

Influence of external and internal factors on the tourism development in the Khorezm region

Sharifa Rashidovna Jumaniyazova¹, Kamil Pícha²

Abstract: The aim of the article is to assess the development of the tourism in Khorezm region in the context of the measures taken and the external factors influencing the tourism sector and travelling. Due to his historical development and character of natural attractions, the Khorezm region is one of the most important tourism destination in Uzbekistan. Based on the available statistical data, we evaluate the recent development of number of tourists in the context of the support provided to the tourism development recently, external factors, like the pandemics and development of the tourism infrastructure in the destination.

Keywords: tourism development, influencing factors, Khorezm region

JEL Classification: L83, R58, Z32

1 Introduction

Tourism in Uzbekistan has not yet reached the level of development adequate to their abilities (Sobirov, 2018). In 2019, tourism contributed by 4.1% to the GDP of this country (Teshabaeva, & Yulchiev, 2022). Khorezm region is one of the most ancient and beautiful regions of Uzbekistan (Komilova et al. (2021). Together with Bukhara, Samarkand, Tashkent regions and the city of Tashkent, Khorezm is one of the most important tourism destination in Uzbekistan. The above cited tourism destinations attract 76% of the total flow of tourists to Uzbekistan (Azimovna et al., 2022). Khorezm is a land of ancient history with a rich cultural heritage located on the Great Silk Road (Ikramovna, 2023). The word Khorezm was first mentioned in the sacred book of Zoroastrians (fire worshipers) "Avesta". The natural potential of the region within its historical borders is determined by Amu-Darya, including its delta, steppe and desert areas, Üst-Yurt plateau between the Caspian and Aral Sea in the west, the northern part of the Qara-qum desert; oases along the northern rim of the Khorasanian mountains in the south and the Qizil-qum desert up to the Sır-Darya delta in the northeast (Munis & Agahi, 2021). The historical region overcomes, naturally the official frontiers of Uzbekistan.

According Vaisov (2023), there are sufficient resources for the development of tourism in the region it is important to study its specific aspects in a comparative manner. National and universal values brought up in the spirit of modernizing the country and building a modern democratic society a new generation of personnel capable of performing complex and wide-scale tasks, to bring up children who can adequately continue the great work they have started will remain an important task (Vaisov, 2023). There are many historical monuments in this area: 18 archaeological and 134 architectural monuments, 66 sculptures, 40 sacred sites. Currently, a unified register of cultural heritage objects of ancient Khorezm has been created, which contains a passport of each object and information about its historical and cultural significance. In 2019, more than 420 thousand foreign tourists chose Khorezm region as their holiday destination, where as total number of domestic tourists to the region exceeded 2.2 million (Ikramovna, 2023).

Tourism development support

Various measures have been adopted recently to support the development of the tourism infrastructure in Uzbekistan and in the Khorezm region and to support both domestic and foreign tourism. The President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Sh.M. Mirziyoev's December 2, 2016 Decree "On Measures to Ensure Rapid Development of the Tourism Industry of the Republic of Uzbekistan" served as an important basis for the development of this sector to a new level (Sobirov, 2018). It has been followed by the Program of specific measures for the implementation of the Development Concept tourism industry of the Republic of Uzbekistan in 2017–2021 (Dekhanbaeva, 2021). In 2018, the Uzbek government decided restrictions in the tourism sector. Thus, it was to simplify its visa policy for 39 countries from February 2019 by completely lifting all tourist visas to seven countries (Yalinkılıçlı, 2018). Finally, a visa-free regime has been introduced for 30 days for citizens of 65 countries.

¹ Urgench State University, Faculty of Tourism and Economics, Lecturer of the Department of Hotel Management, 14, Hamid Olimjon st, Urgench city, 220100, Uzbekistan, sharifa.j@urdu.uz.

