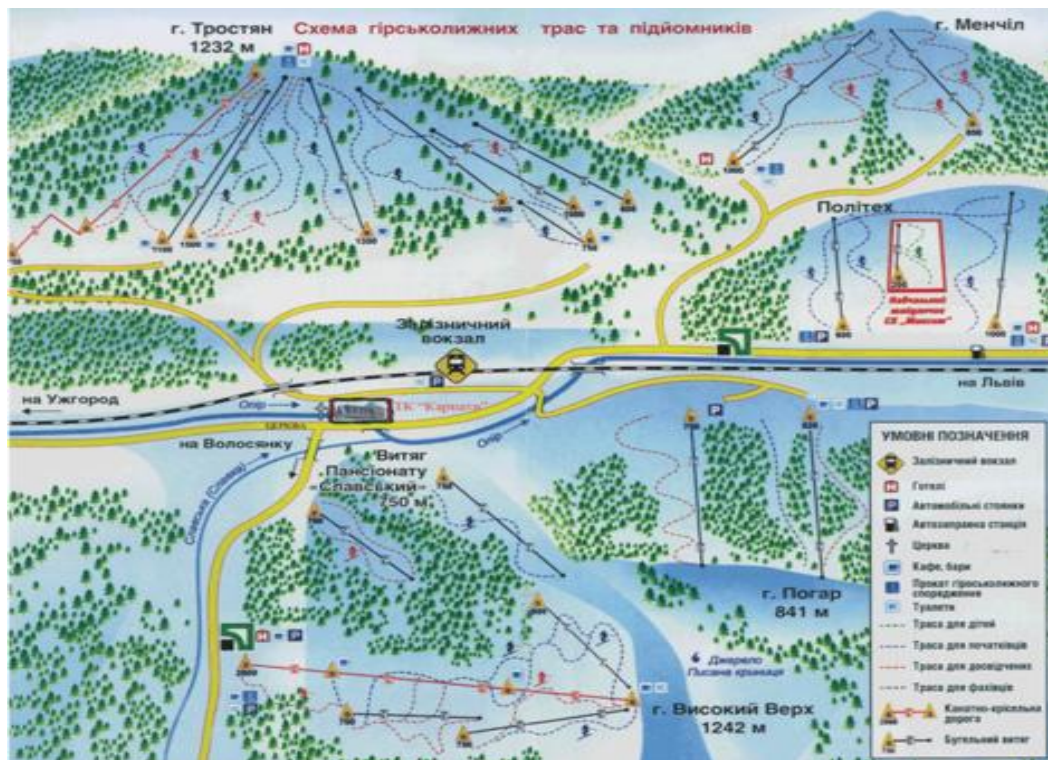


Figure 2. Location of Slavsk ski resorts

Source: <http://www.slavske.com/>

We have done ABC- analysis, due to which we can make such a conclusion:

Advantages of this resort:

- Favorable resort`s economical location;
- Relatively low prices;
- A large number of accommodation facilities;
- Favorable climate conditions;

• Large range of services.

And disadvantages:

- small number of traces;
- bad shape of technical equipment;
- lack of electronic payments for services;
- need of city roads and communications repair .

Bukovel is another Ukrainian ski resort, which is very big and popular (Fig. 3). It is located among three mountains: Dovga (1372 m), Chorna Cleva (1246 m), Bukovel – (1127 m). This resort was named after mountain Bukovel. It was unveiled due to the European sample of ski resorts. Therefore here you can find: modern hotels, SPA- complexes, restaurants, night clubs, fitness centers. Also nice traces, comfortable lifts, developed infrastructure, snow cover are ensured since December till April. Bukovel nowadays consists of track with 51 km length of different levels of complexity (the longest track- 5G – 2106 km). This resort consists of 61 tracks: 12 blue (for beginners), 41 red (average difficulty), 8 black (for professionals). Those tracks united by lifts: eleven chair lift (four persons), one chair lift (three persons), one chair lift (two persons), one ski lift.



Figure 3. Location of Bukovel ski resorts

Source: <http://www.bukovel.com>

On the base of ABC-analysis we can see **such an advantages:**

- Winter season duration;
- Favorable climate for ski development;
- Transport development;
- modern ski equipment (lots of lifts);
- electronic payments for services acceptance (ATM s availability)

and disadvantages: high prices, weekends queues, lack of spa facilities.

CONCLUSIONS OF THE RESEARCH AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCHES

Thus, having conducted this research a theoretical model of recreational and tourist destinations for the needs of outdoor winter activities was presented as well as its structure element characteristics and relations were defined also main factors of attractiveness for different consumers categories were defined.

After analyzing the Ukrainian Carpathian ski resorts it might be concluded that Bukovel is much more perspective for development of ski tourism in this region.

It has better climate conditions: thick snow cover– 3 meters (Slavsk 30-70 sm), longer winter season duration late November – mid April (Slavsk December 15 – March 30), wide variety of different complexity tracks: 12 blue, 41 red and 8 black (Slavsk 9 blue, 8 red, 3 black), greater tracks length: 51 km (Slavsk 20 km).

Thus, for making comparative analysis of the ski resorts you can use the criteria system, which we recommend in our research work. Testing this system on Slavsk and Bukovel resort examples gave us an opportunity to identify their common and distinctive features in the sphere of nature and resource potential, infrastructure support and maintenance, territorial planning organization, contemporary problems and future prospects.

This theoretical model can also be used for analysis and finding improvement and development ways for recreational and tourist destinations for the needs of active winter leisure on the territory of Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, Zakarpattia and Chernivtsi regions.

Also the investment projects of these ski resorts` reconstruction and development can be approved on the base of this model.

Natural conditions and infrastructure maintenance of the region promotes intensive ski resort development, which is observed nowadays. Carpathian region has several skiing areas, the significance of which are going to increase over time. Because the only one region, which has great development opportunities is Ukrainian Carpathians.

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