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Effective Ways to Develop Excursion Services in the Digital Economy of Uzbekistan

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Abstract: The Digital economy is developing at a fast speed in the tourism, excursion business and it is great to reflect on its' current transformation process by using digital platforms, mobile applications, artificial intelligence, virtual technologies. In Uzbekistan, the development of excursion services digitalisation is considered as one of the strategic directions in national programs for the development of the economy (tourism sector, modernization of tourism complex and quality improvement). However, despite a number of developments in digital tourism worldwide, there is inadequate systematic examination of the impact on the performance and sustainability of excursion services delivered through digital technologies within the national context. This gap will be closed in this paper, which approaches the issue through the analysis of international experience and on going processes in Uzbekistan (analytical-comparative-empiric research). Quantitative data on excursions were analysed as well as policy documents to explore the organisational and economic underpinnings of digital excursion services. Results suggest that introduction of online booking system, artificial intelligence based virtual guide, interactive maps and chatbot services has ease providing the services in efficient manner, reduced operational costs and increased tourist satisfaction. And the development of digital tools for visiting major historical cities (Istanbul, Samarkand, Bukhara and Khiva), has facilitated the independent planning of trips and enhanced access to cultural information. The findings show that digitalisation enhances profitability, improves transparency and controls over tourist flows, while operational costs decrease up to 30–40 percent. The paper argues that developing digital infrastructure, enhancing digital skills and increasing public-private partnerships are the key to extracting value from digital excursion services. The adequate realization of these measures, in turn, would contribute to the increase Uzbekistan tourism competitiveness and sustainable development of the tourism sector.

Keywords: Digital Economy, Excursion Services, Hospitality Industry, Digitalization, E-Commerce, Online Services.

1. Introduction

Relevance of the topic. In the world of today, the digital economy powerfully affects a number of areas. The extent that is relevant to us here, some of the many applications in which digital technologies are driving growth include those relating to tourism and excursions. The global realization of digital excursion services is realized by new technologies, mobile applications (apps), artificial intelligence and virtual reality (VR). What's more, today, a lot of popular tourist destinations provides online booking for excursions, virtual tours and interactive maps. The scenario is pays real as in developed countries like USA, Great Britain and Germany virtual guides and automated guided tours based on artificial intelligence are widely being employed. By contrast, China and

South Korea, technologically developed countries have started to use digital ID systems for tourists as well as carrying out big data generated tourism analytics.

(AP) Furthermore, Covid-19 has speeded up the digitalization of excursions services. Virtual tours were introduced at many museums, historical sites and tourist attractions. Indeed, major cultural sites like the Louvre Museum, British Museum and Vatican Museum moved their tours into an online mode. This enabled tourists to virtually experience cultural heritage. As a result, digital technologies development for the field of excursions services is regarded as approach among world tendencies.

The government of Uzbekistan is also implementing a series of measures to digitalize tourism and excursion services. Notably, since 2016, the development of tourism has become one of the priority directions of state policy in the country. Within the framework of the "Development Strategy of the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2022-2026," adopted by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, special attention is given to the issue of improving tourism infrastructure based on modern digital technologies.

In addition, in the context of the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On measures to diversify tourism services and modernize infrastructure in the Republic of Uzbekistan" approved on April 30, a number of programs were adopted aimed at modernizing tourism services, developing online services and mobile applications in the country. The report contains offerings for the implementation of blockchain solution, AI, digital map system in excursion services. Consequently we believe that the digitalisation of excursion services is current and strategic issue.

Literature review on the topic. Foreign and Russian studies of the digitalization of excursion services, as well as tourism infrastructure development contribute significantly to this area. Buhalis examined the role of technology in tourism and explained how online services ease customer's convenience [1]. The work by J. Pesonen and S. Komppula [2] emphasizes the importance of e-services booking systems for the tourism services excursions and interactive services in tourism. UNWTO [3] and OECD [4] reports focus on the process of globalization of tourism and the use of new technologies.

