



АЛТЕРНАТИВИ ЗА РАЗВИТИЕ НА СЪВРЕМЕННИЯ ТУРИЗЪМ

Сборник доклади от научна конференция



Издателство „Наука и икономика“
Икономически университет - Варна

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**Сборник доклади от научна конференция,
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FUTURE TYPES OF TOURISM – SPACE TOURISM

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Introduction

Tourism, seen as a complex social and economic phenomenon, emerges to an unseen level of progress and advancement worldwide. It is known that tourism represents a complicated occurrence that has a great impact on the international economy – of course in a positive sense. It represents a so called "tourism industry" because of the large number of implications that arise from it and is at the same time one of the largest economy activities worldwide.

Over the past few years, the travel and tourism industry has had to contend with a series of unprecedented challenges. Political uncertainty, terrorism, consumer wariness and economic turbulence have all placed enormous pressure on this industry. These events have left their mark – not only on the balance sheets of industry players and on global employment, but also in terms of changes in consumer demand and behaviour. In an effort to adapt to the shifting marketplace, the travel and tourism industry has had to restructure and refocus its efforts. While business plans have become increasingly short term, more and more governments are realizing that they can not leave travel and tourism growth to chance. This emerging global consciousness represents a great opportunity for this industry.

It is important to determine the demand for passenger space travel. This requires information ranging from the world population of people wealthy enough to afford such flights to their fitness and interest levels.

Although the existence of the evolution towards this direction is obvious, numerous factors contributed for the deceleration of public space tourism development. One slowdown of this process is the insufficient knowledge and understanding about the extent of the market's true potential. Certainly, the various difficulties that emerge from this type of tourism development, such as undefined relations in regulation, legislation, insurance and safety, market blockages etc. can not be disregarded. Therefore, appropriate understanding and research about the public interests for this kind of travel is needed, as well as qualitative and quantitative forecast analysis for future tourism demand and supply. This is intended in order to achieve a clear defining of the volume and characteristics of the market's potential, which will have positive benefits and advantages for all involved stakeholders in this new tourism activity: transport construction of space stations/space hotels,

investments, insurance and safety, finances, state policies, as well as trade and tourism entirely.

Beginnings and Development of Space Tourism

Over the course of human history there has always been a strong drive to explore and travel to new and exciting places. Space exploration has captured the imagination of the general public for the last 30 years; it is only natural that people are now beginning to ask if and when they too might venture into space. Space and tourism have both developed at an equally rapid pace, and the potential of both together is definitely going to grow further. Humans have travelled and explored this planet ever since they first existed. People throughout the ages have enjoyed visiting or travelling, as time and funds have permitted. There have been various reasons for these constant movements. For some, there was the need or desire for new land and resources, or for new routes to known destinations. For others, there was religious, political, sports or social motivation. The need for adventure, travel and exploring is simply a fundamental part of being human. Thus, over time a new leisure time pursuit and category of industry developed. The ideas of being a tourist and of tourism were born, leading to a large, profitable market with a healthy growth rate.

The term space tourism can be defined in several different ways. It is important to determine the magnitude and variety of activities that it includes.

The first definition ever provided came from students of the International Space University, which studied Space tourism in detail in an interdisciplinary fashion as part of their summer project¹:

- Space: The empty area outside the earth's atmosphere, where the planets and the stars are². Although the frontier between the atmosphere and space is not officially defined, it is generally accepted that space begins 100 km from the surface of the earth.
- Tourism: (1) Provider-oriented definition: providing services such as transport, places to stay or entertainment for people (Cambridge, 2000). (2) Client-oriented definition: doing that which allows one to experience 'in reality' the pleasures imagined in one's dreams.

Thus,

- Space tourism: providing services for humans to access and experience space for adventure and recreation
- Space tourist: a person who travels to and experiences space for adventure and recreation (also space traveller, space client, space passenger)³.

¹ MSS, 2000.

