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DIRECTIONS FOR DEVELOPING TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE IN BUKHARA REGION

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Abstract

this article analyzes the development trends of tourism infrastructure in Bukhara region from 2017 to 2024. The study examines quantitative and qualitative changes in the main components of tourism infrastructure, as well as the dynamics of tourist flows to the region. Based on the conducted analysis, practical recommendations have been developed aimed at further improving tourism infrastructure in the region, enhancing service quality, and implementing modern tourism services that meet international standards. The research results indicate that although tourism infrastructure in Bukhara region has developed significantly in recent years, certain challenges persist regarding service quality, infrastructure modernization, and widespread adoption of innovative approaches.

Keywords

tourism infrastructure, hotels, tourism services, tourist facilities, tourism potential, tourist flow.

INTRODUCTION

In the current global landscape, the tourism industry is rapidly becoming one of the crucial factors driving economic growth worldwide. According to data from the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the tourism sector constitutes a significant portion of the global gross domestic product and generates thousands of job opportunities [5]. This field not only possesses economic potential but also offers avenues for fostering intercultural exchange, strengthening international cooperation, and contributing to sustainable development.

In recent years, the tourism sector in the Republic of Uzbekistan has been recognized by the government as a strategic priority. The relevant decrees and resolutions issued by the President of the country have laid the foundation for implementing wide-ranging reforms aimed at modernizing tourism infrastructure, improving service quality, and increasing the influx of foreign and domestic tourists. Measures such as introducing a visa-free regime, enhancing the transportation network, and renovating tourism sites are contributing to the achievement of significant results [1,2].

The city of Bukhara boasts a 2500-year history and is home to over 660 cultural and historical monuments inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List [3, 8]. This presents significant opportunities for transforming the region into a world-class tourist destination. However, despite its high tourism potential, the region's tourism infrastructure still does not fully comply with international standards [7].

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The primary objective of this research is to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the current state of tourism infrastructure in Bukhara region and to develop practical recommendations aimed at ensuring its sustainable development. To achieve this goal, several important tasks were identified within the framework of the study. Specifically, an in-depth analysis will be conducted on the quantitative and qualitative indicators of existing tourism infrastructure elements in the region (including accommodation facilities, transportation, catering, information services, and other additional services). Furthermore, the study will examine the dynamics of tourist flow to Bukhara region over the years, including the composition of visitors, their purposes for travel, and their distribution across different areas within the region.

During the research process, existing problems and limiting factors that hinder the development of tourism infrastructure are identified, and the reasons for their occurrence are analyzed. Based on the obtained analytical results, practical and well-substantiated proposals will be developed aimed at further improving the tourism infrastructure in Bukhara region, enhancing the quality of services, and increasing the tourist appeal of the area.

METHODOLGY

During the research, statistical data for the period of 2017-2024, provided by the Department of Tourism Development of Bukhara region, were analyzed [3]. The dataset includes the following key indicators:

- tourism infrastructure facilities (hotels, guesthouses, hostels, motels);

- tourist companies and accompanying guides (interpreters);

- cultural heritage sites and museums;

- infrastructure for additional services (food, handicrafts, ecotourism);

- dynamics of tourist flow and income.

The following methods were employed in the analysis process: statistical analysis, time series analysis, structural analysis, and comparative analysis [4]. Growth rates and relative indicators were calculated. Development trends were evaluated based on the comparison of data for 2023 and 2024.

RESULTS

Analysis of statistical data shows that the number of tourist accommodation facilities in Bukhara region has increased almost 5-fold from 2017 to 2024. While there were 114 facilities in 2017, their number reached 607 in 2024.

Table 1.

Dynamics of tourism accommodation facilities (2017-2024)

Indicators	2017	2019	2021	2022	2023	2024

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Total number of facilities	114	372	485	541	601	607
Number of rooms	1802	3933	5428	6065	6851	7023
Number of beds	3720	8978	12558	14007	15269	16794

In 2017, there were 114 accommodation facilities in the region, and by 2024, their number reached 607. During this period, the number of facilities increased by almost 5.3 times (approximately +432%). The largest jump was observed from 2017 to 2019: the number of facilities rose from 114 to 372, recording a growth of +226%. Although growth continued in subsequent years, the pace relatively stabilized: from 2021 to 2023, it increased by an average of about 11% annually, and in 2024 the number of facilities remained almost unchanged (601 → 607, +1%).

The same trend is reflected in the capacity indicators. The number of rooms increased almost 3.9 times (+290%) from 1,802 in 2017 to 7,023 in 2024. The number of beds increased from 3,720 to 16,794, growing approximately 4.5 times (+351%). Notably in 2024, despite a very small increase in the number of facilities, a significant rise in the number of beds (15,269 → 16,794, +10%) suggests that the growth may have been mainly due to the expansion, reconstruction, or increase in capacity of existing facilities rather than the opening of new ones.

The sector of guesthouses and family guesthouses has also developed significantly. The number of these facilities, which was only 8 in 2017, reached 304 in 2024. This segment plays an important role in ensuring the diversity of tourism services and involving the local population in tourism activities.

Tourist Flow Dynamics

The data in Table 2 (2017-2024) demonstrate that the tourist flow in Bukhara region has undergone significant changes both in terms of overall volume and composition (foreign/domestic).

