


Article

Cultural and geographic drivers of tourism cluster development in the Turkestan region of Kazakhstan

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Abstract: Globally, tourism clusters play an important role in improving the economic competitiveness and investment attractiveness of a country, sustainable development of local culture and recreational resources, tourism enterprises and tourism in regions. After all, tourism clusters mainly provide for the development of tourism infrastructure systems and allow for the optimisation of environmental, social and economic impacts. In this regard, the issues of environmental, technological and socio-economic interrelation in the sustainable development of tourism in the regions of Kazakhstan can be solved through tourism clusters. In particular, the Turkestan region has great opportunities for the development of cultural and cognitive, medical and health tourism through the creation of a tourism cluster and achieving economic growth through the creation of modern tourist complexes. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine the cultural and geographical prerequisites and opportunities for the formation of a tourism cluster necessary for the sustainable development of the Turkestan region. The study used the interview method to identify the main problems and the opportunities for the creation of a tourism cluster were assessed using SWOT analysis. As a result of the research, the need to improve infrastructure (40%), improve the quality of service (27%) and strengthen marketing efforts (17%) to increase the tourism potential of the Turkestan region was identified. At the same time, the Mausoleum of Khoja Ahmed Yasawi (61%) was recognised as one of the most attractive tourist attractions in the Turkestan region. In addition, the historical and cultural objects of the Turkestan region, participating in the tourist cluster, were identified and the structural model of the tourist cluster formation was developed. Thus, this study shows that the formation of a tourism cluster in the Turkestan region contributes to the improvement of infrastructure and economic development of the region and increases the international tourist flow between Turkic countries.

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1 Introduction

Tourism is now recognised as one of the most important sectors of the global economy and contributes to socio-economic development, job creation and regional competitiveness (Moldagaliyeva et al., 2024). The development of tourism clusters is considered in the world practice as an effective mechanism of organisation and management of tourism (Niyazbayeva & Yessengeldina, 2016). Tourism clusters are mainly focused on optimising environmental, social and economic impacts, ensuring the development of tourism infrastructure systems (Alimova et al., 2020). Therefore, the development of tourism clusters allows the effective and sustainable development of tourism activities, as well as the formation of

promising projects in the field of tourism (Gáll & Strežo, 2019). The importance of tourism clusters is characterised as a means of increasing the efficiency of regional tourism groups and solving social problems, determines the necessity of applying the cluster approach for the purposes of sustainable development (Ivanovic et al., 2010; Larionova et al., 2017). Thus, creating tourist clusters in regions with historical and natural attractions, assessing their structure and potential, the investment potential of the cluster zone is determined.

In the world practice there are clusters in various tourist destinations, in particular, the features of tourist clusters in European countries and their impact on the regional economy, the necessary prerequisites for the creation of a cluster are considered in detail (Gorbunov et al., 2018). Cluster models of the USA, India, Russia and China are recognised as a factor in increasing the competitiveness of the national economy (Doçaj et al., 2018; Cao & Sarker, 2022). Therefore, formation of clusters in the tourism industry in these states plays a high role in enhancing the investment attractiveness of the state. The formation and development of tourism clusters occupies an important place in increasing the economic competitiveness and investment attractiveness of countries (Shah & AhmadWani, 2014). In this context, the tourism industry between the countries along the Silk Road in Central Asia (in the border areas of the Silk Road) is developing (Mitroshenko, 2020). That is why Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan direct the development of mutual historical and cultural tourism to the factors of demand of tourist groups (Issakov et al., 2023). Development of local culture and recreational resources, tourism enterprises and tourism in the border regions becomes very important on the way of development of tourism industry in the region of Central Asian countries (Kantarci et al., 2014; Hall & Page, 2016).

The interconnection of environmental, technological and socio-economic changes in the sustainable development of tourism in Kazakhstan is closely linked to the emergence of tourism clusters (Zharkenova et al., 2023). This is due to the fact that tourism clusters contribute to the economic competitiveness of the recreational area and the development of intersectoral co-operation (Kenzhebekov et al., 2021). In the conditions of Kazakhstan, measures for the development of tourist clusters are aimed at the development of the national economy, so it is necessary to increase the competitiveness of tourist centres, clusters of tourist facilities, given the lack of quality infrastructure and unprofitability of the industry (Tokbergenova et al., 2023). Natural, cultural and mixed sites on the territory of Kazakhstan are important elements of the tourism cluster and increase the ecological, economic and political significance of the country (Koshim et al., 2023). To develop Kazakhstan's tourism industry, it is necessary to take effective measures to increase the economic, environmental and political importance of tourist facilities through clustering, improving the quality of infrastructure and attracting international investment. It is also necessary to provide normative and legal support of cluster policy within the framework of the concept of formation and development of clusters in Kazakhstan (Concept of cultural policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2023).

