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RECREATIONAL TOURISM POTENTIAL ON LAKE ALAKOL IN EAST KAZAKHSTAN

Abstract. *This article is devoted to the study of the current state and prospects of tourism development on Lake Alakol, one of the largest and most significant recreational facilities in Eastern Kazakhstan, which has unique natural and health – improving characteristics. The purpose of the work is a comprehensive analysis of the factors determining the tourist attractiveness of the region, as well as identifying key constraints and opportunities for sustainable industry growth in this area. The study focuses on issues of infrastructural development, digitalization of tourist services, seasonality of tourist flow, environmental sustainability and socio-economic impact of tourism on the local community.*

The scientific significance of the work lies in the systematization of existing problems and the potential of tourism development in the context of regional planning. The practical value lies in developing specific recommendations for improving the tourism environment, including the creation of a coordination center, the introduction of digital solutions, the expansion of the sanatorium and resort base and support for small businesses. The methodological basis of the study was comparative and statistical analysis, field observations, expert interviews, as well as the study of domestic and international experience in the field of sustainable lake tourism.

As a result of the analysis, the main barriers to development have been identified, including insufficient transport accessibility, a shortage of qualified personnel, poor promotion of the region and deterioration of infrastructure. The directions of development are formulated: ecotourism, health tourism, digitalization and institutional support. The work contributes to the formation of a scientifically based model of sustainable tourism development in the regions of Kazakhstan and can be used in the development of government programs and strategies in the field of tourism.

Keywords: *tourism, Lake Alakol, recreational potential, infrastructure, domestic tourism, sustainable development.*

Introduction

The development of tourism as one of the priority areas of economic diversification in the

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Republic of Kazakhstan is reflected in strategic documents such as the State Program for the Development of the Tourism Industry and the National Project "Development of Tourism and the Hospitality Industry". Special attention is paid to regional tourist areas with natural, climatic and balneological resources, among which Lake Alakol occupies a significant place.

Lake Alakol, located at the junction of the Abai and Zhetysu regions, is a unique reservoir with healing properties and high recreational potential. The lake's water is saturated with minerals such as bromine and fluorine, which contributes to its use for health purposes. In recent years, the Alakol region has become increasingly popular among tourists, including through the development of domestic tourism and government support.

However, despite the growth of the tourist flow and interest from investors, the tourist infrastructure of the region still remains underdeveloped and is characterized by high seasonality, low quality of service, underdeveloped engineering and transport infrastructure. At the same time, there are significant reserves for the sustainable development of the region, including through eco-tourism, medical and wellness services and the creation of tourist clusters.

This article is aimed at analyzing the current state and prospects of tourism development on Lake Alakol in East Kazakhstan, identifying limiting factors, as well as substantiating priority areas and mechanisms for sustainable growth. Special attention is paid to the natural and economic resources of the region, the state of the infrastructure, the dynamics of tourist flows, as well as the environmental aspects of the development of the territory.

Literature review

The study of scientific approaches to the development of tourism in natural and recreational areas shows that modern research focuses on sustainable development, effective management of tourist infrastructure, as well as on socio-economic and environmental aspects of the functioning of tourist areas.

According to the works of such Kazakhstani researchers as A. A. Sultanov, J. A. Yessimova and G. K. Baymagambetov, the development of tourism in the regions should be based on a comprehensive assessment of natural resources, infrastructural potential and market demand. In particular, the importance of rational use of therapeutic and recreational resources, such as mineral waters, mud and climatic conditions, is noted, which is fully applicable to Lake Alakol [1, 2].

The works of foreign authors (C. Cooper, J. Fletcher, D. Gilbert, etc.) emphasize the role of strategic planning and the cluster approach in the development of regional tourism [3]. The research by M. Hall and G. Richards focuses on sustainable tourism, where an important condition is the preservation of the natural balance and the involvement of the local population in tourism activities [4].

Some researchers, such as T.R. Abdrakhmanova, S.K. Isatayeva, point to the need for digitalization of tourist services and the integration of new technologies (for example, online booking, digital tourist card), which can become a growth point for regions such as the Alakol zone [5].

A separate area in the literature is related to the analysis of the tourist attractiveness of the resort areas of Kazakhstan. In particular, in a number of studies, Alakol is considered as a promising alternative to Borovoi, Kapshagai and Balkhash, which has a high health potential, but an insufficiently developed infrastructure.