² Cambridge Dictionaries, 2000.

³ Buhalis D., Carlos C. Tourism Business Frontiers, Oxford, 2006.

The expression “space tourism” broadly defined by S. Hobe and J. Cloppenburg as “...any commercial activity offering customers direct or indirect experience with space travel”⁴ emphasises that space tourism does not necessarily imply activities taking place in outer space.

Two general activities related to space tourism can be also defined:

Suborbital space travel: a 15-minute suborbital ride to the edge of space,

Orbital space travel: a two-week orbital flight to an orbiting space station/ space hotel.⁵

Serious activity in the private space industry and hence space tourism has only just begun to emerge due to a confluence of factors:

- **Challenges of government space programmes:** The Shuttle and ISS have failed to realise their original goals of providing routine access to space, while future plans face possible funding difficulties.
- **Growth of new space ventures:** A number of influential groups and individuals in the US and Europe now believe that private enterprise is a feasible route to achieving a growing and sustainable presence in space and are spending significant amounts of their own money to realise this goal.
- **Improved development and production methods:** Powerful computer based analysis and design tools, coupled with advanced materials and manufacturing techniques enable small teams to rapidly design and test complex systems. This also reduces the risk on private sector investment which is usually subject to very rigorous controls.
- **Increased wealth of the individual:** World economic growth, particularly in the US and Europe, has increased the disposable wealth of much of the population, resulting in a significant increase in the number of people who are both willing and able to purchase a trip into space.

The first steps will just be short sub-orbital flights, like Alan Shepard made in 1961, since these are easier than getting to orbit. But the technical know-how to make passenger launch vehicles and orbiting hotel accommodation is available, and there is enormous unsatisfied demand – market research has revealed that most people, at least in the industrialized countries, would like to take a trip to space if it was possible. This gives huge scope for reducing the cost of space travel by large-scale operation like airlines.

The main obstacle is simply the conservatism of the space industry as it is today. Since Sputnik was launched in 1957 most space activities have been funded by governments.

On Earth governments provide a number of services, defence, police, a legal system. But most activities are private – done by individuals and companies. Well,

⁴ Hobe S., Cloppenburg J. Selected Legal issues of Space Tourism, Welwyn Garden City, 2008.

⁵ Suzette Beard S., Starzyk J. Space Tourism Market Study, Wisconsin, 2002.

it's going to be the same in space. The Cold War is now over, and space agencies' budgets are being cut. True, so far, instead of using their huge funding to try to develop a profitable business like space tourism, the agencies are continuing the same activities – even though taxpayers aren't so interested any more.

However, the general public are very interested in travelling to space for themselves. So after some false starts in the 1950s, 60s and 80s, work towards realizing space tourism is finally starting to gather some momentum. And the reasons

- Because people want it.
- Because it's a realistic objective.
- Because it's the only way in which space activities can become profitable
- Because it's the quickest way to start to use the limitless resources of space to solve our problems on Earth .
- Because living in space involves every line of business, from construction to marketing, fashion, interior-design and law.

And not least,

- Because it will be fun.⁶

Like any other business, once space tourism gets started it will develop progressively. It can be helpful to think of it as going through several phases. Starting with a relatively small-scale and relatively high-priced “pioneering phase”, the scale of activity will grow and prices will fall as it matures. Finally it will become a mass-market business, like aviation today.

Pioneering phase

The phrase “space adventure travel” has been suggested by Gordon Woodcock of Boeing, and is a convenient one to describe the first phase. Customers will be relatively few - from hundreds per year to thousands per year; prices will be high, \$50,000 and up; and the service will be nearer to “adventure travel” than to luxury hotel-style. Orbital accommodation will be safe but “Spartan”.

Mature phase

This will see demand growing from thousands of passengers per year to hundreds of thousands per year. Tickets to orbit will cost less and flights will depart from many different airports. Orbital facilities will grow from being just clusters of pre-fabricated modules to large structures constructed in orbit for hundreds of guests, permitting a range of orbital entertainments.