In this regard, studies on the development of the tourism industry in Kazakhstan and its socio-economic efficiency highlight the importance of clustering, the need to restructure concentrated tourist facilities, and the need to take into account regional climatic features (Aktymbayeva et al., 2023). Based on these studies, it is very important to develop tourism clusters in Kazakhstan, to study their geographical, socio-economic impact and to introduce international experience. Despite support in this direction from the government, there are no concrete actions on cluster development of tourism in Turkestan, Almaty, Akmola and East Kazakhstan regions (Askeyev & Baizholova, 2021). Especially in Turkestan region, where there are all prerequisites for the formation of a tourism cluster, tourism is still not formed in a cluster context. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine the cultural and geographical prerequisites and opportunities for the formation of a tourism cluster necessary for the sustainable development of the Turkestan region. Since the potential of the tourism cluster of Turkestan region has not been fully explored, the model of tourism cluster development has not been specified, and the impact on the sustainable development of the tourism industry in Kazakhstan has not been assessed. This is stated in the works of many domestic scientists: for example, Abishov and Abishova (2023) in their study 'Mechanisms of Agritourism Development in Turkestan region' argue that tourism development in

Turkestan region becomes important to modernise not only the natural resources of rural areas, but also the culture, traditions, history, national cuisine of the Kazakh people, which will allow the development of clusters. Furthermore, Nakhimbekova et al. (2024) in their work analysed the branding elements affecting the image of Turkestan region and the impact of the use of information technology in the tourism business on the quality of services. It follows that the region has all the prerequisites for tourism development, sufficiency of tourist facilities and the need to develop a model of cluster development.

This research is aimed at studying the cultural and geographical prerequisites and opportunities for the formation of a tourism cluster, necessary for the sustainable development of Turkestan region, in the course of the study widely used methods of interviewing, SWOT-analysis, modelling. A review of the latest Kazakhstan and foreign literature was conducted and Michael Porter's model 'Diamond' was taken as a basis for the development of tourism cluster model. This study will help to form tourism clusters in the Turkestan region, improve the region's infrastructure and increase economic efficiency. Tourism clusters contribute to attracting investment by creating new jobs and increasing competitiveness. Therefore, the development of historical and cultural tourism of Turkestan region creates conditions for the inflow of tourist groups and growth of demand. In addition, the Turkestan region will become a basis for development as an international tourist destination, attracting investments through a positive tourist image of the region, development as a new tourist destination and construction of new resorts meeting international standards. Also, such topical issues as non-compliance of service facilities with international standards, lack of roads to tourist sites and lack of infrastructure at historical and natural tourist sites will be proposed as a direction for future research.

2 Materials and methods

Currently, there are great opportunities in Turkestan region to achieve economic growth through the development of cultural and cognitive and health tourism and the creation of modern tourist complexes (Akbar et al., 2019). Turkestan region borders with the tourist areas of Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan (Figure 1). Turkestan region is characterised not only by historical sights, unique architecture and natural landscapes, but also one of the regions of the republic where health tourism is developed (Baltabayeva et al., 2019). Tourists from different parts of Kazakhstan and neighbouring countries come here to relax and improve their health. Health tourism in the Turkestan region meets all the requirements of tourists for full-fledged recreation and recovery (Doskhozina & Yessekeyeva, 2019). Regular visits to sanatoriums in the region fully satisfy the need for recreation, recovery and treatment using various components of the natural complex (landscape, comfortable climate, healthy regime, environment replacement, etc.) and significantly improve the quality of life. In addition, objects of cultural and cognitive tourism in Turkestan region will allow you to learn the history and culture of Kazakh society and see sacred tourist sites.