Thus, the analysis of scientific and applied literature suggests the need for an integrated and interdisciplinary approach to the study and development of tourism on Lake Alakol. This requires taking into account not only the natural and infrastructural characteristics of the region, but also current trends in the tourism industry, including sustainability, digitalization, marketing and

investment attractiveness.

Methodology

The methodological basis of this research is an integrated approach combining qualitative and quantitative methods of analyzing socio-economic processes in the tourism sector. The application of interdisciplinary approaches has made it possible to cover a wide range of factors influencing the development of tourism on Lake Alakol.

The following methods were used in the research process:

System analysis is used to study the interrelationships between natural and recreational potential, infrastructure, tourist demand and socio-economic effects.

Content analysis of regulatory and strategic documents related to the development of tourism in Kazakhstan, in particular, regional programs for the development of tourism in the Abai region and the state program "Development of the tourism industry of the Republic of Kazakhstan".

Statistical analysis based on official data from the Committee on Statistics of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2018-2023, including indicators of tourist flow, employment, infrastructural development and income from tourism.

Survey — a survey was conducted among 30 respondents, including tourists, representatives of small and medium-sized businesses in the hospitality sector (owners of recreation centers, hotels, cafes), as well as representatives of local tourism authorities. The purpose of the survey was to identify key issues related to holidays on Lake Alakol and to determine the level of satisfaction with the quality of tourist services.

The cartographic method is used to analyze the territorial location of tourist sites, natural attractions and transport accessibility of the region.

SWOT analysis is used for a comprehensive assessment of strengths and weaknesses, as well as opportunities and threats related to the development of tourism on Lake Alakol.

The choice of methods is justified by the need for an objective analysis of the current situation and the identification of promising areas for the development of the tourism industry at the regional level. Methodological flexibility allowed not only to summarize existing data, but also to identify new factors contributing to and limiting the development of tourism in East Kazakhstan.

Results and discussion

In the course of the conducted research, the results were obtained that make it possible to give a comprehensive assessment of the current state of the tourism industry in the area of Lake Alakol, identify the main problems, and identify promising areas for its development.

According to the Committee on Statistics of the Republic of Kazakhstan, from 2018 to 2023, the number of tourists visiting Lake Alakol increased by 36%, reaching about 390 thousand people in 2023 [6]. The largest influx of tourists occurs in the summer months (June – August), which confirms the pronounced seasonality of demand. The main share of vacationers is made up of domestic tourists (up to 92% of the total flow), however, there is also a slight increase in the number of foreign visitors, mainly from Russia and Central Asian countries [7, 8].

The survey results showed that more than 60% of the tourists surveyed rate the quality of infrastructure as "satisfactory", while 30% pointed to the poor condition of roads and limited access to medical and sanitary services. The problematic ones remain:

- lack of centralized sewerage and water supply in many recreation centers;
- overloading of electric power networks during peak season;
- shortage of middle and economy class hotels;

- limited opportunities for cultural and active leisure.

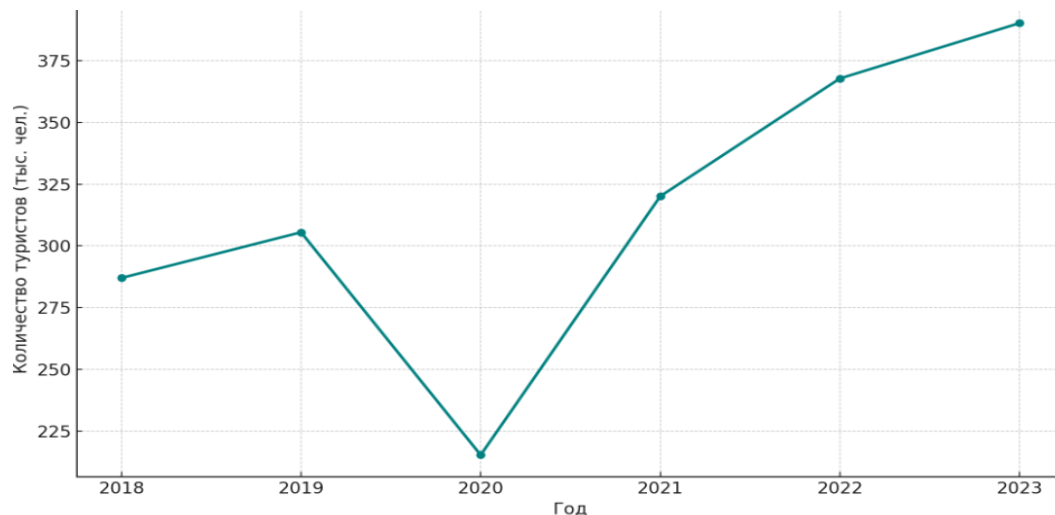


Figure 1 – The dynamics of tourist flow to Lake Alakol (2018-2023)

