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**INFLUENCE OF LIFE QUALITY FACTORS ON THE CITIES'  
ATTRACTIVENESS IN RUSSIA**

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***Abstract***

The article is theoretical and applied and represents the result of studying and assessing the quality of life as an integral indicator that determines the attractiveness of territories. The theoretical part of the study was built by the authors of the article on the basis of sociological understanding and economic interpretation of the category "population life quality", on the basis of communication between the works of Russian and foreign scientists, as well as in the process of their own scientific research, the results of which are published in a series of publications and research reports. Desk research took place between 2010 and 2018. Field studies were carried out in 17 large cities of the Central Federal District of the Russian Federation in 2017 and were carried out according to criteria such as socio-economic conditions of the population, the possibility of professional, entrepreneurial, creative and other activities that increase the well-being of respondents; comfort level of life; development of social infrastructure; creation of conditions for comprehensive personal development, as well as the level of attractiveness (attractiveness) of the territory in the economic, marketing and psychological aspects. The results of the study confirmed that large cities are not only developed industrial centers, but also, for the most part, accumulate objects of education, science, culture, religion, sports, attracting tourists and providing a high standard of living for residents.

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**Keywords:** Life quality, regional economy, marketing of territories, cities' attractiveness, socio-economic conditions.



## 1. Introduction

As it's known, the most relevant and interesting research topics and scientific projects are formed at the junction of various scientific areas. The authors of this article, specializing in the areas of research on marketing, marketing communications, services, tourism, the regional economy and the quality of life, and having numerous publications on such diverse topics, have prepared a joint article that demonstrates the possibilities of scientific partnership.

On the one hand, the development of domestic tourism is ensured by growth, and on the other hand, strengthens the regional economy. At the same time, an important factor in this development is the attractiveness of this territory and the life quality within it. What factors of quality of life in large cities of Russia contribute to the growth of such attractiveness are analyzed by the authors.

## 2. Problem Statement

The author's position regarding such a difficult category from the point of view of sociological understanding and economic assessment of the category "quality of life" of the population" has developed under the influence of the works of scientists and researchers in this field: (Zarakovsky, 2009), (Zaslavskaya, 2011; Pavlenok et al., 2010) and others, as well as in the process of scientific research conducted with the direct participation of the co-authors of this article (Bank, Kirova, & Hristoforova, 2016; Makeeva & Hristoforova, 2014; Nazina, Platonova, Hristoforova, & Kolgushkina, 2010; Kharitonova, 2015, 2016; Kharitonova & Sharkova, 2018).

Many authors emphasize the impact of tourism on the quality of life of the population in cities (Biagi, Ladu, Meleddu, & Royuela, 2019). A special place is given to social tourism (Pyke, Pyke, & Watuwa, 2019). Leisure time trends increase the importance of tourism in providing quality of life (Randle, Zhang, & Dolnicar, 2019; Jepson, Stadler, & Spencer, 2019). Moreover, the "quality of life" is also transferred to the quality of stay (Huang, Chen, & Gao, 2019; Peters, Kallmuenzer, & Buhalis, 2019).

According to the hypothesis put forward by the authors, the assessment of the life quality should be approached taking into account: ensuring the socio-economic conditions for the life of the population and engaging in professional, entrepreneurial or other activities aimed at improving its well-being; the level of comfort of living, the development of social infrastructure and the creation of conditions for full personal development; level of attraction (attractiveness) of the territory in the economic, marketing and psychological aspects. The listed factors are significantly differentiated by regional feature, which dictates the need to consider the regional aspect. In this regard, studies were conducted in the Central Federal District (CFD) of the Russian Federation.

The Central Federal District is the largest in the Russian Federation in terms of population (as of 01.01.2018 – 39311413 people, which corresponds to 26.76% of the population of the Russian Federation) and has the highest population density in Russia - 60.46 people / km<sup>2</sup>. Also, a rather high level of urbanization is noted in the Central Federal District - the share of the urban population is about 82%. In the subjective composition of the district there are only 17 regions and the city of federal significance Moscow, which is its administrative center. However, some imbalances should be noted in the distribution of the population across the territory of the Central Federal District. For example, more

than 50% of the population lives in Moscow and the Moscow Region. These subjects of the Russian Federation are highly attractive to the population from several life quality positions.