In this regard, this study aimed to fully explore the tourism cluster potential of Turkestan region, develop a structural model of the tourism cluster and assess its impact on the sustainable development of tourism in Kazakhstan. The study reviewed the works of world scholars (55 literature sources) and determined the relevance of the topic. The literature review was conducted as an ongoing process throughout the research period, while primary data collection through interviews was carried out during 01.09.2024–20.10.2024. The world experience of tourism clusters has been studied, structural models of clusters in developed countries have been analysed. At the same time, in order to identify the main issues in the industry were asked interview questions prepared together with young scientists of Abai University (01.09.2024-20.10.2024) received answers from the respondents. By means of interviews with various stakeholders (tourists, tourism professionals, local residents) (30 respondents) the current state and possibilities of cluster development were fully assessed. While the sample size is modest for a study of this regional scope, it is appropriate for the qualitative, in-depth interview approach employed, and findings should be interpreted as exploratory rather than statistically representative. Thus, it was fully possible to deepen the study of the main problems of creating a tourism cluster of Turkestan region and identify ways to solve and improve it. The following questions (Q) were asked during the interview:

- Q1. Tell us more about yourself, what neighbourhood will you be from?
- Q2. How do you assess the tourism potential of Turkestan region today?
- Q3. What factors, in your opinion, contribute to the development of tourism in the region?
- Q4. What tourist objects are the most attractive for Turkestan region?
- Q5. Are you satisfied with the quality of the tourist services offered and the itineraries in the tourist destinations?

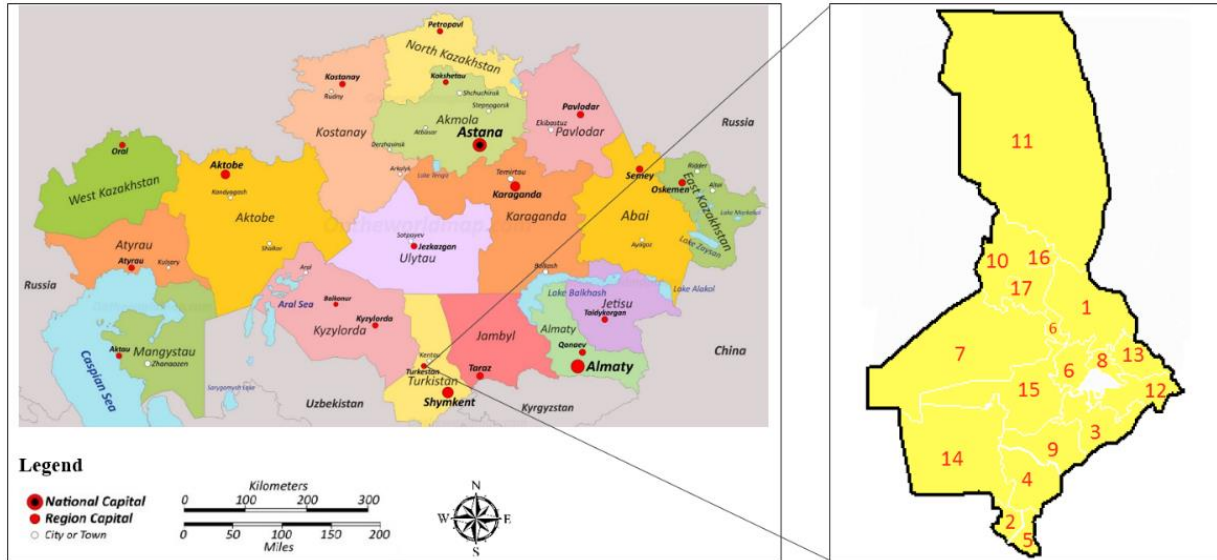


Figure 1. Map of the Turkestan region district: 1) Baidibek 2) Zhetysay 3) Kazygurt 4) Keles 5) Maktaaral 6) Ordabasy 7) Otyrar 8) Sairam 9) Saryagash 10) Sauran 11) Sozak 12) Tolebi 13) Tulkubas 14) Shardara 15) Arys city 16) Kentau city 17) Turkestan city.

In the study, consent to the interview was determined by telephone call, and the interview itself was conducted face-to-face and online ZOOM. The duration of each interview was 10-15 minutes, at which stage the data obtained was recorded and processed on tape for qualitative analysis. In addition, during the research we conducted a SWOT analysis to analyse the opportunities for creating a tourism cluster in the Turkestan region. The analysis considered the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of tourism in the Turkestan region.