Note – compiled by the author based on the source [9]

The development of tourism has a positive impact on the region's economy. According to the Urjar district akimat, in 2023, more than 500 people were employed in the field of tourism and related services, mainly in the summer. Tourism revenues in the region are estimated at over 1.2 billion tenge per season. Small and medium – sized businesses are developing - new recreation centers, cafes, transport services, tours and excursions are emerging [9, 10].

According to the survey results, 78% of respondents come to the lake for the purpose of recreation. Alakol water is rich in minerals, especially bromine, which has a positive effect on the musculoskeletal and nervous systems. However, to date, there are no certified medical and rehabilitation facilities in the region that could use the lake's natural resources as part of sanatorium treatment.

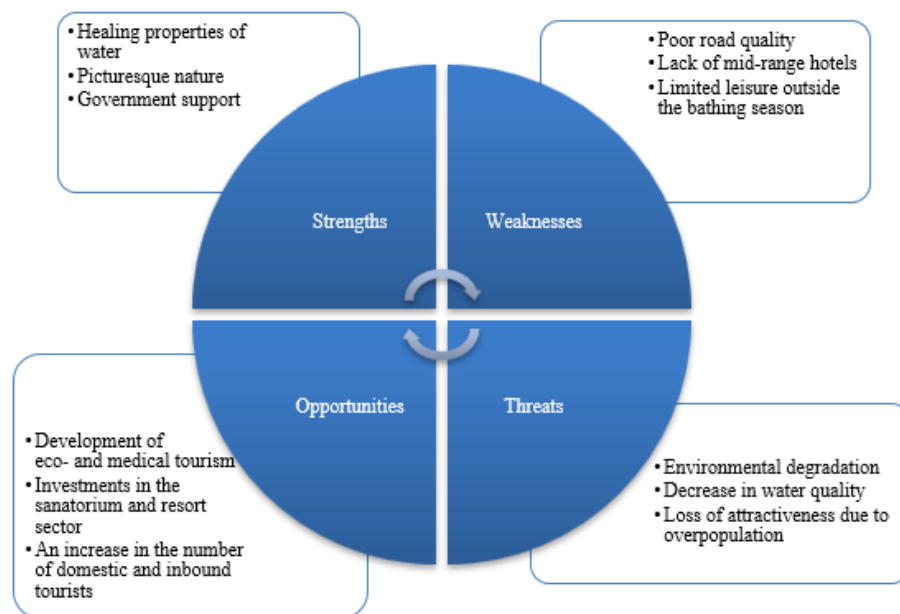


Figure 2 – SWOT analysis of the tourist potential of the Lake Alakol region

Note – compiled by the author

An analysis of the current environmental situation indicates an increase in anthropogenic pressure on the coastal zone of the lake. The main risks include:

- water pollution by household waste;
- deterioration of coastal vegetation;
- the lack of a waste disposal system at most tourist sites.

Local authorities, together with eco-activists, are carrying out actions to clean up the coastline, but these measures are still sporadic.

Lake tourism, using the example of Lake Louise (Canada), demonstrates a comprehensive combination of environmental responsibility and high-class hospitality. Banff & Lake Louise Tourism (BLLT) implements a sustainable development strategy — including road infrastructure, environmental plans, reduction of plastic use and protection of wildlife — with the participation of more than 2,000 residents of the small town of Banff (population $\approx 10,000$) [11]. The example of Lake Louise shows that only an integrated approach — infrastructure + ecology + community involvement — allows us to preserve the uniqueness of natural sites and increase the tourist value.