Mass phase

Ticket prices will fall to the equivalent of a few \$ thousand and customers will grow from hundreds of thousands to millions of passengers per year. Apparently unthinkable to most people in the space industry, even 1 million passengers per

⁶ <http://www.spacefuture.com/tourism/agencies.shtml>

year are just 8 hours of aviation! And aviation is still growing fast at today's level of 1 billion passengers per year. So there's no reason to suppose that space travel will ever stop growing. There's certainly no limit to the possible destinations. And the access to space resources that low cost launch will bring about will ensure that economic growth needn't end for a few more millennia at least!⁷

In addition to the motivation for space tourism owing to the basic human desire for adventure, travel and fun, there is also the possibility of economic motivation for the supply side. The economic rationale for space tourism is founded on two aspects: the first is the stimulation of the space industry and space exploration by opening a new market for reusable launch vehicles and the second is the establishment of a new global industry. The only successful commercial space activities today are satellite communications and remote sensing. Although the emergence of mobile communications is leading to this industry's continued growth, satellite communications companies represent a small fraction of the market capitalization of the entire telecommunications industry, and satellite companies face competition from global optical fibre and local microwave systems. The satellite communications industry profits by using large (2000-4000 kg) satellites with multiple transponders in geostationary/geosynchronous (GEO/ GSO) orbits (37 000-38 000 km) for a variety of applications: telephony, TV broadcasting, broadband Internet, storage and forwarding communications, etc. The whole space industry is interrelated, in that the more satellites are built the more rockets and operations centres are required, increasing revenue and profits in the industry. The other successful space industry is the recently developed remote sensing industry. Although still in its infancy, multiple constellations of satellites placed in Low Earth Orbits (LEO) and equipped with multiple optical/radar sensors provide a high volume of information in varying resolutions (0.5 m-150 m) for customers such as farmers, the military, universities, urban planning organizations and government institutes/ ministries. Space tourism has the potential to become a market itself; combining the size and specifics of the two industries it consists of – tourism and space. The development of a robust, safe and affordable spaceship that can carry space tourists can potentially capitalize on the great interest that exists in both industries.

Space Tourism as a Business

The main 'space tourism' activities offered to tourists today are not truly space tourism, but rather space-related tourism. Space-related tourism in this context means adventurous and recreational opportunities that in one way or another are related to space⁸. They may be physical (experiencing high/low/ zero gravitation),

⁷ <http://www.spacefuture.com/tourism/agencies.shtml>

⁸ MSS, 2000.

visual (watching the stars, the sky or the northern lights, visiting museums or witnessing the launch of rockets/shuttles); or experimental (meteorite expeditions, rocket-robot-building, running telescopes, virtual reality). These activities have the potential to raise significant funds for real space tourism developments, some currently planned by, for example, the X-Prize organization.

From the financial point of view there are two sides to a business - costs and revenues, supply and demand. Much of the work of the space industry is spent on developing new technology. But there's no point in doing this if there's no economic benefit. No launch vehicle being developed or planned by government space agencies today will pay back their investment - let alone earn a profit - because the demand for launching satellites is tiny. It's time to stop this expensive process and focus on making space activities profitable.

The current situation of space tourism can be identified through two major activities related to it:

