

Assessment of the Transportation System Supporting Tourism in the Khorezm Region

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Abstract: Transportation plays a crucial role in the tourism industry. The development of tourism is largely dependent on the improvement of transportation infrastructure. The progress of tourism in any region relies on the development of the transportation system. Therefore, it is vital to assess the existing transportation systems in tourism to make further improvements in the industry. The objective of this article is to evaluate the current transportation components of the tourism industry in the Khorezm region using the method of expert evaluation.

Keywords: tourism, transport, tourist transportation, infrastructure, expert evaluation.

1. INTRODUCTION

The evaluation of the tourism transport system in the Khorezm region focuses on analyzing the effectiveness and efficiency of the transportation infrastructure in facilitating tourism activities. The assessment aims to identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement to enhance the overall visitor experience and support the sustainable development of tourism in the region.

The evaluation considers various aspects of the tourism transport system, including the road network, public transportation services, accessibility to tourist sites, and the integration of sustainable transport practices. It examines the extent to which the existing transportation infrastructure meets the demands and expectations of tourists, while also addressing any challenges and limitations that may hinder the growth of the tourism sector.

By assessing the tourism transport system, policymakers, stakeholders, and relevant authorities can identify opportunities to enhance connectivity, improve the quality of transportation services, and promote sustainable mobility options. This evaluation plays a crucial role in formulating strategies and initiatives to develop and upgrade the transport infrastructure, ensuring that it aligns with the region's tourism goals and contributes to the overall economic development.

Through the evaluation process, the strengths and successes of the tourism transport system in the Khorezm region can be acknowledged, providing a foundation for further improvement and expansion. Additionally, any shortcomings or areas of concern can be addressed through targeted interventions, such as infrastructure investments, capacity building, and collaboration with relevant stakeholders.

Ultimately, the evaluation of the tourism transport system in the Khorezm region serves as a valuable tool for decision-makers to make informed choices and implement measures that enhance the accessibility, efficiency, and sustainability of transportation services. It enables the region to adapt to changing tourism trends, meet the needs of visitors, and maximize the potential of tourism as a driver of economic growth and community development.

Tourism is a complex and interdisciplinary phenomenon that involves social and cultural interactions, emphasizing knowledge and learning. The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) highlights the significant economic performance of the tourism industry, with international tourism revenues reaching \$1.7 trillion in 2019, including \$255 billion from international passenger transport. The global tourism sector witnessed 1.4 billion international visits, accounting for 28% of world exports and 7% of total exports of goods and services. Although Uzbekistan possesses abundant tourist

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facilities and resources, the contribution of the tourism services market to the country's GDP is currently only 2%. In 2019, Uzbekistan welcomed 6.7 million tourists, indicating the diverse tourism potential present across the country's regions. The importance of the tourism industry in the global market continues to grow due to factors such as improved transportation access, increased global mobility, tourism-friendly policies, and innovative approaches to transportation systems. To grasp the dynamics between the tourism industry and transportation services, it is essential to understand that tourism involves temporary relocation with a specific purpose, requiring reliable and high-quality transportation services. Thus, the provision of transportation services is inseparable from the functioning of the tourism business

2. Literature review

Transportation plays a crucial role in the tourism industry, as it enables people to travel and stay away from their usual residence for leisure purposes. The development of tourism is closely tied to advancements in transportation infrastructure, which facilitate tourist movements and contribute to the overall tourism experience. The transportation component of the tourism system connects tourist-generating regions with destinations through transit routes, allowing tourists to reach their desired locations. Within a tourist destination, transportation is responsible for ensuring mobility, both within the destination itself and within specific tourist attractions. It also facilitates leisure route travel, allowing tourists to explore various destinations and maximize their exposure to different experiences. The mode of transportation chosen by tourists can influence their mobility habits and impact their overall travel experience. Furthermore, tourist transport services are not only utilized by tourists but also serve as a means of everyday transportation for the local population, reflecting the specific nature of these services. Khorezm region, located on the historical Great Silk Road, holds significant cultural and historical importance, with numerous archaeological and architectural monuments. In 2019, Khorezm attracted over 420,000 foreign tourists and more than 2.2 million domestic tourists. However, the COVID-19 pandemic imposed restrictions on travel and significantly affected the tourism industry, leading to a decline in tourist numbers. Despite the challenges faced, efforts are being made to revive the tourism sector, with a total of 360,500 tourists visiting Khorezm in 2020, including both foreign and domestic visitors.