### **3. Research Questions**

For objective reasons, the regions of the Russian Federation are differentiated both in terms of economic development, life quality and, accordingly, in attractiveness for residents and tourists. In terms of socio-economic indicators, Moscow has traditionally taken a leading position in the ranking of “attractiveness of cities” in terms of life quality. Combining not only managerial, but also economic, political, social, cultural and other functions, this dynamically developing metropolis has a very high attractiveness. The authors' studies were aimed at assessing the level of life quality and attractivity in other large cities of the Central Federal District. The analysis made it possible to identify the most significant points of “attraction” of the cities of the Central Federal District, as well as to identify and characterize the problems that are taking place.

### **4. Purpose of the Study**

The main objective of the study presented in this article is to summarize the objective and subjective assessments of the life quality that determine the attractiveness of the largest cities in the Central Federal District from the standpoint of regional economy, territorial marketing and tourism.

### **5. Research Methods**

As methods of collecting primary and secondary information during desk and field studies, the authors of the article used: goal-setting, induction, deduction, grouping and ranking of indicators, questionnaires and expert surveys, which were conducted from 2010 to 2018.

At the first stage of the study, the authors evaluated the life quality of the population in cities that are administrative centers of the Central Federal District. To obtain the assessment, the ranking of cities was used relative to the values of indicators of socio-economic development, which made it possible to assess the housing supply of the population, as well as the conditions for engaging in professional, entrepreneurial or other activities aimed at increasing its well-being.

For research purposes, we used the indicators of the Federal State Statistics Service, as well as indicators calculated on their basis, refined or proposed directly by the authors, in particular: population growth per 1000 people; the total area of (m<sup>2</sup>) residential premises, falling on average per city resident (m<sup>2</sup>); commissioning of residential buildings (thousand m<sup>2</sup> of total area); average load per hospital organization; number of doctors per 10,000 people; the number of enterprises and organizations according to state registration; percentage of people working in organizations; monthly average nominal accrued wages; retail sales per average per inhabitant; the volume of self-produced goods, work and services per one inhabitant; the use of fixed assets of organizations in industry; investments in fixed assets (million rubles). The final city rank was determined by ranking the arithmetic mean values of the ranks scored by each city for all the above indicators.

At the second stage of the study, a generalization of expert assessments of the attractiveness of cities for the life of the population was carried out. The expert (objective-subjective) assessment mainly exposed indicators associated with the comfort of living. The array of information was borrowed from the results of an all-Russian survey conducted by Domofond.ru specialists in order to find out people's opinions on the quality of life in their cities. The following were used as evaluation criteria: life safety; clean city; state of ecology; work of public transport; step-by-step availability of outlets (stores) providing products and essential goods of good quality; the availability of leisure and sports facilities; the availability and development of infrastructure for children; quality of housing and communal services; the ratio of cost and quality of life (sufficient income to cover all required expenses and comfortable living); good neighborliness (tolerant relations between population groups, different in ethnicity, religious and social beliefs, subcultures, etc.).

As additional assessment criteria, the following proposed by Domofond.ru specialists were used: the payback period of investments in residential real estate (using the example of a one-room apartment); quality of roads and accessibility of parking lots; noise level; smell from landfills and incinerators. At the third (final) stage of the study, the problem of the attractiveness of the cities of the Central Federal District was examined in more detail.

Often, the attractiveness of objects or places is said from the standpoint of their tourist attractiveness. The authors tried to assess the situation in terms of the attractiveness of the city for life and work. So, while choosing a settlement as a new place of residence, a person focuses not only on ratings, reviews and opinions, but also on certain objects that are for him the embodiment of certain life blessings. These objects are attractions. As a rule, the more there are, the stronger the attractiveness (attractiveness) of a place for a person.

Today, objects of production, education, healthcare, culture, sports, trade, natural objects, complexes and clusters formed by their combinations usually act as materialized attractions. Attractions may not have the form of materialized objects. For example, lifestyle, history, traditions, politics of regional and local authorities, etc. As part of the study, 17 cities were subject to ranking (for the study period, only 2 cities from the list were millionaires (Moscow and Voronezh).

## **6. Findings**

As a result of the study for the period of 2017, the following results were obtained.