Ground-based space tourism

One important and distinct feature of space travel is the experience of different gravity forces. During launch to and re-entry from space, a space tourist will experience a high gravitational force – several times higher than the gravity force on Earth. For the Space Shuttle, the maximum acceleration during launch is about 3 g (three times higher than on Earth), and for the Russian Soyuz it is slightly higher, about 5 g on re-entry. These conditions can be simulated on Earth in centrifuges. In the Yuri Gagarin Cosmonaut Training Centre in Star City, Russia, several companies offer rides in centrifuges for prices of around US\$1150 (Space Adventures, 2004). In orbit around Earth (or other planets/celestial bodies), tourists within a spacecraft will have the feeling of zero gravitation or 'weightlessness'. In a Neutral Buoyancy Hydro Lab (essentially a huge, heated swimming pool) it is possible to experience something very similar to true weightlessness. The price for neutral buoyancy training is around US\$7000 (Space Adventures, 2004). Packages, such as cosmonaut training and space camps (Space Adventures, 2004), combine many activities related to space and space exploration. These give the tourist a broader picture of space exploration by providing a complete setting. At space camps tourists take part in all the different aspects of cosmonaut/ astronaut life – eating freeze-dried space food, training in partial gravity simulators, learning mission control aspects and performing different jobs and tasks in the same way as real cosmonauts/ astronauts would do. Cosmonaut training in Star City, Russia, gives the tourist access to different simulators, such as Mir, Soyuz-TM and navigation. It also includes rides in centrifuges and experience in a low-pressure chamber, as well as stellar navigation in a planetarium and walking tours and museum visits in Star City. There is also a whole range of experimental and 'hands on' activities that are related to space. Just by looking towards the night sky, the stars, the planets, comets and meteorites,

tourists get a feeling of space and the universe. Services provided for this kind of observation can also be considered as space-related tourism. In the Polar Regions in the north and the south, companies offer Aurora (northern and southern light) watching (MSS, 2000).

Air-based space tourism

High and low gravitational acceleration can also be experienced in the air. Adventure tourism companies now offer flights in different jet fighters that are able to fly at very high altitudes and at high velocity. The MiG-25 and MiG-29 jet fighter planes can reach over 25 000 metres, and from this altitude it is possible to see the curvature of Earth. These jet fighter planes typically have a maximum velocity in the order of Mach 2.5, or 2.5 times the speed of sound. One of the most extraordinary aspects of space flight is the feeling of weightlessness. By flying a Russian Ilyushin-76 jet plane in a parabolic flight path, it is possible to create a zero-G environment for a short period of time. To do this, the parabolic manoeuvre starts from level flight at 8000 m. The plane is pitched up at approximately 45 degrees, and during this time the passengers feel an acceleration of up to 1.8 g. The engines are then throttled back, and the jet glides over the top of the path with just enough power to overcome air friction and drag. Everyone inside the jet experiences the sensation of free fall or zero gravity. Passengers have approximately 28-30 seconds of microgravity during the top of the parabolic path. During the parabolic flight, tourists get a chance to experience extended zero-G, and to play and to do experiments in this unusual environment⁹.

The activities mentioned above though, are insufficient for categorizing space tourism as a business. Efforts should be made in the direction of broadening the current situation of activities related to space tourism in order to make it more available and more interesting to the masses. Two distinct services are currently envisioned for public space travel: travel to low Earth orbit or **orbital flights**, and short excursions beyond Earth's atmosphere and back, or **suborbital flights**.

Thus, adequate market research is needed. The possible size of the market for space tourism was discussed in a number of papers in the 1980s (B Citron Collins and D Ashford) and again in a study by a group of US aerospace companies (CSTS) in 1994. But the first actual market research was carried out in Japan in 1993. The results of this survey were extremely positive – some 70% said they'd like to travel to space, and almost half said they would pay 3 months' salary to do so. The results are described in detail in numerous papers presented at conferences, and subsequently published in journals. In 1995 small surveys were carried out in Toronto and Berlin, followed by a nation-wide telephone survey of 1020 people in Canada and USA. These surveys all found that the idea of space tourism is massively popular, and the results are described

⁹ Buhalis D., Carlos C. *Tourism Business Frontiers*, Oxford, 2006

in other papers (S Abitzsch, P Collins et al). In 1997 the US "National Leisure Travel Monitor" survey included questions on space tourism for the first time. Of 1,500 Americans surveyed, 42% said they'd be interested in flying in a space cruise vessel, and would be willing to spend on average \$10,800 for the trip¹⁰.

