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Analysis of Tourism Routes in Tourist Areas (On the Example of the Samarkand Region)

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Abstract: This article covers the definitions of a tourism route given by foreign and local scholars, an analysis of tourism routes in the context of tourist areas, and data on the duration of tourists' stays in these areas while using existing routes. Additionally, based on the author's research, tourism routes are analyzed on the example of the Samarkand region according to the results of surveys conducted among tourists.

Keywords: Tourism route, tour duration, number of tourists, international tourists, length of stay in the region, cultural heritage sites, touristic city, historical, architectural, and archaeological monuments.

Introduction

Resolution PQ-161 of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, "On Measures for the Accelerated Development of Tourism Infrastructure in the Regions and the Introduction of a Project Management System in the Sector", was adopted on April 30, 2026. According to the resolution, the objectives are to comprehensively develop tourism infrastructure in the regions, transition the tourism sector to a project management system, create new jobs, increase public income, and boost the flow of local and foreign tourists [1]. In executing this resolution, the 2026-2027 tourism development targets for the Republic of Karakalpakstan, the regions, and the city of Tashkent place special emphasis on several key issues: creating a total of 40,000 jobs, which includes 24,000 new positions in tourism and related sectors and bringing 16,000 jobs out of the informal economy; establishing and developing 31 tourism facilities by transitioning the sector to a project management system; and increasing the number of accommodation facilities to 8,250 with 95,000 rooms, including raising the number of hotels to 1,380 with 45,000 rooms [2-5]. Furthermore, crucial tasks were assigned to the Tourism Committee to develop master plans for 34 sites based on project management, following the "attractive destination-project-infrastructure-entrepreneur-promotion-tourist" chain. Fulfilling such priority tasks requires not only studying, analyzing, and discovering new tourist sites in all regions but also entrusting industry specialists with the responsibility of developing their tourist routes and creating an interregional tourism circuit [6].

Our President, Sh.M.Mirziyoyev, has stated: ... "famous brands such as the Chust knife, Samarkand bread, Margilanadras, Sherabad pomegranate, Altyaryk and Parkent

Citation: Tursunova G. R. Analysis of Tourism Routes in Tourist Areas (On the Example of the Samarkand Region). Central Asian Journal of Innovations on Tourism Management and Finance 2026, 7(3), 78-87.

Received: 10th Feb 2026
Revised: 11th Mar 2026
Accepted: 19th Apr 2026
Published: 09th May 2026



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grapes, Khorezm melon, and Surkhandarya persimmon can be actively promoted in the international market by registering them according to their territorial affiliation". His words highlight the pressing issues facing tourism specialists today, such as finding effective ways to utilize the potential of these regions in producing various types of tourism and tourism products, and further enhancing the appeal of tourist routes and travel programs [7].

Literature Review

Although concepts like "tourist route" and "tour" have been studied extensively by both foreign and local scholars and researchers, the definitions, perspectives, and approaches to these concepts found in their scientific research serve as valuable supplementary sources.

For instance, M.B.Birzhakova defined a "tourist route" as "a geographically determined path for a walk or journey, linked to a specific territory and special sites, and described with varying degrees of detail".

V.S.Senin puts forward the idea that a "route is a path indicated by a list of all geographical points and places, specifying the types of transport used by tourists to travel between stops on the itinerary". According to it, the starting and finishing points of the route are the starting and finishing points of the journey.

According to the definition provided by A.S.Kuskov and Yu.A.Dzhaladyan, "the points of a tourist's stop (stay) on a tourist route are the starting and ending points of the route for travel during the tour". They state that the start and end points of the route correspond to the start and end points of the journey. The beginning of the route can be defined as the location where the first tourist service specified in the contract is provided to the tourist, and the end of the route as the location where the last tourist service is provided [8].

According to local scholar Z.O.Rakhimov, "the fact that tourist routes are considered a foundation of tourism development implies that a tourist or tourists have visited a tourist site or sites in a particular country of their own volition and have certainly used a tourist route to do so. The route used by tourists must be pre-planned, with established service programs for the tourist route".

In the opinion of R.Khaitboyev, "a tourist route is so named because it guarantees the excellent fulfillment of specified or even unexpected "proposals" or a set of "services". The paths used to meet all the needs and requirements of tourists are called tourist paths" [9].