In creating a tourism cluster model of Turkestan region, we comprehensively studied the tourism industry of the region using the Michael Porter Diamond model (Fang et al., 2018). The four key elements of this model helped us to effectively structure tourism competitiveness. With the help of this model, the directions necessary for the development and development of Turkestan region's tourism potential were identified. The main objective was to contribute to the economic growth of the region and its international recognition by creating a tourism cluster of Turkestan region. The flowchart of this research in full is presented in Figure 2.

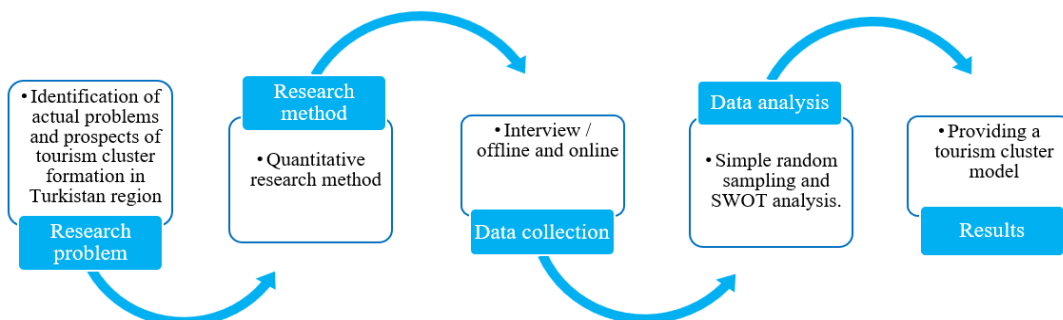


Figure 2. Research Flowchart (Source: Compiled by the authors)

3 Results and discussion

As a result of the study, out of 30 respondents who participated in the interviews, 5 were from Baidibek, 4 Saryagash, 4 Sairam, 3 Otyrar, 3 Zhetysai, 2 Tulkubas, 2 Tulebi, 2 Kazygurt, 1 Maktaaral, 1 Shardara, 1 Sozak districts, 2 respondents were from Turkestan. The majority of respondents appreciated these historical monuments, reporting that attendance at the Khoja Ahmed Yassawi Mausoleum and the neighbouring Arystan Bab Mausoleum and the Ukasha Ata Memorial Complex in Turkestan has been increasing over the years. After all, these places are tourist sites of great importance for tourists interested in the history of Kazakhstan and Central Asia. The opinions of respondents regarding the current tourist potential of Turkestan region were also analysed, and the assessments of three main groups (high, average, low) were determined. The results, along with recognising the rich historical heritage of the region, showed the need to develop infrastructure and quality of services (Figure 3a). In addition, the main directions of the region's development to increase the tourism potential of Turkestan region have been identified. The respondents' answers showed that improving infrastructure, improving the quality of services and strengthening marketing efforts play an important role. According to respondents, the main factors contributing to tourism development are infrastructure development (40%) and quality of services (27%) (Figure 3b).

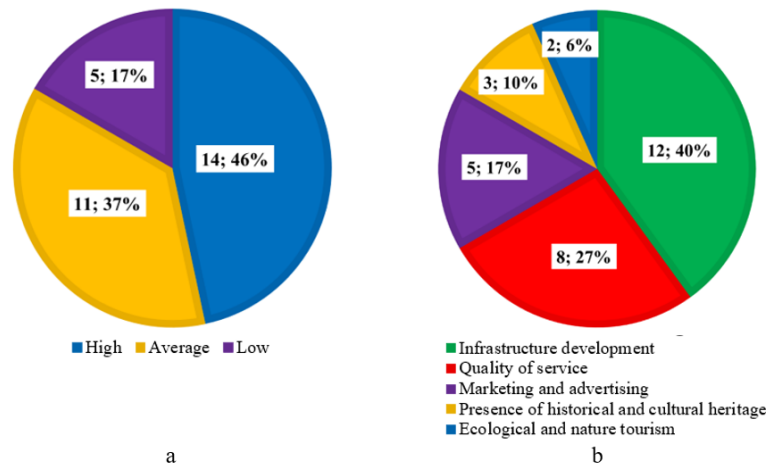


Figure 3. Answers of respondents: a) Assessment of tourism potential of Turkestan region. b) Main factors contributing to tourism development, %

Turkestan region as a rich region of cultural and historical heritage of the country is particularly popular among tourists. Tourist sites of the region attract with their history, architecture and natural features. Respondents chose the mausoleum of Khoja Akhmed Yasawi (61%) as the most attractive tourist site in Turkestan region (Figure 4).