The coastal zone of Alakol has a high geomorphological vulnerability: according to Medeu et al. (2023), 67.4% of the coastal area is classified as "high vulnerability" (42.8% by area) and 30.7% is medium. This affects areas where tourist facilities are being developed and vacationers are staying [12]. The study was performed using GIS mapping, Gernitz Coastal Vulnerability Index (CVI), satellite monitoring and field observations [13]. To protect the coastal zone, engineering measures are needed — shore reinforcement, geogrids, dams — and coastal zoning, taking into account geomorphological risks.

AR technologies have proven their effectiveness in the tourism industry: using the example of the ToARist application developed by user centred design, usability, interactivity and tourist engagement have been improved. The application has gone through several iterations, testing the prototype with 20 participants, showed a high appreciation for the convenience of integrating AR guides and routes [14]. This approach can also be adapted in Alakol: to introduce a mobile AR guide with routes, objects (flora, history, culture) and QR points, which will increase the tourist attractiveness and educational value of the service.

AR/VR tools, including 360° virtual tours of beaches and sanatoriums, can stimulate the interest of foreign tourists, as has been proven for Lake Toba (Indonesia): VR experiences have increased the intention to visit and recommend a destination. For Lake Alakol, this means launching virtual "test tours" — panoramic videos, panoramas, and infrastructure presentations that slow down the tourist flow and guide it during periods of low congestion.

BigDate and IoT transform smart tourism from theory into practice: flow analytics, peak load detection, demand forecasting with AI — all this helps to manage resources and minimize the impact on the eco-environment. It is important for Alakol to install visitor sensors on beaches, Wi-Fi markings, an analytical panel, congestion alerts, and a mobile message about the loading of facilities - this will help mitigate seasonal emissions and optimize infrastructure.

The infrastructure of road and transport accessibility plays a key role. To improve logistics, it is important to equip the 200-kilometer section to Alakol with a high-quality road, equip service areas (gas stations, hotels, medical centers), expand border posts with China and develop the Ak Togai-Dostyk railway line with stops at tourist sites. The experience of Lake Geneva shows that the integration of transport (train+ferry+bus+excursions) through a single ticket improves connectivity and attracts tourists.

The environmental component should include a centralized sewage system, standards for

autonomous wastewater treatment plants on the shore, and regular sanitary inspections. Monitoring of water, shores and flora using digital panels and information stands is important. Environmental literacy is complemented by the involvement of the local community: community councils, surveys, training programs for guides from among the villagers, master classes — similar to BLLT, which actively involves residents in the development of the "Lead Tourism for Good" strategy [15].

To assess the effectiveness of solutions, the seven-factor smart tourism experience scale (MDPI, 2022) is used: accessibility, interactivity, hedonic experience, environmental reflection, trust, convenience, value. Based on this assessment, it is possible to adjust digital and infrastructure services, invest in IT systems, UX/UI, high-value content and selling experience.

The development of the cultural component gives Lake Alakol its uniqueness. The Silk Road AR routes with immersion in history, craft fairs, ethno festivals and integration with indigenous practices — develop the local economy and preserve cultural heritage. The involvement of indigenous people in ecotourism enhances the authenticity and social sustainability of the project.

State context: In Kazakhstan's strategies, tourism should grow to 8% of GDP by 2025, with ecotourism and wellness considered a priority. For implementation, Alakol has grounds to set indicators: tourist flow, income, premium. PPP models and investments are possible through international grants (UNESCO, GEF), government subsidies and our own digital ecosystem with a subscription for tourists.

Alakol can become an analogue of Lake Louise with the use of engineering coastal protection, sustainable infrastructure, a digital platform for smart tourism, AR/VR, environmental standards, the involvement of local and cultural programs. Filling the digital and physical space will make it possible to effectively manage seasonality, protect nature and increase the tourism potential of the region.

- competition of high—quality infrastructure measures,
- environmental and digital practices,
- cultural engagement,
- government cooperation and investments — will form a balanced, sustainable and attractive direction of tourist development on Lake Alakol.

The development of tourism on Lake Alakol requires not only an internal analysis of the current infrastructure and natural resources, but also an active study and adaptation of the international experience of sustainable lake tourism. In world practice, successful cases can be identified in which digital technologies, the participation of local communities and environmental regulation are combined to achieve a sustainable balance between tourism and nature conservation.