Research Methodology

This research employs methods such as comparative analysis, systematic comparison, scientific abstract reasoning, and a logical approach.

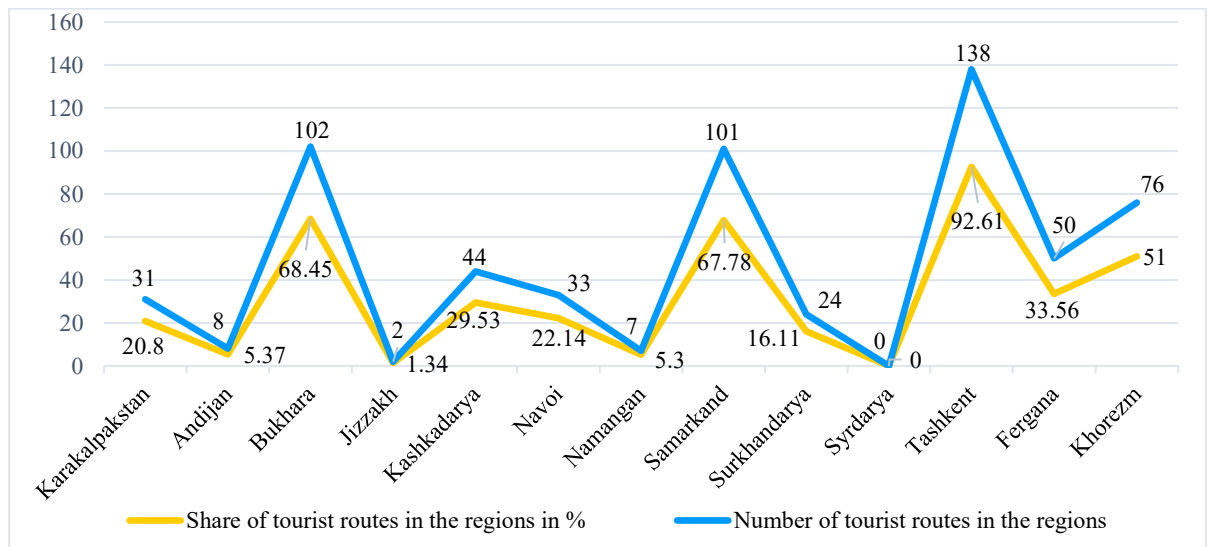


Figure 1. Share of Existing Tourist Routes in Uzbekistan by Region.

Another important issue is the duration of tours on these routes and the length of tourists' stays in the regions. According to feedback from tourists in our research, if they only have 3 days and no time to prepare for a trip, they recommend two options: a trip to either Tashkent or Bukhara. Neither of these routes requires advance preparation, finding a guide-interpreter, renting a car, or purchasing hard-to-find train tickets. Tashkent is famous for its modern buildings, while Bukhara is renowned as a very convenient city for tourism. While Samarkand is a perfect city in terms of its architectural structure, Khiva is considered a museum city worth staying in for several days.

Based on the information above, an analysis of the duration of tourist stays in the regions across all tourist routes in Uzbekistan revealed the following.

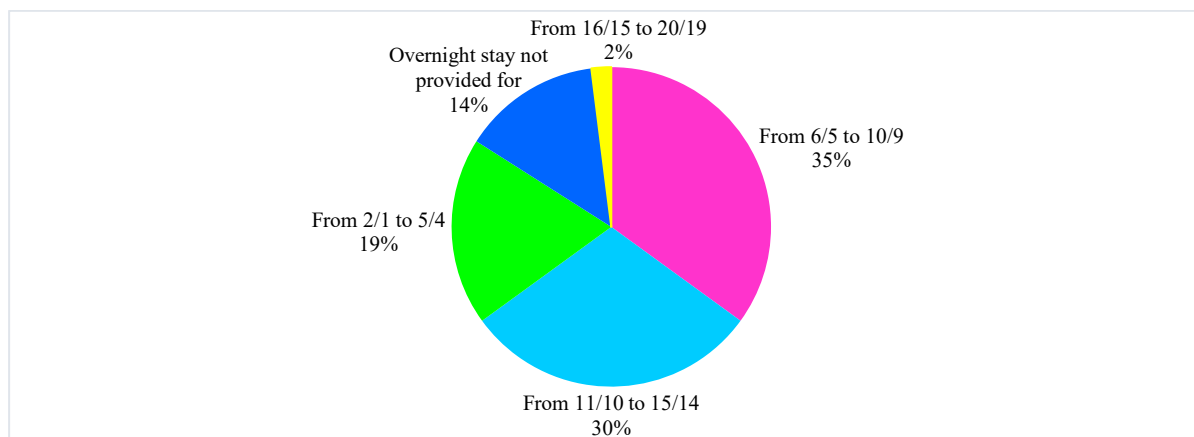


Figure 2. Duration of Tourist Routes by Regions of Uzbekistan.