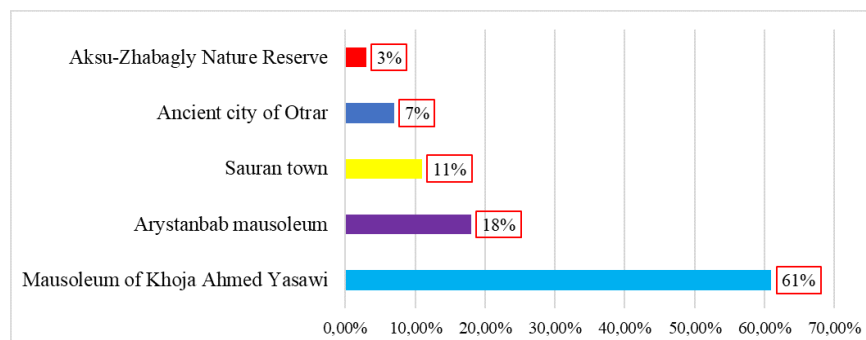


Figure 4. Most attractive tourist destinations, %

After all, there are several historical sites within the Khoja Ahmed Yasawi Mausoleum and Hazret Sultan Reserve-Museum, such as: the underground Kiluet Mosque, Juma Mosque Museum, Rabiga Sultan

Begin Mausoleum, and many others. Arystan Baba Mausoleum is in second place (18%). Every tourist going to the mausoleum of Khoja Ahmed Yasawi will first spend the night in the mausoleum of his teacher Arystan Baba. The third place is occupied by the town of Sauran, the name of the town is found in written sources since the 10th century (Smagulov, 2008; Iskakova et al., 2021). Archaeological excavations and restoration projects are ongoing at the site. Fourth, the city of Otrar is one of the most ancient cities of Central Asia, formerly known as Farab, a center of trade and crafts, a city of diplomatic, military and strategic importance (Abzhalov & Kozha, 2022). In fifth place, Aksu-Zhabagli reserve was recognized as the most visited by tourists (Akbar & Yang, 2022). In addition, a large number of tourists visiting the Karatau Nature Reserve, Sairam-Ugam National Park and Akmeshit Cave are noted. They are widely known to tourists as one of the attractive attractions of Turkestan region.

Regarding service quality, respondents in Turkestan region were asked: “Are you satisfied with the quality of the tourist services offered and the itineraries in the tourist destinations?” In response, 50% of respondents answered that they are not satisfied with the quality of services. Despite the development of tourism in the region of the oblast, a number of issues related to the organization of tourist routes (33% of respondents) still need improvement. In addition, respondents (17%) believe that in this direction it is necessary to organize new programs and excursion routes, to ensure in accordance with them the quality of service. Thus, the results of the interviews to assess the tourism potential of Turkestan region showed high potential of the historical and cultural riches of the region. Respondents highly appreciated the tourism potential of the region, but noted the low level of infrastructure and quality of services as important obstacles. Infrastructure development, quality of services and prioritization of marketing were identified as the main factors influencing tourism development. The need to effectively promote the cultural heritage of Turkestan and the importance of forming a tourist brand of the region was emphasized. The Mausoleum of Khoja Ahmed Yasawi was also recognized as the main attraction of the region, and the need to improve tourism services and routes, as well as information provision was identified. To develop tourism in the Turkestan region it is necessary to improve quality standards and infrastructure development. In this regard, we conducted a SWOT analysis to fully assess the tourism opportunities of Turkestan region (Table 1). The results of the conducted SWOT analysis are used to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the organization or region, as well as opportunities and threats related to the structure of the tourism cluster of Turkestan region.

Table 1. SWOT analysis matrix

	Opportunities:	Threats:
	- development of cultural tourism; - renewal of tourist products; - growth of foreign tourists.	- lack of economic stability; - the emergence of new competition.
Strengths:		
1. Historical and cultural heritage	- organizing cultural tours, festivals and events; - establishing partnerships and developing special programs between domestic universities and research centers.	- public accessibility of historical sites may lead to the loss of cultural values; - increased tourist flows, negatively affecting the lives of local people.
2. Development of tourist infrastructure	- improvement of roads and transportation services; - development of tourist routes; - attraction of investments.	- infrastructure improvements can lead to environmental problems.
3. State support for tourism development	- attraction of investments into the sphere of tourism through state support; - formation of tourist brand of Turkestan region on the international market	- financial dependence; - misdirection of government support.
4. High quality service	- to be competitive in the tourism industry by training skilled workers; - attracting customers through quality service.	- outflow of tourists to competitors as a result of lack of quality service; - deterioration in the level of service.