Futron Corporation, the industry leader in forecasting space-related markets, decided to address the constraint of the market for public space travel represented mainly in the form of lack of knowledge about the potential market size by objectively assessing the current interest in public space travel, and quantifying and forecasting the future demand for this service. Futron earnestly endeavoured to provide an accurate picture of the size and characteristics of the potential public space travel market via objective, thorough research, analysis, and Futron's extensive experience in forecasting space-related markets. Therefore, the findings of their research should be of value to those involved in: space transportation, space stations/hotels, tourism, investing, insurance, banking, as well as government policy, commerce, and regulatory organizations.

Some of the Futron/Zogby Survey for Public space travel includes:

The group of respondents interested in and willing to pay for suborbital flights is demographically distinct from the group interested in and willing to pay for orbital flights:

Potential orbital customers

Average age	Gender	Fitness	Vacations	Employment status
53	89% Male, 11% Female	60% have above average fitness or better	37% spend a month + on vacation annually	57% work full-time, 14% retired

Source: Futron Corporation Space Tourism Market Study

Potential Suborbital customers

Average age	Gender	Fitness	Vacations	Employment status
55	72% Male, 28% Female	46% have above average fitness or better	48% spend a month + on vacation annually	41% work full-time, 23% retired

*Source: Futron Corporation Space Tourism Market Study*¹¹

¹⁰ <http://www.spacefuture.com/tourism/agencies.shtml>

¹¹ Futron Corporation Space Tourism Market Study, 2002.

- There's no place like home – Of all the attractive features associated with a flight into space, viewing the Earth from space rated highest, with 63% of respondents indicating that the opportunity to do so was 'very important' as an aspect of suborbital flight.
- People just want to have fun – when asked about their discretionary spending, nearly one-third of survey respondents indicated that they spend the largest amount of their discretionary income on travelling and vacations. This was almost three times higher than the next largest item – a new car.
- Private or government vehicle? – People were more or less indifferent to flying on a privately developed vehicle with limited flight history, 52% said it made no difference in their decision to purchase a suborbital flight.
- Lower prices = more demand – Orbital space travel is a fairly elastic market, there are significant jumps in demand when the price drops to US\$10 million and again at US\$1 million.
- Tough customers – 52% of those surveyed indicated that physical discomfort post-flight (e.g., dizziness, difficulty standing) made no difference in their decision to purchase an orbital flight.

The survey presents also a forecast of this new emerging service:

- Suborbital space travel is a promising market – Futron's forecast for suborbital space travel projects that by 2021, over 15,000 passengers could be flying annually, representing revenues in excess of US\$700 million.
- Orbital space travel is also a promising market – Futron's forecast for orbital space travel projects that by 2021, 60 passengers may be flying annually, representing revenues in excess of US\$300 million.
- Location, location, location – the most important thing about onorbit destinations is options. Futron estimated that an increase in demand would result from having both the ISS and a commercial on-orbit facility available, yielding a total of 553 passengers over the forecast period – a 32 percent increase over the baseline forecast with the ISS as the sole on-orbit destination option¹².

The willingness of the participants in the survey was also examined. Hence, for suborbital flights seventeen percent of respondents said they were "definitely likely" to participate. Combining the "definitely likely" responses with the "very likely" responses yielded a total of 28 percent of the respondents being interested in suborbital flight participation. On the other hand, over 40 percent of the respondents stated that they were "not very likely" or "definitely not likely" to participate in suborbital travel.

¹² Futron Corporation Space Tourism Market Study, 2002.

For orbital flights 22 percent of respondents said they were “definitely likely” to participate. Combining the “definitely likely” responses with the “very likely” responses, yielded a total of 35 percent of the respondents being interested in taking an orbital flight. Over 40 percent of the respondents were either “not very likely” or “definitely not likely” to participate in orbital travel.

