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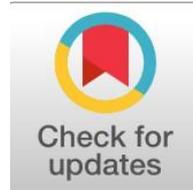
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Features of the Development of the Navoi Tourism Circle in the Diversification of the Tourism Market of the Central Tourism Region

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Abstract

General Background: Tourism development and diversification play an important role in supporting regional economic stability, employment creation, and cultural exchange within modern tourism systems. **Specific Background:** The Navoi region of Uzbekistan possesses significant tourism potential due to its historical monuments, natural landscapes, pilgrimage sites, and favorable transport and logistics infrastructure, which create opportunities for expanding tourism activities. **Knowledge Gap:** Despite this potential, the structural development and functional role of the Navoi Tourism Ring in supporting diversification of the regional tourism market have not been sufficiently examined in academic studies. **Aims:** This study aims to analyze the development characteristics of the Navoi Tourism Ring and to examine its role in expanding tourist routes and tourism infrastructure in the Central Tourism Region. **Results:** The findings show that in 2024 the region experienced a sharp increase in tourist arrivals, reaching 420.2 thousand foreign visitors and 2.485 million domestic tourists, while tourism exports reached 105 million USD. The implementation of the tourism ring concept led to the creation of 14 tourist routes covering 60 tourism facilities across several districts, along with infrastructure expansion including new hotels, increased accommodation capacity, and tourism clusters offering desert experiences and cultural activities. **Novelty:** The study highlights the structural organization of tourism routes and infrastructure development within the Navoi Tourism Ring as a regional diversification mechanism. **Implications:** The development of integrated tourist routes, infrastructure expansion, marketing strategies, and professional training contributes to strengthening the tourism sector, promoting cultural heritage, and supporting sustainable regional tourism development.

Highlights:

- Rapid Growth of Visitor Numbers and Tourism Export Value Recorded in 2024.
- Fourteen Integrated Routes Connecting Sixty Attractions Across Multiple Districts.
- Tourism Clusters Provide Desert Experiences, Cultural Heritage Visits, and Accommodation Services.

Keywords: Tourism Diversification, Navoi Tourism Ring, Regional Tourism Development, Tourist Routes, Tourism Infrastructure.

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Introduction

The development and diversification of regional tourism serve the stability of the local economy and create new opportunities in the social sphere. World practice shows that the tourism sector is not only a driver of economic growth, but also an important factor of cultural exchange and global integration. From this point of view, the tourism development strategies adopted in Uzbekistan are aimed at the effective use of the potential of the regions.

The Navoi region is distinguished by Uzbekistan's rich historical and architectural heritage, unique natural landscapes, as well as favorable transport and logistics conditions. These factors lay the foundation for the formation of the region as one of the leading tourist centers of the republic[1]. The implementation of the "Navoi Tourism Ring" concept is an important step in opening new directions of tourism and accelerating the processes of diversification.

Literature Review

The development of the tourism sector, especially the diversification of regional tourism, is widely covered in world and national scientific research. In particular, local scientists have also paid attention to various aspects of tourism development. In particular, the works of I.S.Tukhliiev, M.K.Pardaev, B.Sh.Safarov, A.A.Eshtaei, A.P.Makhmudova, M.T.Alimova, M.T.Aliyeva, N.E.Ibadullaev highlight the need to develop tourism in Uzbekistan as one of the strategic sectors, the importance of infrastructure investments and public-private partnerships, and explore the possibilities of achieving regional economic stability through the diversification of tourism services[2-3-4].

Of the works that are focused on the Navoi region significance belongs to the research carried by employees of Samarkand Institute of Economics and Service. The authors also consider the tourist resources, historical and cultural monuments, as well as ecotourism facilities in the region and they justify scientifically forming a concept of the tourism ring for the Navoi region.

At the same time, Presidential decrees and resolutions pay special attention to the development of the tourism sector, the expansion of new tourist destinations and logistical opportunities[5-6]. These documents effectively create a regulatory framework for the diversification of tourism infrastructure and the services market.