Table 1. (Continued)

	Opportunities:	Threats:
	- development of cultural tourism; - renewal of tourist products; - growth of foreign tourists.	- lack of economic stability; - the emergence of new competition.
Weaknesses:		
1. Lack of tourism infrastructure	- infrastructure development contributes to job creation, improvement of the quality of tourism services.	- construction works and infrastructure development may affect the environment; - financial difficulties may result in projects not being completed on time.
2. Weakness of advertising and marketing	- presentation of tourist products of Turkestan region in the national and international markets through strengthening of advertising; - popularization at tourism exhibitions and festivals, strengthening of positions in the international market.	- weakness of publicity may lead to incomplete disclosure of the area's potential.
3. Problems for foreign tourists	- provision of preferential tours and packages for visiting tourists, creation of special routes; - increasing the interest of foreign tourists through strengthening tourist cooperation with neighboring countries.	- higher prices for travel expenses, accommodation and other services of visiting tourists may lead to fewer foreign tourists; - language problems of foreign tourists, lack of language among locals and in the service sector may lead to a negative impact of the tourist experience.
Note: compiled by the authors based on interview responses and literature review		

Thus, for the sustainable development of tourism in the Turkestan region, travel agencies need to organize powerful advertising campaigns and popularize the historical and cultural heritage of the region. It is important to develop high-level customer service programs and develop tourist destinations (Garda, 2022). These measures will create a permanent customer base and increase the region's competitiveness in tourism. Tourism development in the region is of great macroeconomic importance, as the region's tourism potential has not yet been fully realized (Kuralbayev et al., 2017). The study showed that although the level of respondents' satisfaction with tourism services varies, there are no significant differences by demographic and business characteristics. This suggests the need to increase the popularity of tourist destinations and develop unique tourism products. The provision of similar services by many enterprises in the region leads to a neutral assessment of their competitiveness. Thus, we have fully covered the historical and cultural features of the Turkestan region as components of the tourism cluster.

Due to the fact that the main purpose of forming a tourist cluster in the Turkestan region is to increase the flow of tourists and increase the duration of stay of tourists, we have combined all tourist facilities in the region into the components of the cluster (Figure 5): The first component is historical and cognitive tourism, including historical and cultural sites located in Turkestan city, Otrar, Sauran and Baidibek districts. The second is ecological tourism, including specially protected natural territories (reserves 'Aksu-Zhabagly' and 'Karatau', as well as national natural park 'Sairam-Ugam' and regional natural park 'Syrdarya-Turkestan') and Zhetykol in the vicinity of the city of Turkestan. The third group of therapeutic tourism clusters, including resort zones Saryagash, Arys, Mankent. Thus, the development of grouping of tourism types in the region opens the way to additional income and socio-economic stability of the local population.

The formation of tourism cluster in Turkestan region can become an important factor of socio-economic growth of the region. Close cooperation between the public and private sectors is necessary to increase the potential of tourism in this region. The state should promote tourism development at the regional level and focus on creating new opportunities for domestic and international tourists (Mamutova, 2020; Nakhipbekova et al., 2023). In addition, it is important to improve the infrastructure of tourist destinations, support the construction of new facilities and modernize historical and cultural heritage. The

competitiveness of the region's tourism will be enhanced by improving the quality of services and affordability of prices (Tiberghien, 2019). Tourism organizations should adapt to the needs of the market and implement modern technologies. As one of the directions of state support it is possible to increase the efficiency of the coordinating council of the tourism cluster. To increase the number of visitors to the region, it is necessary to conduct advertising campaigns and marketing research (Tuyakbayev et al., 2021). This opens up new opportunities for business owners in the region and strengthens their economic stability.