As seen from the data in this figure, the largest share of existing tourist routes is comprised of tours lasting from 6 days and 5 nights to 10 days and 9 nights, accounting for 35% of all routes. Tours lasting from 11 days and 10 nights to 15 days and 14 nights make up 30%. Tours from 2 days and 1 night to 5 days and 4 nights constitute 19%. Day trips with no overnight stay account for 14%, while tours lasting from 16 days and 15 nights to 20 days and 19 nights represent the smallest share, at 2%.

Now, regarding the potential of our republic's natural resources, Uzbekistan ranks among the world's richest countries in terms of the reserves and diversity of its tourism resources. There are over 8,200 cultural heritage sites in our country, yet only 500 of them

are included in tourist routes. It is advisable to take measures to increase the number of sites on routes where pilgrimage and traditional tourism can be developed to 800.

Uzbekistan possesses enormous tourism and recreational potential, with a total of 8,200 cultural heritage sites. Of these, 209 are located within four “museum cities”-the Ichan-Kala complex in Khiva, the historical center of Bukhara, the city of Shakhrisabz, and the city of Samarkand-all of which are famously included in the UNESCO World Heritage List.

Furthermore, the number of sites of purely historical, architectural, and archaeological significance in the country exceeds 4,000. Of these, 545 are architectural monuments, 575 are historical, 1,457 are artistic, and 550 are archaeological. When analyzing the distribution of tourist sites across cities, we find that there are 310 sites in Khiva, 221 in Bukhara, 144 in Tashkent, 118 in Samarkand, and 372 in the Jizzakh region. Additionally, 9 nature reserves, 10 sanctuaries, and 4 national parks, along with our unique nature, scenic landscapes, and diverse fauna and flora, represent significant potential for the successful development and organization of all types of tourism. The flow of visitors to these tourist sites increases only after tourist routes are established.

As studying the scale and significance of tourist routes in the regions and analyzing their supply and demand are among today's critical issues, we conducted a survey in May 2024 among foreign tourists, using the Samarkand region as the subject of our research. According to the survey, 241 tourists who had visited the sights of Samarkand city participated.

An analysis of foreign tourists in Samarkand by their country of origin shows that, of all participants, the largest group was from Italy, with 29 tourists taking part in the survey. The next two places were occupied by England with 27 tourists and Russia with 26 tourists, who shared their opinions. The fewest responses in this survey came from tourists from Bangladesh (2), Indonesia (2), Thailand (2), Switzerland (2), Slovenia (2), Romania (2), and Australia (2). For this reason, we grouped these smaller numbers into the “share of tourists from other countries” category in the table.