3. Transport services in Khorezm region

The transportation options available in the Khorezm region cater to both local residents and tourists. The most commonly used modes of transportation for both locals and visitors are buses, taxis, trolleybuses, and minibuses. In terms of tourism-specific transportation services, many tourism firms offer a range of options such as minibuses, buses, vehicle rental with drivers, and car rental without a driver (self-drive). These options are favored by tourists as they provide comfort and convenience for traveling to different parts of Uzbekistan. However, it should be noted that the public transit system in the Khorezm region primarily serves the needs of local residents, which can leave certain transportation requirements of tourists unfulfilled. The public transit fleet consists mainly of buses produced by ISUZU at the Samarkand Automobile Plant, and local transport companies operate within the city and its outskirts to cater to the commuting needs of the residents (E.Khodjaniyazov, 2018).

4. Methodology

An assessment of the tourism transport infrastructure in the Khorezm region was carried out using the expert evaluation method, which involved conducting surveys among professionals in the fields of transport and tourism. A total of 30 specialists, including professionals from tourism, aviation, and railway transport sectors, participated in the survey. The study aimed to gather insights and expertise from these practitioners to evaluate the existing transport infrastructure in the region.

In order to enhance the tourism transport infrastructure, efforts have been made to introduce unique initiatives. One notable initiative is the operation of a distinctive tourist train that showcases national aesthetics and operates three times a week along the "Tashkent-Urgench" route. Additionally, during the tourist season, there are direct flights to Urgench from major cities worldwide, including Paris, Milan, and Frankfurt.



Recognizing the importance of providing suitable transportation options for tourists, the government and local authorities have taken steps to encourage tourism companies to invest in high-quality buses and minibuses specifically designed for tourists. This has been achieved through various measures, such as facilitating access to loans and granting tax exemptions.

By engaging with experts and implementing targeted measures, the aim is to improve the tourism transport infrastructure in the Khorezm region and ensure that visitors have convenient and enjoyable transportation options throughout their journey.

5. Analysis and results

In the evaluation of tourism transportation development in the Khorezm region, the lowest ratings were given to regional bus stations, roadside infrastructure, and the level of interaction between transport and tourism companies, which scored below an average of 2. Road infrastructure, public transportation, railway transport, road transport, railway stations, and vehicle service received scores ranging between 2 and 3. The level of personnel training in the transport sector slightly lagged behind the training of tourism specialists, with a difference of 1 point. Airports and air transport received the highest ratings among the components of the transport infrastructure, while the level of service in the tourism sector showed the best results.

When asked about the factors that could improve the quality of tourism transportation in the short term, most respondents were unable to provide specific solutions, as they believed that immediate measures would not significantly alter the existing situation or reverse unfavorable trends. However, some minority opinions advocated for additional government funding for the transport industry, fleet renewal, implementation of internet technologies, advanced training for transport and tourism personnel, improvement in service quality, increasing the involvement of private services in the transport sector, convenient payment options, and the development of a competent state policy in transport and tourism.

Although the lack of qualified personnel was recognized by many respondents, only 50% expressed interest in collaborating with educational institutions that offer training in Transport and Tourism specialties. Regarding the most effective mechanism for managing tourism transport infrastructure, opinions were divided, with 74.9% supporting a combination of state and business involvement, 25% favoring the involvement of state, business, and public organizations, and a negligible percentage advocating for sole state management.

6. Conclusion

The study concluded that the current methods and long-term structural reforms in the transport sector implemented in the Khorezm region do not effectively contribute to the growth and development of tourism and transportation. Urgent measures are required to enhance the development of tourism transportation infrastructure in Khorezm, increase the region's attractiveness and competitiveness as a tourist destination, expand the capabilities of tourism and transportation enterprises, and boost their contribution to regional economic development. When formulating a strategic development plan for tourism and transportation, it is crucial to consider suggestions from both theorists and practitioners.

Since transportation constitutes a significant portion (up to 70%) of the cost of tour packages in Uzbekistan's domestic tourism industry, it is essential to improve the efficiency of managing the transportation infrastructure in tourism, pay closer attention to its various components, and fully exploit its potential. The study's findings lead to the conclusion that existing scientific, methodological, and practical approaches to improving the field of tourism and transportation, along with long-term structural reforms in Uzbekistan's transportation sector, are not sufficiently effective in promoting the development of tourism transportation. To establish a comprehensive mobility framework in the tourism sector that adequately meets visitor needs, all stakeholders in the tourism industry must collaborate.



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