² University of South Bohemia, Faculty of Economics, Department of Trade, Tourism and Languages, Studentská 13, 370 05 České Budějovice, Czech Republic, kpicha@ef.jcu.cz

The programme of development of tourism development in Khorezm region for 2019-2021 was seen as an important element of the socio-economic development. It brought measures with a potential for this region to achieve world tourism standards. These measures, which can ensure that tourism is fully brought up to world standards, cover a wide range of tasks, from demonstrating the country's potential in the international tourism market to training qualified specialists (Firdavsbek, 2023). Various measures have been adopted to support the development of the tourism infrastructure and to support both domestic and foreign tourism. Khorezm boasts several historically significant sites, especially in the city of Khiva, which is a UNESCO World Heritage site. The region has witnessed developments in transportation, accommodation, and other tourist-related amenities. This includes road improvements and a focus on enhancing the quality of services in hotels. Tourism in Khorezm, like many other parts globally, was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, which disrupted the incoming tourism. Efforts have been ongoing to revive the sector and promote domestic tourism as an interim solution.

2 Methods

The aim of the article is to assess the development of the tourism in Khorezm region in the context of the measures taken and the external factors influencing the tourism sector and travelling. We are analysing statistical data on development of infrastructure and number of tourists that should be influenced by the supporting programmes and measures but can also be affected by the pandemic period. The data were sourced from a Report on the work done to develop the tourism industry in Khorezm region in 2021.

3 Research results

The support to the tourism development brought some important results. For example, there was 21 modern tourist class vehicles available in the Khorezm region in 2017. In 2018, augmented to the 34, then to 133 in 2019, to 293 in 2020, finally, 303 tourist class vehicles were registered in 2021. This indicator has increased 14 times compared to 2017, 8.6 times compared to 2018, and 2.2 times compared to 2019.

In 2017, the number of guides with relevant certificates was 89 in the region, 103 in 2018, and 114 in 2019. Currently, 138 guide-excursion schools are providing services to tourists with appropriate certificates. This indicator increased by 1.5 times compared to 2017, 1.3 times compared to 2018, and 1.2 times compared to 2019.

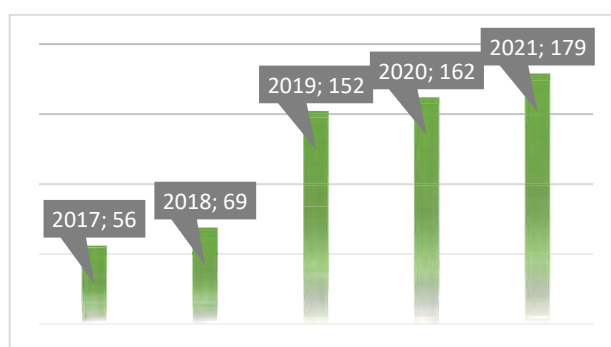
The Khorezm region lived an important increase of both domestic and foreign tourists in the period 2017-2019. This positive development was seriously interrupted by the Covid-19 pandemics in 2020. The situation partially recovered in 2021 in case of the citizens of Uzbekistan, whereas the foreign citizens were still limited by worldwide travel restrictions. We can see also that despite some limiting measures, the number of domestic tourists (citizens of Uzbekistan), the number of domestic tourists was higher in 2021 than in 2017 (see Table 1).

Table 1. The number of tourists who visited Khorezm region in 2017-2021

No	Foreign tourists visiting the region	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
	<i>Total</i>	1 160 700	1 653 665	2 646 597	360 500	1 297 542
1.	Number of foreign citizens	60 700	123 210	420 828	23 050	39 805
2.	Number of citizens of Uzbekistan	1 100 000	1 530 455	2 225 769	337 450	1 257 737

Shortly before the pandemics, the region has experienced developments in transportation, accommodation, and other tourist-related amenities. This includes road improvements and a focus on enhancing the quality of services in hotels. The support was translated, for instance into an important increase of accommodation establishments, particularly from 2018 to 2019 (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. The graph of the growth of the number of accommodation establishments during the years 2017-2021³



4 Conclusions

According to the general aspects of approaches to the concept of infrastructure, it is appropriate to consider this category as a set of objects and services that provide the conditions created by man, the general conditions of production and social development for the effective organization of production processes. That is, the tourism infrastructure consists of a system of material objects and activities to provide tourist services to the population, strengthen their health, and increase their income.

