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## COMPETITIVENESS OF TOURISM IN THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN: CURRENT TRENDS AND CHALLENGES

**Kakzhanova Azhar Sayatovna**

[uzika2002@mail.ru](mailto:uzika2002@mail.ru)

**Zhumabaykyzy Ayazhan**

[ayazhan.zhuamabay01@gmail.com](mailto:ayazhan.zhuamabay01@gmail.com)

**Zhumabay Alisher Bakhytulý**

[alisher.zhumabay@mail.ru](mailto:alisher.zhumabay@mail.ru)

L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University, Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan

Scientific advisor – Nurmanova Ulbossyn

This article provides a brief description of the comparative advantages of the global tourism market and highlights the problems, current trends and challenges regarding the development of tourism in Kazakhstan. Our country is rich in natural, biological, cultural resources, and also has a diverse climate that promotes the development of tourism enterprises.

On this basis, the article talks about a new kind of tourism for our country, which has existed for a long time, but would fit perfectly into our country. The article will concentrate more on our nomadic culture, as well as not forgetting about the modern attractions, taking into account the promotion of these places thanks to cars, which we call the tourism by car.

Keywords: tourism industry, economy, development, competitiveness, cultural industry, car tourism, pilgrimage and religious tourism

The tourism sector is currently one of the fastest growing for the economy sector worldwide. Thanks to tourism, many countries have increased the emergence of new jobs, which has served as an engine for the growth of other related industries. And for many other countries, such as: Turkey, UAE, Macau, Maldives, etc. - tourism is the main source of income. Thus, international tourism has become a priority industry for the Republic of Kazakhstan. Since international tourism plays an important role in the country's economy, there is a great incentive for the production of goods and services for people who will visit our country. Accordingly, the main goal of the development of international tourism in Kazakhstan is to make it competitive.

It should be recognized that our country has a great potential, since Kazakhstan is rich in almost all aspects: cultural, historical, natural, entertainment, etc.

“Kazakhstan has to work more on marketing, advertisement in Europe, America, Asia and other countries. Consequently, in ten years the country could become one of the leading tourist destinations. Besides, Kazakhs are hospitable people, smiling, open and these are good characteristics” as noted on XVIII session to General assembly UNWTO Gael de La Port De Tiel, the president of tourism marketing company Global tourism interface (Kazakhstanskaya Pravda, 2009.09.10).

Kazakhstan has about 100 water clinics and more than 9,000 archaeological and historical monuments, which allows the tourist product of our country to offer a unique opportunity for development in almost all types of tourism, from educational trips to cultural and historical, as well as other alternative forms of tourism and ecotourism. And such activities as hunting and fishing, including national types of hunting, are popular with tourists. Accordingly, Kazakhstan needs to be

promoted as a tourist destination in order to meet the needs of global tourist demand and attract more tourists.

To this end, the Government has been actively taking steps to develop tourism in our country since 2003, when it developed and implemented a tourism development program for 2003-2005. The successful implementation of the Program in 2005 was followed by the adoption of a new program in 2011 (the Program for the Development of Tourism in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2007-2011). The purpose of this program is to develop a competitive tourism industry for employment, as well as a steady increase in government revenues due to an increase in the volume of inbound and domestic tourism.

Kazakhstan became a member of the UN World Tourism Organization in 1993. With this action Kazakhstan has formally expressed its great interest and dedication to tourism and the economic growth resulting from this industry (State program of forced industrial-innovative development of Kazakhstan for 2010-2014). A leading role while implementing the strategy of industrial innovation development of the Kazakhstan economy is assigned to the system of local clusters. The tourism cluster is one of them. Today's trends in this industry are such that the tourists traveling to the most famous resorts of the world seek to explore the countries where the tourism sector is just beginning to develop. Kazakhstan is one of them.

World Aktau. Now western Kazakhstan is more visited, now there is more reason to visit the western part of the country because it meets all the standards of the trend of tourist places in the country.

Akmola region (Borovoe resort), Astana, Almaty as a center of event tourism, Almaty region (Ile-Alatau National Park, Altyn Emel National Park, Charyn Canyon), East Kazakhstan (Zaisan Lake, Markokol Reserve), Mangystau, South Kazakhstan region (pilgrimage and religious tourism) are the places which influenced trends and demand in tourism.