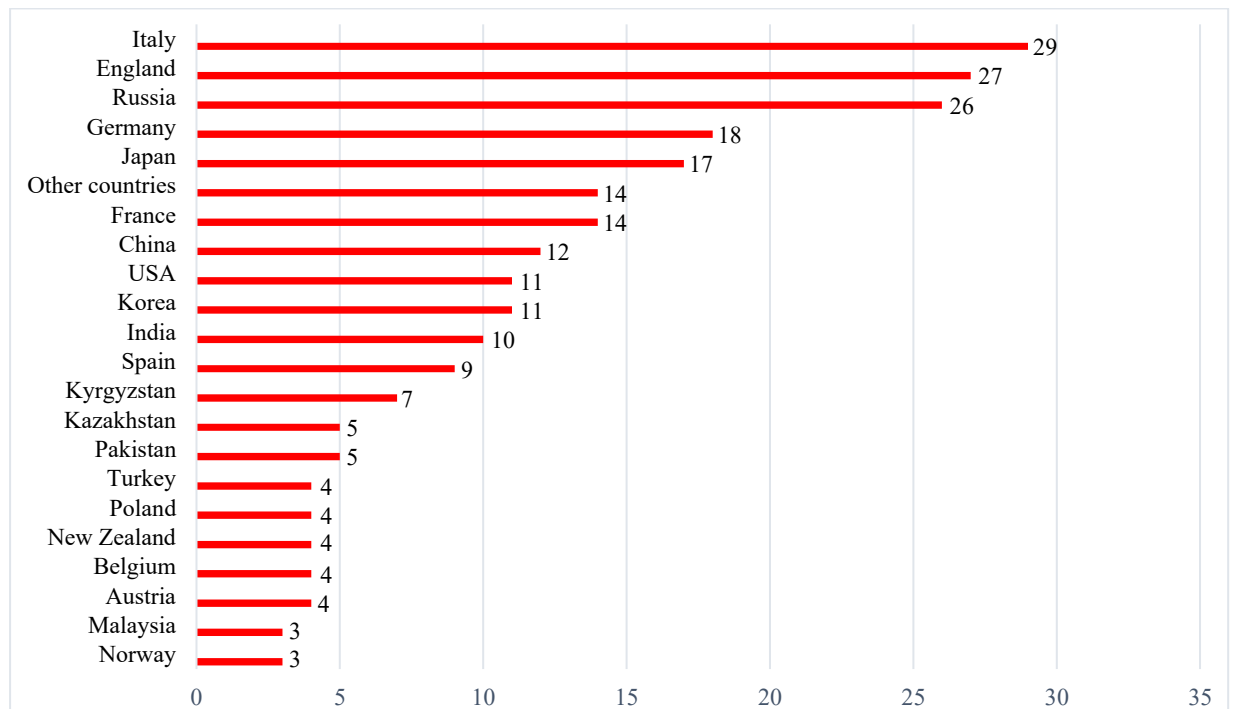


Figure 3. Analysis of the number of foreign tourists by territorial location.

An analysis of the respondents' gender shows that of the foreign tourists, 118 (49%) were women and 123 (51%) were men.

Regarding the age analysis of the respondents who participated in the survey, the segmentation of international tourists is as follows: those aged 3-13 made up 1.5%, 14-18 years old 3.5%, 19-28 years old 25%, 29-44 years old 35%, 45-64 years old 25%, and those over 65 made up 10%.

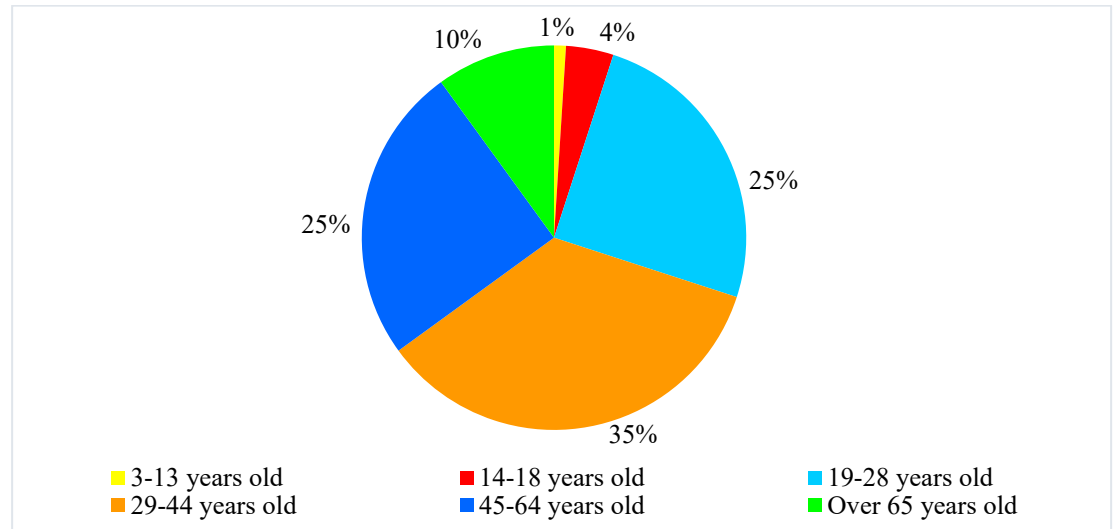


Figure 4. Analysis of the age segmentation of international tourists.