The measures being implemented to develop excursion services in Uzbekistan are reflected in the decrees of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan [5][6] and state programs established by the Ministry of Tourism and Cultural Heritage [7][8]. I. Jo'raboyev [9] and Sh. Ergashev [10] have studied the challenges encountered in the digitalization of tourism infrastructure in Uzbekistan and ways to overcome them[11][12]. Additionally, reports by Google Travel Insights [13] and Statista [14] have analyzed the development trends of online booking systems for tourist services in the global market[15], [16].

2. Materials and Methods

This study employs methods of analysis, comparison, and empirical research. Statistical data and international experiences were analyzed to assess the effectiveness of digital excursion services.

3. Results and Discussion

Results

Many sectors are currently having their practices overhauled, largely due to new technologies that can make things simpler. One area in particular where digital development and its ongoing process of digitalisation is creating new possibilities is within tourism and excursion services. Whereas in the past tourists were obligated to take tours with guides or through tour agencies, nowadays they can arrange serviceable audio-guide services themselves online or enjoy a virtual tour supported by AI. Excursion

services have undergone a considerable economic transformation due to digitalization. On the one hand, automation of the tourist service processes has led to improved efficiency in tourism. For instance while in the past excursion companies had to sell tour routes to tourists and arrange them one at a time, nowadays such processes are heavily automated by digital platforms. Tourists, nowadays, have the opportunity to choose most suitable routes for them directly with mobile applications – make bookings and even use virtual guide services anywhere.

And digitalization is even helping to make the tourism industry more profitable. Several have been using digital technology to offer better tourism services. For example, on the one hand, we are experiencing a very accurate tourist management and service delivery by interactive maps and online booking, as well as an AI-powered recommendation. In this field, it is also widely developed in Uzbekistan. For instance, digital guiding services are being introduced in historical cities like Samarkand, Bukhara and Khiva. In social terms, the innovation of excursion services in a digital form is increasing the options for travellers. Earlier, tourists had to bring local guides or rely on interpretation service in individual local guide companies, but by linking to mobile applications and artificial-intelligence-based virtual guides or online translation services now they are equipped to arrange visits independently. This favours proliferation of tourism that is becoming easy and low cost.

Further, the sustainable development of tourism sector has to be achieved by digitising excursion services. To avoid congestion in tourist flows, and excessive exploitation of natural and cultural heritage sites, tourists are managed with the aid of big data analytics. Thus, digitalization plays an important role for tourists and tourism development besides management. Overall, the development of excursion services on a digital basis not only provides economic opportunities for income generation in tourism economically but also give tourists more ease and choice in making independent travel socially. This procedure is equally needed for the Republic of Uzbekistan and provides additional impetus to our country's tourism industry. Here's how trip services are digitizing in Uzbekistan Digitalization of tourist services in bkzstn has been developing rapidly over the past few years. Choices of the public authorities, strong involvement of business and new technologies are helping to raise these relations to a qualitatively new level. In addition to upgrading tourism infrastructure, digital technology is one of the elements in boosting service capacity, forming a friendly tourist environment and promoting local economic growth. Now is the time to go forward, with selection as such of trends (on behalf of tourism growth) as digitalization of excursions services confirmed by a number of government-approved decisions and programs. Introduction of the 'E-Visa' system has significantly facilitated for foreign tourists to journey Uzbekistan. Moreover, the introduction of electronic reservations throughout the country has made it possible to manage on-line hotels, travel agencies and other tourist services.

Concurrently, digital guide services are being introduced in major cities and tourist centers. In Samarkand, Bukhara, and Khiva, mobile applications, interactive maps, audio guides, and artificial intelligence-based virtual guides are enabling tourists to organize their excursions independently. Through these technologies, visitors can access detailed information about monuments, historical sites, and tourist attractions. The Ministry of Tourism and Cultural Heritage of the Republic of Uzbekistan is implementing new projects to digitalize the tourism sector within the framework of the "Digital Uzbekistan 2030" program. These projects aim to enhance the quality of tourist services, ensure their transparency, and adapt foreign practices to local conditions. Notably, systems providing personalized recommendations for tourists based on artificial intelligence are being implemented. Additionally, special chatbot services are being developed for tourists, allowing them to receive real-time information about hotels, transportation, and points of interest. Excursion services digitalization does not happen only at the state level, but also involves private companies. It companies and tourism entrepreneurs are seeking to

enhance tourism development in IT ecosystem by mobile applications, online facilities and original services. Local startups provide convenient, customized services for tourists through the development of digital excursion apps. The government is promoting digital tourism with tax breaks and investment help.