One such example is the Lake District in the UK, where, despite its natural appeal, the region has faced the negative consequences of so-called overtourism. According to a study published in The Guardian, a large number of short-term rentals through platforms like Airbnb (about 14,000 properties) disrupt community sustainability, lead to loss of housing stock and negatively affect natural ecosystems. This situation underscores the need for early regulation of the tourist flow in Alakol, including through the control of accommodation, environmental loads and the development of "soft" tourism focused on wellness and ecology.

Special attention should be paid to the use of geographic information systems (GIS) and coastline vulnerability models, as was done in the study by Medeu et al. (2023) in relation to Lake Alakol. Using the Coastal Vulnerability Index (CVI) model, the authors proved that more than 67% of the coastal zone of Alakol is highly vulnerable. This requires the implementation of engineering solutions for coastal protection, planning of areas with limited development, as well as the development of a long-term monitoring program for changes in water levels and erosion [16].

Using the Cinque Terre in Italy as an example, one can trace the importance of participatory management in protected natural areas. There, the involvement of local residents in tourism activities and joint decision-making made it possible to create a model where infrastructure development does not violate the cultural integrity and natural sustainability of the territory. This is especially true for Alakol, located at the junction of cultural and natural zones of Eastern Kazakhstan [17].

On the other hand, modern technologies open up new prospects for the digitalization of travel services. A study published in the journal Sustainability (MDPI) highlights that smart tourism using IoT, AR/VR, blockchain and Big Data can not only improve the tourist experience, but also contribute to a more rational use of resources. The integration of approaches such as visual AR-guides along the coastal zone, VR-walks along sanatoriums and natural routes, as well as digital booking, taking into account the load on the territory, can contribute to an even distribution of tourists and reduce seasonal pressure.

In this regard, the experience of the cities of Tampere (Finland), Ljubljana (Slovenia) and Aspres (France) is interesting because they have created digital ecosystems of TAAS (Tourism as a System), including mobile applications, an attendance analysis system, interactive maps, as well as sustainable marketing algorithms. These technologies are applicable to the Alakol region, where there is still no centralized system for accounting and managing the tourist flow.

One of the promising areas is the involvement of local communities in the process of managing and benefiting from tourism. In Malaysia, a project has been implemented in Kuching, where public participation in decision-making and small business development has proved to be a key factor in sustainability. According to a study published in the European Journal of Tourism Research, the participation of local residents contributes to a better distribution of income, reducing tensions and increasing confidence in tourism policy. The same approach can be implemented in Alakol through the support of rural hospitality, the creation of guesthouses, workshops and cultural events reflecting the local identity.

In parallel with engineering approaches, the use of digital sensors, IoT devices, and analytical panels is becoming increasingly important. Their integration allows you to track the number of visitors in real time, identify infrastructure bottlenecks, and adapt logistics. The installation of Wi-Fi meters, the integration of mobile notifications about beach congestion and the use of heat maps will increase the comfort of recreation and prevent overloading of individual zones.

In addition to infrastructural and digital development, the cultural and visual aspect of the territory is important. For example, the Santa Catarina Palopó project in Guatemala has shown how the transformation of settlement architecture through color coding and ethnic motifs increases cultural value, develops art tourism and contributes to the preservation of cultural identity. This can be applied in Alakol in the form of cultural festivals, ethnic fairs, as well as initiatives to decorate guest houses in the style of traditional Kazakh ornaments.

It should also be noted the potential of using blockchain technologies in managing tourist flows. As shown in a study conducted in the state of Sikkim (India), the blockchain is used for transparent accounting of tourist permits, environmental fees and confirmation of the status of a sustainable facility. This practice contributes to the growth of trust on the part of tourists, increases the prestige of the destination and contributes to the formation of a "green brand" of the territory [18].

Finally, the development of tourism is impossible without government support. The national project "Development of Tourism and the hospitality industry" of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2019-2025 provides for the growth of the sector to 8% of GDP. However, as the experience of international programs shows, formal goals need to be accompanied by specific support mechanisms

on the ground: tax benefits, subsidies, access to grants and the implementation of sustainability standards. The integration of the efforts of government agencies, private business and the local population should become the basis for the development of the tourism cluster in Alakol.

In general, the experience of the lake regions in Canada, India, Italy, Finland, Slovenia and other countries suggests that sustainable tourism development is possible only with an integrated approach: ecological, digital, social and cultural. Lake Alakol has all the natural and organizational prerequisites for transformation into a center of ecotourism, recreational recreation and digital solutions in tourism. The prerequisite for this will be systematic work to protect nature, attract investment, digitalize and involve all stakeholders.