In terms of housing and conditions for professional, entrepreneurial or other activities aimed at increasing prosperity, not a single city is "ideal". Closest to this condition is Moscow. But it has a very low position in terms of housing provision and health coverage. The second place is occupied by Tula, in which most indicators are average and above average. In the third position is a group of cities, in it there are Kaluga, Lipetsk, Smolensk, Voronezh, Tver, Ryazan. As a rule, they have a rather large range of rating values: from high enough to relatively low. The fourth group includes Yaroslavl, Belgorod, Bryansk, Vladimir, Kursk, Tambov. For most indicators, these cities have "below average" values. The fifth group consists of the cities with the lowest rating: Kostroma, Orel and Ivanovo. Thus, according to an objective assessment, these cities turned out to be the least attractive for the life and work of the population.

The study also considered the opinion of the townspeople themselves. According to the analysis, not one of the ranking cities of the Central Federal District was included in the top ten according to population estimates. The best result was in Moscow, which took 22nd place out of 250. Most of the cities fell into the group with a rating from 101 to 150: Tambov, Kostroma, Smolensk, Voronezh, Tver, Lipetsk, Tula, Ivanovo and Orel. It should also be noted that among the administrative centers of the Central Federal District there is not one that falls into the group with the worst indicators. Ryazan has the lowest rating (195). At the same time, three cities of the Moscow Region, which is also a subject of the Central Federal District, were in the top ten in terms of quality of life: Dubna (3rd place), Dolgoprudny (8th place) and Reutov (10th place). Krasnogorsk, in which several management functions are concentrated in the Moscow region, took 52nd place. According to the population, Anapa is recognized as the best city to live in 2017.

Weaknesses in assessing the quality of life in the cities of the Central Federal District are: the state of the environment, insufficient cleanliness, inefficient operation of housing and communal services. The ranking of the cities of the Central Federal District according to additional criteria made it possible to clarify the assessment of the population about the attractiveness of life in certain settlements.

The payback period of real estate investments shows how quickly it is possible to return the funds invested in the purchase of an apartment if, immediately after the registration of the right of ownership, you begin to lease it. According to this criterion, not one of the administrative centers of the Central Administrative District was in the top ten. The best result in the payback period (11 years) was Ryazan (51 out of 250). In Moscow, this period is more than 18 years.

The best in terms of road quality and accessibility of parking lots from the studied cities was Moscow (17th out of 150). Rather low ratings are in Bryansk (130 place) and Yaroslavl (150 place). The “best” in terms of noise in the ranking was Tver (27th out of 150). Among the cities where residents are less affected by the smell of landfills and incinerators, Vladimir was ranked among the top ten (3 out of 150). Residents of Volokolamsk (Moscow region) are more affected by the smell of rubbish and burning, and Ryazan is among the cities studied (114 out of 150). If we compare the results of the various stages of the study, we can conclude that objective and subjective assessments completely coincide with respect to Moscow, are quite close with respect to Kaluga, Voronezh, Smolensk, Tver and are almost diametrical with respect to Vladimir and Tula. The least attractive from the point of view of comfortable living are Tambov and Yaroslavl. Taking into account additional criteria, the assessment of the level of comfort of living can be reduced in the following cities: Belgorod, Lipetsk, Tambov, Yaroslavl, Moscow.

On the contrary, the assessment of the level of comfort of living can be increased taking into account additional criteria in Voronezh, Ivanovo, Kaluga, Kursk, Smolensk, Tver. Tver is leading in the ranking for additional indicators, and Vladimir and Kaluga should be recognized as the most comfortable cities for living (according to the results of a public assessment).

## **7. Conclusion**

The study shows once again that not always the most developed socio-economic cities are the most attractive for life. The population, especially in developed countries, is more likely to appreciate the comfort of living; therefore, preference is given to small settlements located within the radius of transport accessibility of

industrially developed megacities. A rather important condition for the attractiveness of a settlement from the point of view of choosing a place for permanent residence is the natural and climatic factors.

The largest cities of the Central Federal District are not only industrially developed centers, which is due to their historical specialization, but also the concentration of Russian education, science and culture, the stronghold of Orthodox Christianity, the guardians of the original Russian traditions. Monuments of history, culture and other sights, located in their borders or in proximity form sustainable tourist routes that attract domestic and foreign tourists. All the above factors significantly affect, according to the authors, the level of attractiveness of specific territories.

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