Additionally, this survey included a question about the tourists' professions, and the foreign tourists' answers are as follows:

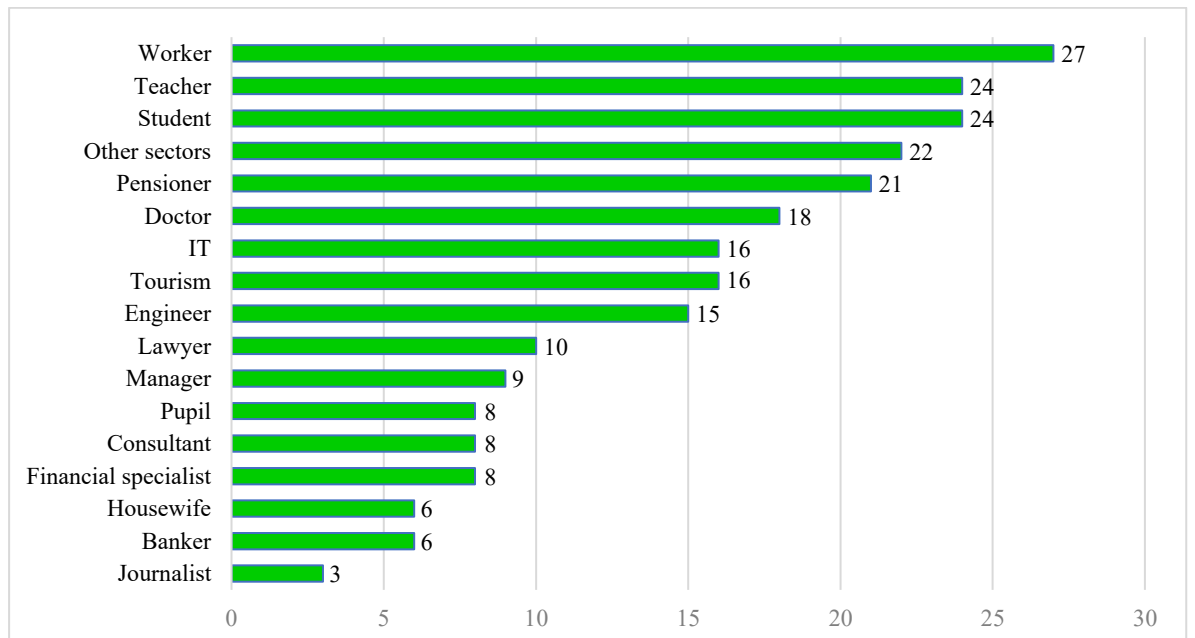


Figure 5. Analysis of foreign tourists by their occupations.

Foreign tourists who participated in the survey answered the question, "How many days is your trip?" as follows:

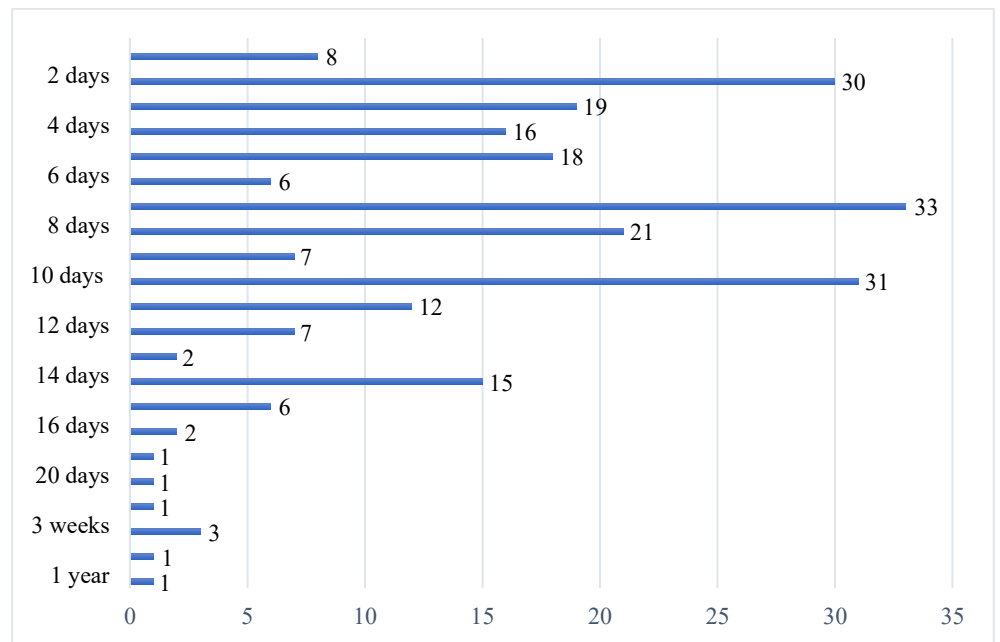


Figure 6. Analysis of the question from foreign tourists: “How many days is your trip?”.