Research Methodology

In the course of this research work, such methods as comparative analysis and systematic comparison, scientific abstract thinking, and a logical approach were used. Also, through economic-statistical analysis and comparative practice analysis, the tourism potential and infrastructure capabilities of the region were studied.

Results and Discussion

During 2024, the number of tourists visiting the Navoi region increased sharply. This situation testifies to the fact that the reforms and effective measures implemented in the region have been reflected in practice. According to the Department of Tourism of Navoi region, "a total of 420.2 thousand foreign and 2 million 485 thousand local tourists visited the region, which is almost 2.6 times more than last year. Also, by the end of 2024, the volume of tourism exports of the region reached 105 million US dollars"[7]. This indicator, along with a huge contribution to the region's economy, also demonstrates the effectiveness of new marketing strategies and infrastructure upgrades used in the tourism sector.

New tourist routes have been created and infrastructure has been developed in the region. In particular, 14 tourist routes have been developed, consisting of 60 facilities located for a distance of 340 kilometers, covering the Khatyrchi, Nurota, Navbahor, Karmana, and Kyzyltepa districts. These routes are organized on the basis of the "Navoi Tourism Ring" concept and are an important step in the diversification of regional tourism[8].

In particular, tourism clusters formed as a result of the initiatives of "Qizilqum Safari" LLC, "Yurt Camp" LLC, and "Kemal travel" LLC are generating great interest among local and foreign tourists. These facilities provide tourists with unique experiences such as living in yurts, using additional services in desert conditions, and riding camels or horses. This further increases the attractiveness of tourism products in the Navoi region and contributes to the formation of the region as a brand.

In 2024, a number of important initiatives were implemented in the direction of developing modern tourism infrastructure in the city of Navoi. In particular, as a result of the launch of the Shedevr Plaza and Tinchlik Plaza-2 hotels, 220 additional hotel beds and 60 new jobs were created.[9] This has become an important factor in improving the quality of tourist services in the city and region and creating amenities for guests.

As a result, "as of 2024, the number of accommodation facilities in the Navoi region reached 238, and the total number of tourist places reached 6983." [10] This indicator reflects the expansion of the hotel network in the region and the sustainable development of the tourism industry[11-12].

In the research conducted by scientists of the Samarkand Institute of Economics and Service, the tourist potential of the Navoi region was deeply analyzed. As a result of this scientific work, 12 new tourist destinations and ideas (fixes) were

developed that serve to increase the attractiveness of the region. They are significant because they open up opportunities for the effective use of the region's natural resources, historical and architectural monuments, and cultural heritage.

The proposed directions can have a positive impact on the tourism sector of the Navoi region in several aspects, such as expanding employment opportunities for the local population, stimulating the economic growth of the region, widely promoting national cultural heritage, ensuring competitiveness in the domestic and foreign markets through the diversification of tourism services[13].

Overall, in 2024, the Navoi region reached a new level in the tourism sector. Thanks to the creation of new tourist facilities and infrastructure, active participation in international events, preservation and promotion of national cultural heritage, and the introduction of modern technologies, the attractiveness of the region has significantly increased.

These achievements contribute to the formation of the Navoi region as an important tourist destination not only on the scale of Uzbekistan, but also on the international stage. Thus, it is expected that the economic potential and social opportunities of the region will be further expanded through the strategic development of the tourism sector in the region.

The "Navoi Tourism Ring" idea as part of the development of the central tourist area is a necessity. This project will enable the full utilization of existing tourism resources in the region, ensure good infrastructural layout and provide a variety of services for both domestic and foreign tourists. Additionally, the output such a concept is dedicated to achieve among others key objectives such as economic diversification of the region, job creation and cultural/natural heritage preservation.

The tourist destinations of the Navoi region of the Central Tourist Region have a number of advantages. These include the historical and cultural heritage of the Sarmishsay petroglyphs, the Raboti Malik caravanserai, and other architectural monuments, the possibilities of ecological tourism, including the Nuratau Mountains, Aydarkul, the Kyzylkum Desert, and natural areas, the possibilities of pilgrimage tourism, including the shrines of Imam Hasan and Imam Husayn, the Navoi Free Economic Zone, and economic and logistical opportunities, including international airports and transport networks. Together, these factors contribute to the formation of the Navoi region as one of the central tourist destinations of Uzbekistan and are of great importance in the diversification of the region's tourist destinations[14].