An additional factor influencing the development of tourism on Lake Alakol is the transformation of consumer preferences of tourists, especially in the post-pandemic period. According to international observations, there is a clear shift towards tourists seeking safe, environmentally friendly and secluded destinations where natural landscapes, recreational opportunities and digital independence play an important role. Lake Alakol, which has unique mineralized waters, a warm climate and remoteness from large urban centers, satisfies many of these expectations.

However, to realize the potential, it is necessary to take into account the changing structure of demand. For example, according to the European Tourism Commission, an increasing number of tourists are seeking flexible vacation formats — from short trips to workation (work + rest), which requires stable Wi-Fi coverage, advanced IT infrastructure and adaptive services. For the Lake Alakol region, this means the need to invest in digital infrastructure, including the creation of online travel platforms, electronic booking systems, virtual guides and interactive maps. Such digital solutions not only increase the attractiveness of the destination, but also contribute to the effective management of tourist flows, reducing the burden on ecologically vulnerable areas of the coast.

In addition, the modern tourist audience is actively guided by sustainability criteria, including the availability of "green" certifications, environmental practices and a socially responsible approach on the part of businesses. In this context, Lake Alakol can use international standards for sustainable tourism, such as the GSTC (Global Sustainable Tourism Council), as a model for evaluating and certifying hotel complexes, tourist bases, and other facilities. The creation of the Green Alakol regional program with the issuance of environmental labels, support for eco-initiatives, organization of training courses for entrepreneurs and the introduction of ESG criteria can become one of the effective tools for positioning the region as an environmentally oriented area.

An important task remains the formation of a positive image of the destination in both the domestic and international tourism market. International experience shows that sustainable destination brands are formed not only due to natural conditions, but also due to the presence of a vibrant identity, an original narrative, as well as effective content. For Alakol, it is advisable to create a unified visual and semantic brand concept based on images of nature, silence, health, and historical and cultural heritage. This may involve media channels, video blogs, tour operators, bloggers, as well as diplomatic missions of Kazakhstan abroad.

Thus, based on a comprehensive analysis of international experience, digital technologies, environmental requirements and the participation of local communities, it can be concluded that Lake Alakol has a high potential for sustainable and competitive development as a tourist destination. The implementation of strategic approaches — from the introduction of smart infrastructure and environmental certification to active branding and the involvement of local residents — will not only increase the influx of tourists, but also preserve the unique natural environment of the region. In the

context of global changes in tourism demand and challenges to environmental sustainability, it is important that the development of Lake Alakol takes place on the basis of a scientifically sound and socially oriented approach, providing long-term value for both the economy of Kazakhstan and for future generations.

Conclusion

The conducted research has shown that Lake Alakol has significant potential for the development of domestic and inbound tourism in Kazakhstan due to its unique natural and recreational resources. The steady growth of the tourist flow in recent years confirms the growing interest of the population in this area, which is facilitated by natural and climatic features, as well as government support measures.

At the same time, the development of tourism on Lake Alakol faces a number of objective problems, including the seasonal nature of tourist demand, limited and worn-out infrastructure, poor quality of service, as well as environmental risks. The issues of modernizing transport accessibility, water supply, sanitation, and waste disposal require a systematic and interagency approach.

Based on the results of the survey, statistical and SWOT analysis, the following priority areas of development can be identified:

- modernization of the region's engineering and transport infrastructure;
- creation of medical and health facilities using the natural resources of the lake;
- development of ecologically oriented forms of tourism (eco- and agrotourism);
- support for small and medium - sized businesses in the tourism sector;
- introduction of digital services for tourists (online booking, mobile guides, information portals);
- increasing the environmental responsibility of all participants in the tourism process.

Thus, the sustainable development of tourism on Lake Alakol is possible with an integrated approach that includes government support, business participation, scientific support and the involvement of the local community. The implementation of the proposed measures will increase the investment attractiveness of the region, improve the quality of tourist services and ensure a balance between economic development and the preservation of natural heritage.