As can be seen from the data in Figure 6, the duration of stay for foreign tourists in the regions has increased. The highest figure was 33 tourists who visited Uzbekistan on a 7-day tour. Following this, it is noted that 31 tourists chose 10-day tours and 30 tourists chose 2-day tours. From this, it can be concluded that the increase in the number of days tourists stay in Uzbekistan indicates the country's growing tourism potential.

The analysis of the survey question for foreign tourists, “Which cities would you include in the “Golden Ring” tourist route?” is as follows:

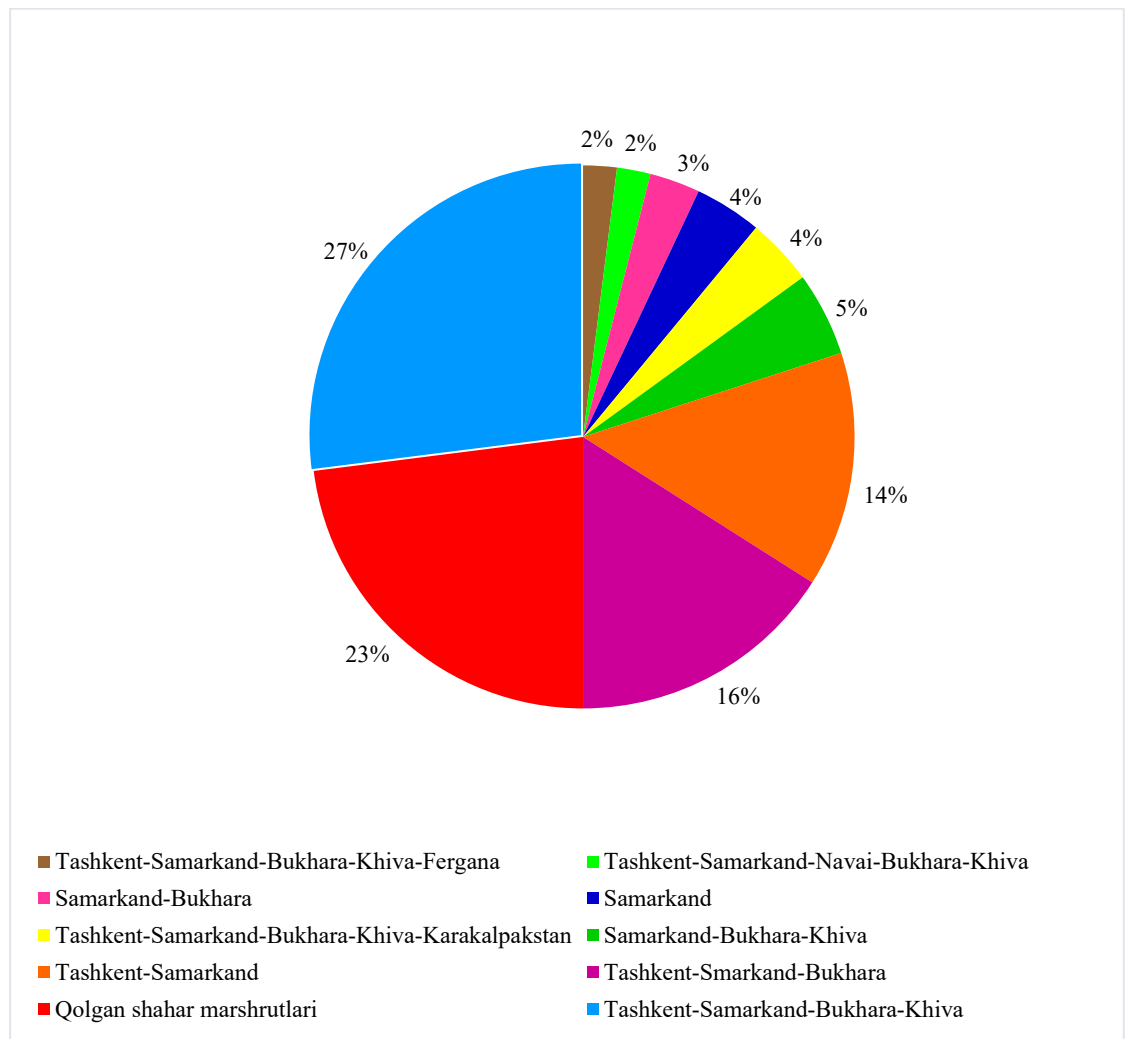


Figure 7. Analysis of responses from foreign tourists to the question, “Which cities would you include in the “Golden Ring” route?”.

An analysis of the tourist routes, formed based on the choices of foreign tourists who participated in the survey and traveled to Samarkand, shows that the route most deserving of the “Golden Ring” designation is the *Tashkent-Samarkand-Bukhara-Khiva* tourist route. According to the research results, 27% of all tourists chose these specific cities. In second place is the *Tashkent-Samarkand-Bukhara* tourist route with 16%, followed by the *Tashkent-Samarkand* tourist route with 14%. The data in Figure 7 shows that these are popular mass-tourism city routes among tourists.

Results and Discussion

The results of the study reveal several important findings regarding tourism routes in Uzbekistan and tourist behavior in the Samarkand region [10].

Distribution of tourism route duration

The largest share of tourism routes (35%) consists of trips lasting 6–10 days. Routes lasting 11–15 days account for 30%, while 2–5 day trips make up 19%. One-day excursions represent 14%, and long tours of 16–20 days constitute only 2%. This indicates that medium-duration tourism packages are the most common in Uzbekistan.

Length of tourists’ stay

Survey results show that the most preferred trip duration is 7 days (33 tourists), followed by 10 days (31 tourists) and 2 days (30 tourists). This demonstrates an increasing potential of Uzbekistan as a tourism destination with flexible travel durations.

Preferred “Golden Ring” route.[11][12]

The most attractive route identified by tourists (27%) is Tashkent–Samarkand–Bukhara–Khiva. The second most preferred route is Tashkent–Samarkand–Bukhara (16%), followed by Tashkent–Samarkand (14%).