Attractions that are a symbol of the country, respectively, these same attractions are the most visited, in the top of trends and queries, are, above all, the natural wealth and culture, the history of the Kazakhs. Among them: Kolsay Lakes, Charyn Canyon, Lake Markakol, underground caves, camels in Mangistau, Borovaya zone as the second Switzerland, singing dune, Turkestan, Lake Balkhash, Caspian Sea, Medeo rink, Beket ata. There is an interest in pilgrimage from the people of Uzbekistan, Russia and Kyrgyzstan, the visitors want to feel the history of the Kazakhs.

These places are associated with Kazakhstan, they make us more popular because we are more developed in the natural tourism industry, in the historical and cultural industry.

If other countries attract tourists with their exotic fruits, beaches, warm climate, cathedrals or famous restaurants, we attract tourists to see our rich, natural places, cultural cities that have great history, that have contributed to world history, historical places that attract both tourists and explorers around the world. In that respect, we are very competitive because we have all the opportunities to do that.

There are many places in every city or region of Kazakhstan where you can go, have fun and spend time. In order to make such trips from one city to another, it is easier to have your own car, or your own private bus, or a minivan if we are talking about a large family. It would be inconvenient to wait for a plane, train, waste time waiting for a flight, so for a long trip between cities in the country, it is better to have a car. Now it is fashionable to travel independently by car. This is one of the most popular types of tourism in the world, even in Russia it is quite common. St. Petersburg is not far from Europe, so you can travel by car, for example, in Finland. In Europe, it is convenient to get from one city to another in a few hours by car. In the U.S., you can even have your own bus with everything you need to live inside. Thanks to a motorhome, you can easily travel between states. In the same way, in Kazakhstan you can increase the demand for car tourism, so that people can see the Charyn Canyon first and then go to Borovoye. It is very convenient and economical, the money spent on the ticket can be spent on oil. But we have some difficulties and obstacles with this type of tourism.

First, we need to improve the state of the roads. It is known that there are problems with roads between cities and within cities, which hinder the free movement of residents. Because of the bad roads, a car can drive slowly. Few drivers take this risk, which can lead to loss of time, money for gasoline. The car can be damaged because of road repairs, and sometimes you have to drive on the other side, detouring to another location instead of the planned route because the road is being repaired there. All of this creates one problem for drivers, for travelers, people have to have patience and be prepared for these road conditions. It's inconvenient, it can ruin people's mood and the whole mood of the trip, so the issue of roads in the country has to be solved first.

The next factor is the weather. Here people are powerless to change anything, because weather conditions are beyond our control. Often in the north of the country, because of bad weather, the highways are closed in winter and nothing can be seen because of heavy snowstorms, snow, wind and ice, which is very dangerous to life. Even people, in order to get to their hometown, have to wait for the road to open. Among the residents there are those who wanted to go skiing in another city, go to relatives for the winter vacations or visit Burabay, because even in winter many people go there to rest, but sometimes plans change. Due to difficult weather conditions, car touring cannot exist for the whole season.

This does not mean that we do not have auto-tourism at all, it exists only within a certain city to visit various sights. But to travel by car, one of the fashionable types of tourism, the demand for which has been growing for many years, it is not enough just to drive around the city. The peculiarity of this type is that one has to drive all over the country, visiting cities.

Kazakhstan is undoubtedly an attractive destination for foreign tourists and the local population, but the Government should also activate other industries that, with proper and rational development, can generate more income, thereby improving the resource base of domestic tourism.

In conclusion, the tourism industry is globally a highly lucrative economic activity. As the global experience shows, for the development of tourism it is necessary to consolidate the efforts of all the stakeholders of the tourism market, both in the private and public sector. Therefore, one of the top priority directions of the Kazakh economy should be the development of the lodging industry with emphasis on the creation of tourism clusters. Tourism clusters can help the enterprises to improve the offered services to tourists and to cope with international competition. On the other hand, the role of the Kazakh authorities is to improve the infrastructures as well as to plan and coordinate the tourism development policy at country and state level.

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