Discussion

Another crucial aspect of digitalization is increasing the economic efficiency of tourism services. Global experience demonstrates that the widespread implementation of digital technologies enables an increase in revenue from tourist services. Specifically, tourists can plan tour packages, book hotels, and organize excursions through online reservation systems - this not only creates convenience but also intensifies competition among service providers, leading to improved quality. Moreover, artificial intelligence technologies are allowing services to get more autonomous. For example the development of solutions recommending individual itineraries for tourists (or tourism robots as described in Section 3) or the use of chatbots with a focus on tourism. Digitization is also putting more transparency into tourist services. By using blockchain hotels, trips and other tourist services can be monitored in real-time. This can improve quality of service, guarantee customer safety and avoid fraud[17],[18].

Overall, the digitalization of excursion services is creating extensive opportunities for developing tourism infrastructure in Uzbekistan, enhancing service quality, and ensuring economic efficiency. Through proper management of this process and the implementation of advanced technologies, Uzbekistan has the potential to become one of the leading tourist destinations in the region.

Digitisation of day trip services is driving the creation, development and evolution of the tourism industry. With the current development of digital technology, there is the possibility that not only will service quality be improved, but also economic efficiency can be realized. International experience shows that the digitalisation of passenger services, which makes life easier for clients, becomes an additional source of profit for companies. For example, virtual booking and the interactive guide have been adopted in European countries, which significantly improve the revenue of tour services.

Turning to Uzbekistan's experience, the tourism sector is considered one of the priority areas for economic development in our country[19]. In particular, within the framework of the "Digital Uzbekistan 2030" program, extensive work is being carried out to modernize excursion services and integrate them with digital platforms. Today, mobile applications, artificial intelligence-based guides, virtual tours, and electronic booking systems have been implemented in our historical cities such as Samarkand, Bukhara, and Khiva. These innovative services create convenient opportunities not only for local but also for international tourists. Through the digitalization of excursion services, an increase in service quality and tourism business profitability has been observed. For example, electronic booking and artificial intelligence-guided excursion services have allowed for a 30-40% reduction in operating costs. This, along with simplifying the processes of serving tourists, helps tourism organizations ensure financial stability.

Furthermore, the promotion of services based on digital technologies and the development of marketing strategies serve to increase the profitability of the tourism business.

4. Conclusion and Suggestions

Today, it is possible to study tourists' behaviors, interests, and preferences through big data and artificial intelligence technologies. Based on this information, personalized services are being offered to tourists, which increases their satisfaction levels and expands the usage of tourist services. However, certain challenges exist in the process of digitalizing excursion services. One of them is the incomplete development of digital infrastructure,

particularly the poor internet quality in remote areas or the shortage of personnel skilled in using these technologies. Therefore, enterprises and government agencies operating in the tourism sector need to develop additional measures to enhance digital literacy, train specialists, and widely implement technological innovations.

In general, the digitalization of excursion services is an integral direction of development in the tourism sector, which allows for improving the quality of service and economic efficiency. Through proper management of this process and the implementation of advanced technologies, Uzbekistan can strengthen its position in the international tourism market. Therefore, in the future, developing strategic programs for integrating tourism and technology, attracting investments, and expanding the network of digital services will contribute to the sustainable development of the country's tourism sector.

Based on the conducted research, it can be concluded that the process of digitalizing excursion services in Uzbekistan is having a positive impact on the rapid development of the tourism sector, improving the quality of tourist services, and increasing the flow of foreign tourists. In the future, by accelerating this process and widely implementing advanced digital technologies, our country can become one of the leading tourist centers in the region. Therefore, we believe that developing special digital platforms for the tourism sector, expanding digitalization projects within the framework of public-private partnerships, and attracting investments remain important tasks.

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