Tourist satisfaction and challenges

The study shows that existing traditional tourism routes are:

outdated,

structurally repetitive,

lacking new services,

weakly integrated with modern tourism types.

Utilization of tourism resources

Out of more than 8,200 cultural heritage sites in Uzbekistan, only about 500 are included in tourism routes. This indicates that the majority of tourism potential remains underutilized.

Distribution of tourist sites

The highest concentration of tourist attractions is found in Khiva (310 sites), Bukhara (221), Tashkent (144), and Samarkand (118), confirming these cities as major tourism hubs.

Empirical findings from Samarkand survey

A total of 241 foreign tourists participated in the survey. Among them, 51% were male and 49% female. The most active age groups were 29–44 years (35%) and 19–28 years (25%) [13-15].

Table 1. Cities and their routes least frequently suggested by foreign tourists for inclusion in the “Golden Ring” tourist route.

№	Tourist route	Number of tourists	Date of occurrence
1.	Tashkent-Bukhara-Khiva	4 persons	22 days
2.	Tashkent-Jizzakh-Samarkand-Bukhara-Khiva	4 persons	38 days
3.	Samarkand-Navoi-Bukhara-Khiva	3 persons	3 weeks
4.	Tashkent-Samarkand-Bukhara-Khiva-Karakalpakstan-Fergana	3 persons	12 days
5.	Tashkent-Samarkand-Bukhara-Fergana-Andijan-Namangan	2 persons	10 days
6.	Tashkent-Samarkand-Bukhara-Khiva-Karakalpakstan-Surkhandarya	2 persons	11 days
7.	Tashkent-Samarkand-Bukhara-Khiva-Andijan	2 persons	8 days
8.	Tashkent-Samarkand-Bukhara-Fergana	2 persons	4 days
9.	Tashkent-Samarkand-Karakalpakstan	2 persons	4 days
10.	Tashkent-Samarkand-Bukhara-Khiva-Surkhandarya	2 persons	5 days
11.	Tashkent-Samarkand-Bukhara-Khiva-Kashkadarya	1 person	2 weeks
12.	Tashkent-Bukhara-Khiva-Karakalpakstan	1 person	7 days
13.	Tashkent-Samarkand-Bukhara-Khiva-Karakalpakstan-Kashkadarya-Fergana	1 person	4 days
14.	Tashkent-Jizzakh-Samarkand-Bukhara	1 person	10 days
15.	Tashkent-Syrdarya-Samarkand-Khiva-Karakalpakstan-Fergana	1 person	15 days
16.	Tashkent-Samarkand-Navoi	1 person	7 days
17.	Karakalpakstan-Andijan	1 person	3 days
18.	Tashkent-Jizzakh-Samarkand	1 person	8 days
19.	Tashkent-Syrdarya-Navoi-Karakalpakstan	1 person	4 days
20.	Tashkent-Samarkand-Bukhara-Kashkadarya	1 person	10 days
21.	Tashkent-Samarkand-Bukhara-Khiva-Fergana	1 person	10 days
22.	Khiva	1 person	9 days