The development of tourism infrastructure is an important factor in ensuring the development of the region, and it is a dynamic process aimed at increasing the number of objects necessary for the development of tourism and providing tourist services and improving the services offered by them. The objective necessity of development of tourism infrastructure is manifested in increasing the potential of tourism infrastructure enterprises, improving their structural structure, improving the quality of services, creating new elements and objects. Final statistics from the 2022 are still not available. We can assume some decrease of the domestic tourists and, at the same time, the increase of foreign tourists coming to the region. At the same time, we have to consider expectation of some retreat behaviour of tourists that manifests for instance in manifests in behaviors such as maintaining social distancing from other travelers, avoiding overly popular tourism destinations, choosing less-known tourism destinations, and preferring regional travels (Miao et al., 2022). This behaviour can imply for the Khorezm region a different structure of international tourists as in the period until the year 2020. Two trends can take place – one is the growing preference for this region as the tourists can look for less crowded destinations, another is the expected tendency of not to travel as far from their domicile. The forecast of the inbound tourism in Uzbekistan for the years 2022-2026 suggest an increase to reach the number of the year 2019 but does suggest a rather cyclic development expecting weaker years from that point of view (Safarov et al., 2022). The Khoresm region should be ready to compete with other attractive destination within the Uzbekistan and the closest countries.

The capacity of accommodation kept increasing even during the pandemics, which can potentially bring a higher number of overnights. However, there are no statistics about projects of new accommodation establishments started recently.

References

- Azimovna, M. S., Ilkhomovna, U. D., & Shokhrukhovich, U. F. (2022). Innovative Strategies Of Tourism Development In Uzbekistan. *European Journal Of Innovation In Nonformal Education*, 2(1), 1-4.
- Dekhkanbaeva, M. N. (2021). Prospects Of Tourism Development In Uzbekistan. *The American Journal of Applied sciences*, 3(02), 95-99.
- Firdavsbek, S. (2021). Formulation of a Strategy to Increase Investment Activity in the Field of Tourism Services in Khorezm Region. *ResearchJet Journal of Analysis and Inventions*, 2(07), 131-134.
- Ikramovna, Y. M. (2023). Improving The Transport System In The Development Of Ecotourism (In The Case Of The Republic Of Karakalpakstan And Khorezm Region). *"Germany" Modern Scientific Research: Achievements, Innovations and Development Prospects*, 9(1).

³ Report on the work done to develop the tourism industry in Khorezm region in 2021

- Komilova, N. K., Matchanova, A. E., Safarova, N. I., Usmanov, M. R., & Makhmudov, M. M. (2021). Some socio-economic aspects of gastronomic tourism study. *Estudios de economía aplicada*, 39(6), 12. DOI 10.25115/eea.v39i6.5121
- Miao, L., Im, J., So, K. K. F., & Cao, Y. (2022). Post-pandemic and post-traumatic tourism behavior. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 95, 103410.
- Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Uzbekistan (2022). Report on the work done to develop the tourism industry in Khorezm region in 2021"by Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Uzbekistan. uzbektourism.uz
- Munis, S. M. M., & Agahi, M. R. M. (1999). *Firdaws al-iqbāl: History of Khorezm*. Leiden, Brill.
- Safarov, B., Al-Smadi, H. M., Buzrukova, M., Janzakov, B., Ilieș, A., Grama, V., ... & Dávid, L. D. (2022). Forecasting the volume of tourism services in Uzbekistan. *Sustainability*, 14(13), 7762.
- Sobirov, B. (2018). Innovative development of tourism in Uzbekistan. *American Journal of Economics and Business Management*, 1(1), 60-74.
- Teshabaeva, O., & Yulchiev, A. (2022). Innovative marketing strategy aimed at maximizing the development of the tourist industry in Uzbekistan. *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing & Management Review*, 11(05), 1-6.
- Vaisov, A. (2023). Expanding Tourist Opportunities as an Important Factor in the Development of the Khorezm Region. *International Journal of Intellectual Cultural Heritage*, 3(2), 117-120.
- Yalinkiliçli, E. (2018). Uzbekistan as a gateway for Turkey's return to Central Asia. *Insight Turkey*, 20(4), 27-44.