Table-2

Tourist Flow Dynamics (2017-2024)

Indicators	**2017**	**2019**	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**
Total number of tourists (persons)	1,452,125	3,640,918	3,513,794	4,877,764	5,755,525
Foreign tourists (persons)	169,617	603,084	552,652	1,387,830	1,745,000
Domestic tourists (persons)	1,282,508	3,037,834	2,961,142	3,489,964	4,010,325

In 2017, the number of tourists visiting the region was 1,452,125, while by 2024 this figure reached 5,755,525. Thus, between 2017 and 2024, the total tourist flow increased almost 4-fold (+296%). The sharpest growth was observed from 2017 to 2019, with the number of tourists increasing from 1.45 million to 3.64 million (+151%). From 2019 to 2022, the overall flow decreased slightly (3,640,918 → 3,513,794, −3.5%), which can be attributed to external factors

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and restrictions affecting the tourism market (including the consequences of the global epidemiological situation). After 2022, the recovery phase intensified: in 2023, the total number of tourists grew by 38.8% to 4,877,764, and in 2024, it further increased by 18.0% to 5,755,525.

Structural analysis shows that the most active driver of growth is the influx of foreign tourists. The number of foreign tourists increased from 169,617 in 2017 to 1,745,000 in 2024, representing nearly a 10-fold increase (+929%). Notably, from 2022 to 2023, the number of foreign tourists surged from 552,652 to 1,387,830, recording a growth of +151%. In 2023-2024, growth continued with foreign tourists increasing by 25.7%.

Domestic tourists also contributed significantly to the overall growth: from 1,282,508 in 2017 to 4,010,325 in 2024, an increase of almost 3.1 times (+213%). However, from 2019 to 2022, a slight decrease (-2.5%) was also observed in domestic tourists, with stable growth resuming in subsequent years.

The most important conclusion is that the share of foreign tourists in the overall tourist flow has increased significantly: in 2017, foreigners accounted for approximately 11.7% of the total flow, while in 2024 this share rose to around 30%. This trend indicates the growing attractiveness of the Bukhara region in the international market. At the same time, the growing proportion of foreign tourists underscores the need to improve service quality, enhance service culture, develop language and information infrastructure, and expand the range of services that meet international standards.

Economic effectiveness

Revenues from the tourism sector are also showing significant growth. The volume of income (export of services) from foreign tourists increased from 37.2 million US dollars in 2017 to 436 million US dollars in 2024, representing a 12-fold increase. Revenue from domestic tourists also rose from 27 billion soums in 2017 to 802 billion soums in 2024..

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Research results indicate that the tourism infrastructure of Bukhara region has achieved significant development over the past 7-8 years. The number of accommodation facilities, tourist flow, and tourism revenue have increased several times. However, a number of problems still remain unresolved.

Firstly, the issue of hotel quality standards remains a pressing concern [6]. According to 2024 data, there is only 1 five-star hotel, 3 four-star hotels, and 5 three-star hotels, which collectively account for just 4.3% of the total number of hotels. The remaining 592 hotels (95.7%) are of standard quality, indicating a lack of high-quality services that meet international standards.

Secondly, the geographical distribution of tourists is not uniform. 53.3% of foreign tourists (800,000 people) are from CIS countries, 23.3% (350,000 people) are from European countries, while the share of tourists from Asian and American continents is relatively low. This highlights the need to strengthen marketing activities in these markets.

Thirdly, the number of newly constructed hotels in 2023 was 27, and in 2024 it remains almost unchanged. This may indicate a slowdown in the expansion of tourism infrastructure.

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Practical recommendations

Based on the analysis results, the following proposals were developed for improving tourism infrastructure in Bukhara region:

1. **Enhancing quality standards**. It is necessary to develop a comprehensive program to categorize existing hotels according to international standards and improve their service quality [5, 6]. It is recommended to introduce a certification system for hotels that meets UNESCO and World Tourism Organization requirements.

2. **Personnel training.** It is crucial to establish training centers for professional guides and hotel staff, and implement foreign language proficiency programs [4]. Currently, there are 180 professional guides, which is insufficient. The number of professional guides should be increased at least twofold by expanding training programs.

3. **Implementing digital technologies**. Although the e-hotel system connection rate is 100%, the visibility of regional hotels on online booking platforms is low. It is necessary to strengthen integration with international reservation systems (Booking.com, Expedia, Agoda).

4. **Modernizing cultural and historical sites**. There are 175 cultural heritage sites requiring restoration, and investments should be attracted for their restoration and modernization [8]. In 2023, 625,413 tourists visited museums, and to increase this figure, it is recommended to introduce interactive exhibits, virtual tours, and multimedia exhibitions.

5. **Developing transport infrastructure**. It is necessary to increase the number of vehicles for tourism, especially expanding off-road vehicles for ecotourism. Travel routes should be optimized and the road sign system improved.

6. **Expanding international cooperation.** It is necessary to continue increasing participation in foreign trips and tourist fairs and create conditions to attract foreign investors. The number of sister cities reaching 20 in 2024 is a positive indicator, and tourist flows can be increased by strengthening these ties.

7. **Developing ecological and cultural tourism**. It is essential to increase the number of ecotourism facilities, develop craft centers, and effectively utilize the potential of pilgrimage tourism.

CONCLUSION

Bukhara region is one of Uzbekistan's oldest and most beautiful tourism centers, and its development is of strategic importance for the country's economy [1, 2]. Research results show that in recent years, significant attention has been paid to developing tourism infrastructure, and positive results have been achieved [3].

However, much work remains to create tourism infrastructure that fully meets international standards. Systematic efforts are needed to improve hotel quality, train professional personnel, introduce modern technologies, and preserve and modernize cultural and historical sites.

If the measures proposed in this study are implemented, it will be possible to fully realize the tourism potential of Bukhara region and make a significant contribution to the development

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of the country's tourism sector. Future research should focus on studying tourist satisfaction levels, assessing the quality of tourism services, and exploring ways to increase competitiveness.

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