The Navoi Tourism Ring offers various tourist routes, combining the tourism potential of the region. For this, the following elements should be developed (Fig. 1):

Figure 1. Necessary elements of tourist ring formation



In the process of integrating tourist routes, routes for the development of tourism in the Navoi region are formed according to the following main directions (Table 1):

Table 1 Tourist routes

№	Route name	Route locations
1	Historical and architectural direction	Navoi - Raboti Malik - Sarmashsoy -.....
2	Ecological-tourist route	Navoi - Nurata - Aydarkul - Kyzylkum
3	Pilgrimage tourism route	Mausoleums of Navoi - Imam Hasan and Imam Hussein -.....

In order to increase the flow of national and international tourists, improve the tourism infrastructure of Navoi, create new jobs for the local population, and increase opportunities for the preservation of cultural heritage, a concept for the development of the tourist ring was proposed (Table 2).

Table 2. Concept for the Development of the Navoi Tourist Ring [15]

№	Main measures	Implementation Mechanisms
1.	Definition of the main objectives of the Concept	ensuring the interconnectedness of territories through the creation of a tourist ring; attracting national and international tourists; ensuring the digitalization of tourism facilities; improvement of tourism infrastructure and assistance in its development; increasing the activity of local entrepreneurs.
2.	Definition of the basic orientations of tourist cycle	On the emergence of cultural and historical tourism: reconstruction and maintenance of historical and cultural monuments; placement of tourist objects in electronic maps; preparation of guides, information facilities and other services in connection with tourist routes. On the growth of ecological tourism: maintenance and improvement of national parks and reserves; formation of ecotourism routes;.

		On the subject of ecological tourism: grassroots stewardship of national parks and reserves; formation of ecotourism routes; encouragement of tourism activities that are friendly to the environment.
		On the progress of MICE and business tourism: development of facilities for conferences and meetings; development of trade and hotel services; 34. arrangement of special roads for tours for business tourism.
		On supporting agritourism and handicrafts: a plan for the rural tourism development; formation of specialized zones for handicraft sales; encouragement for regional cooking and food tourism
3.	Development of the tourist ring infrastructure	Improving roads to tourist attractions; Increasing the number of hotels, restaurants and leisure facilities; Introducing digital services and developing mobile applications..
4.	Tourism promotion and marketing strategy	Increasing advertising on the internet and social media; Developing online platforms for tourist services; Participating in international tourism exhibitions.
5.	Training and development of personnel in the field of tourism	Training and upskilling specialists in the tourism sector; Improving standards in the service sector; Collaborating with universities and vocational colleges..
6.	Increasing the economic and social significance of the tourism sector	creating new jobs; increasing the flow of international and local tourists; increasing the income of local entrepreneurs; contributing to the preservation of national culture and historical heritage.

In diversifying the central tourism area, the formation of a tourist ring around Navoi will contribute to improving 'integrity' among regions and create favorable conditions for domestic and foreign tourists.

Conclusions and Proposals

For the effective implementation of this concept, the interaction of the public and private sectors is of great importance. At the same time, it is necessary to combine the efforts of business structures and society to create a favorable environment for the tourism sector. Such institutional cooperation will further increase the tourist attractiveness of the region and make it possible to form the Navoi region as one of the leading tourist centers in Uzbekistan.

The Navoi Tourism Ring concept plays an important role in the sustainable development of tourism infrastructure in the region. The construction of new hotels, campsites, and eco-camps, the improvement of road infrastructure, and the organization of modern tourist centers and guide services will significantly increase the region's tourist attractiveness. This will create a favorable environment for local and foreign tourists.

At the same time, providing tax benefits to the tourism sector, strengthening public-private partnerships, and holding tourism festivals will further expand the investment climate. As a result of these measures, new jobs will be created in the Navoi region, the participation of the local population in the tourism sector will expand, and opportunities for the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage will increase.

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