23.	Bukhara-Khiva	1 person	8 days
24.	Tashkent-Samarkand-Khiva	1 person	15 days
25.	Bukhara	1 person	1 day
26.	Tashkent	1 person	1 day
27.	Tashkent-Syrdarya-Samarkand-Karakalpakstan	1 person	30 days
28.	Samarkand-Bukhara-Khiva-Karakalpakstan-Fergana	1 person	4 days
29.	Tashkent-Samarkand-Karakalpakstan	1 person	5 days
30.	Tashkent-Samarkand-Bukhara-Khiva-Karakalpakstan-Kashkadarya	1 person	11 days
31.	Tashkent-Samarkand-Fergana-Andijan	1 person	2 days
32.	Samarkand-Bukhara-Khiva-Namangan	1 person	2 weeks
33.	Tashkent-Samarkand-Bukhara-Khiva-Fergana-Andijan	1 person	3 days
34.	Tashkent-Samarkand-Bukhara-Khiva-Namangan	1 person	5 days
35.	Tashkent-Syrdarya-Samarkand-Surkhandarya-Khiva	1 person	5 days
36.	Samarkand-Bukhara-Khiva-Karakalpakstan-Andijan	1 person	3 days

The tourist city routes representing 23% in Figure 7 are various city routes chosen by foreign tourists, and have been analyzed as the “remaining city routes”. A separate list was compiled based on the data from Figure 7, which shows the cities and their routes least frequently suggested by foreign tourists for inclusion in the “Golden Ring” tourist route in Table 1. The table also includes the number of tourists, their length of stay in the regions of Uzbekistan, and their chosen tourist routes. According to information provided by 4 foreign tourists who traveled to Samarkand, they came to Uzbekistan on a 22-day tour and noted that only the Tashkent-Bukhara-Khiva tourist route was worthy of the “Golden Ring” designation. Another 4 tourists arrived in Uzbekistan on a 38-day tour and stated that the Tashkent-Jizzakh-Samarkand-Bukhara-Khiva city route was worthy of the “Golden Ring” tourist route.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Our research indicates that visitors are not satisfied with the classic and traditional tourist routes covering Uzbekistan's tourist cities, as they do not meet modern demands. This is due to several factors:

- The classic and traditional tourist routes are significantly outdated;
- The uniformity of the routes;
- The lack of new services being introduced;
- The absence of a new city image and appeal;
- An overemphasis on historical and cultural tourism;
- A lack of attention to, and integration with, modern tourism types and resources.

Today, “only 1/3 of the available tourist resources are used in the tourist routes developed by tour operators”. Therefore, today in all regions of Uzbekistan, the creation of tour packages and corresponding tourist routes based on innovative and new approaches to tourism types necessitates its promotion at the international level. In particular, there are sufficient opportunities to create the “Golden Ring” tourist route in Uzbekistan, and our government is creating sufficient conditions for its development in a new form. In this regard, the adoption by our esteemed President of the resolution “In order to diversify tourism products and services aimed at various segments of the republic's tourism market, further increase their competitiveness, create a favorable domestic and international tourism environment, expand transport routes, improve the quality of transport services, widely promote tourism products, and strengthen the image of our country as a safe destination for travel and recreation” testifies to the importance of issues regarding the creation of tourism routes in our country.

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