From this and similar research it can be concluded that the general public are in general willing to participate in space tourism and to pay for it, as well as in the future there can't be seen an end of this increasing trend (including not only people with greater earnings).

A large number of activities can arise from the development of space tourism business in the future such as: constructing of space hotels for the space inhabitants (becoming larger and luxury) that will be rotating in order to create artificial gravity, zero-gravity activities and sports (gymnastics, ballet, variations of table-tennis, badminton, tennis, and even basketball), creating larger rooms in these hotels with large panoramic windows, activities in space in special designed space-suites, rotating swimming pools etc.

Challenges of Space Tourism

There are many legal, regulatory, economic and technical challenges that can prevent space tourism from being a viable business¹³. Binding international treaties and conventions can have a significant impact on space tourism activities. The liability treaty and the convention on registration are major issues concerning any private tourism activities in space, since they have the following implicit:

- a state is entitled to prohibit any private space tourism pre-launch activity on its territory
- non-governmental activities in space tourism will require authorization and continuing supervision by the appropriate state party.

The hostile environment of space presents extremely varied human hazards, ranging from minor annoyances with non-operational or mission impacts, to severe and emergent life-threatening situations. These hazards span a wide range of events – some predictable, some less so. Examples range from expected physiological alterations to orbital debris impact during Extra Vehicular Activities (EVAs). However, the primary threats can be considered to fall into one of the following categories:

1. Cabin environment and altered atmosphere
2. Radiation
3. Microgravity (cardiovascular, neurovestibular, musculoskeletal)¹⁴.

¹³ Goodrich, 1987; Ashford, 1990; Collins et al., 1994; Smith, 2000

¹⁴ MSS, 2000.

The technical challenges of being able to have affordable, sustainable access to space are many and difficult to tackle. Current access to orbit is only possible via government means. Access to space for space tourists seems to need a combination of government incentives and private entrepreneurship in order for it to become reality.

While there is much excitement and activity occurring, there remain several potential blockages to the successful evolution of space tourism to profitable operations. Some progress has been made in the U.S. but equivalent activity in Europe is slow in getting started.¹⁵

- **Lack of a Regulatory Framework:** Regulations are highly important to the nascent private spaceflight industry but as a new activity it is uncertain how it should be classified and thus how progress should be made. As an activity for paying passengers, safety requirements should be as stringent as possible but it is important not to stifle the industry. Regulations are needed in the following areas as a minimum:

Vehicle Safety, Crew and Passenger Safety, Environmental Impact

- **Uncertainty Regarding Insurance and Indemnification:** It is essential to establish liabilities with regard to space tourism.
- **Blockages to Open Competition:** The US International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR) makes it very difficult for European companies to be involved with any undertakings that involve US technology. It also makes it difficult to export US technology for operation in Europe.

It is clear that these and similar challenges and inhibit factors that have a negative influence on the normal future growth of this type of tourism should be resolved in a proper manner.

Conclusion

Mass and specialised tourism have boomed, and new destinations, themes and adventures are being added continuously. Similarly, human spaceflight has also developed dramatically over the past two decades. Thus, new types of tourism offer have emerged. Public space travel—better known as space tourism—has evolved from a fringe market struggling to be taken seriously to an emerging, competitive market in which a large number of companies are seeking to gain a foothold. It is also known that the demand for tourism flight exists and is continuously rising; there persist the need for a proper answer from the supply side to this situation. Space tourism is still in its beginning phase and is making only the first steps towards becoming a large industry, but the opportunities that will appear will be limitless if it becomes a mass phenomenon. A large number of conducted

¹⁵ <http://www.vega-group.com>

researches for the potential market are presenting these predictions. Although the knowledge and technology already exists for making this alternate and future tourism activity reality, there remain a large number of limitations for doing so. Thus, it becomes clear that only with the adequate involvement of the private sector in synchronization with the governments, from market research and technical support to defining the regulatory, legislative and safety framework and similar activities, can contribute for the proper advancement of this sector.

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