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ШЫҒЫС ҚАЗАҚСТАНДАҒЫ АЛАКӨЛ КӨЛІНІҢ РЕКРЕАЦИЯЛЫҚ ТУРИСТІК ӘЛЕУЕТІ

Аңдатпа. Бұл мақала бірегей табиғи және сауықтыру ерекшеліктері бар Шығыс Қазақстанның ең ірі және маңызды демалыс орындарының бірі Алакөл көліндегі туризмнің қазіргі жағдайы мен даму перспективаларын зерттеуге арналған. Жұмыстың мақсаты - аймақтың туристік тартымдылығын анықтайтын факторларды жан-жақты талдау, сонымен қатар осы саладағы өнеркәсіптің тұрақты өсуінің негізгі шектеулері мен мүмкіндіктерін анықтау. Зерттеу инфрақұрылымды дамыту, туристік қызметтерді цифрландыру, туристік ағымның маусымдылығы, экологиялық тұрақтылық және туризмнің жергілікті қоғамдастыққа әлеуметтік-экономикалық әсері мәселелеріне бағытталған.

Жұмыстың ғылыми маңыздылығы аймақтық жоспарлау жағдайында бар проблемаларды жүйелеу және туризмді дамыту әлеуетінде жатыр. Практикалық құндылығы туристік ортаны жақсарту бойынша нақты ұсыныстарды әзірлеуде, оның ішінде үйлестіру орталығын құруда, цифрлық шешімдерді енгізуде, санаторийлік-курорттық базаны кеңейтуде және шағын бизнесті қолдауда жатыр. Зерттеудің әдіснамалық негізі салыстырмалы-статистикалық талдау, далалық бақылаулар, сараптамалық сұхбаттар, сондай-ақ тұрақты көл туризмі саласындағы отандық және халықаралық тәжірибені зерттеу болды.

Талдау нәтижесінде дамудың негізгі кедергілері анықталды, оның ішінде көлікке қол жетімділіктің жеткіліксіздігі, білікті кадрлардың жетіспеушілігі, аймақтың нашар ілгерілеуі және инфрақұрылымның нашарлауы. Даму бағыттары тұжырымдалған: экотуризм, сауықтыру туризмі, цифрландыру және институционалдық қолдау. Бұл жұмыс Қазақстан аймақтарында туризмді тұрақты дамытудың ғылыми негізделген моделін қалыптастыруға ықпал етеді және оны туризм саласындағы мемлекеттік бағдарламалар мен стратегияларды әзірлеуде қолдануға болады.

Кілт сөздер: туризм, Алакөл көлі, рекреациялық әлеует, инфрақұрылым, Ішкі туризм, тұрақты даму.

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РЕКРЕАЦИОННЫЙ ТУРИСТИЧЕСКИЙ ПОТЕНЦИАЛ ОЗЕРА АЛАКОЛЬ В ВОСТОЧНОМ КАЗАХСТАНЕ

Аннотация. Данная статья посвящена изучению современного состояния и перспектив развития туризма на озере Алаколь, одном из крупнейших и наиболее значимых рекреационных объектов Восточного Казахстана, обладающем уникальными природными и оздоровительными характеристиками. Целью работы является всесторонний анализ факторов, определяющих туристическую привлекательность региона, а также выявление ключевых ограничений и возможностей для устойчивого роста промышленности в этой сфере. Исследование сосредоточено на вопросах развития инфраструктуры, цифровизации туристических услуг, сезонности туристического потока, экологической устойчивости и социально-экономического воздействия туризма на местное сообщество.

Научная значимость работы заключается в систематизации существующих проблем и потенциала развития туризма в контексте регионального планирования. Практическая ценность заключается в разработке конкретных рекомендаций по улучшению туристической среды, включая создание координационного центра, внедрение цифровых решений, расширение санаторно-курортной базы и поддержку малого бизнеса. Методологической основой исследования послужили сравнительный и статистический анализ, полевые наблюдения, экспертные интервью, а также изучение отечественного и международного опыта в области устойчивого озерного туризма.

В результате анализа были выявлены основные барьеры для развития, в том числе недостаточная транспортная доступность, нехватка квалифицированных кадров, слабое продвижение региона и изношенность инфраструктуры. Сформулированы направления развития: экотуризм, оздоровительный туризм, цифровизация и институциональная поддержка. Работа способствует формированию научно обоснованной модели устойчивого развития туризма в регионах Казахстана и может быть использована при разработке государственных программ и стратегий в сфере туризма.

Ключевые слова: туризм, озеро Алаколь, рекреационный потенциал, инфраструктура, внутренний туризм, устойчивое развитие.