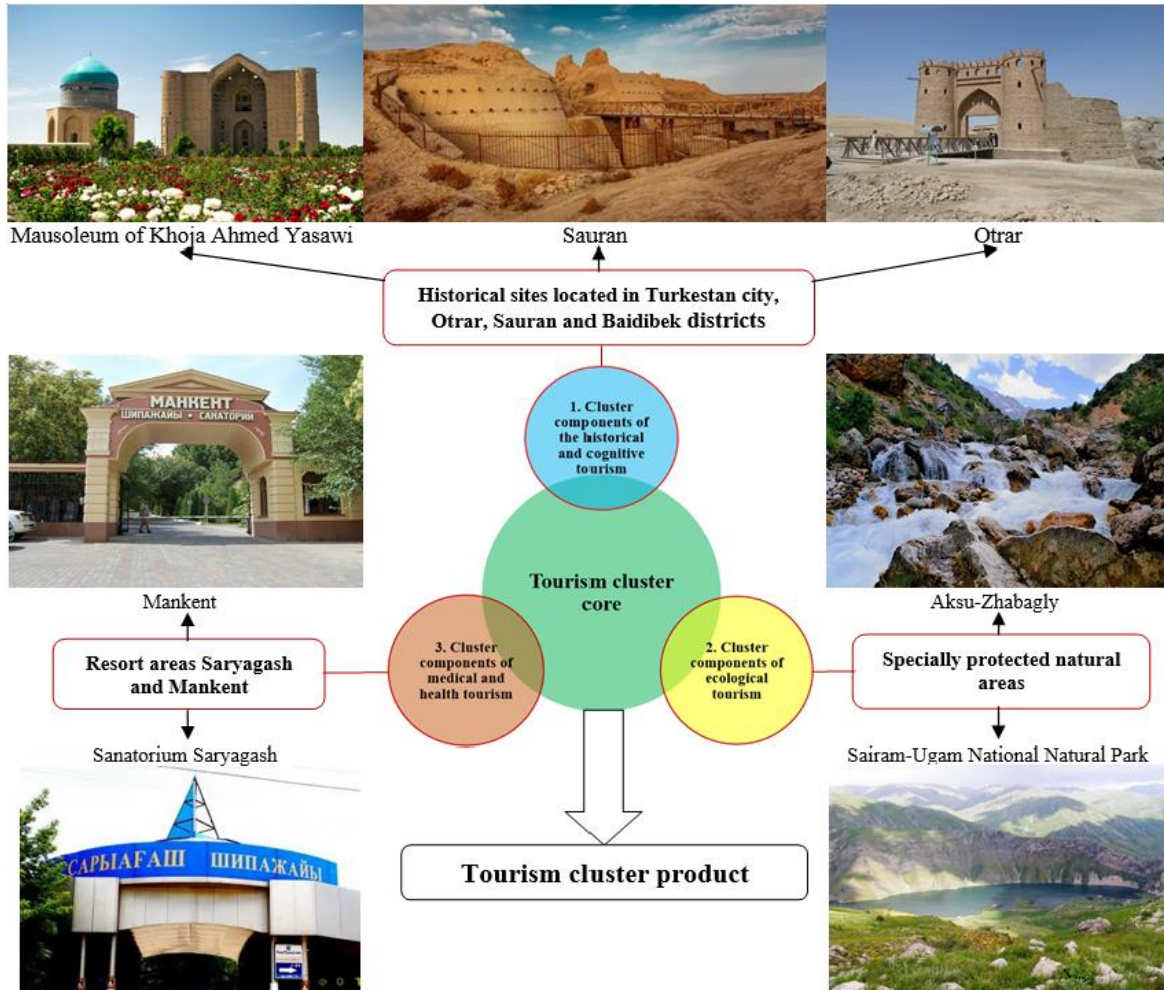


Figure 5. Structural model of tourism cluster formation in Turkestan region

Thus, the development of tourism cluster in Turkestan region should include social and cultural aspects. There is an opportunity to improve the quality of life in the region by attracting local residents to the tourism business. It is possible to improve the level of service by introducing training and professional development programs for local entrepreneurs. It is especially necessary to effectively utilize historical and cultural sites and natural resources. To increase the popularity of tourist destinations, it is necessary to strengthen cooperation between tourism organizations and local authorities (Mamirkulova et al., 2020). In addition, it is possible to increase the attractiveness of the region by diversifying tourism products. After Covid-19, it is important that tourism development measures are permanent. At the same time, research results and statistical data play an important role in tourism planning and decision-making. The unique geographical and cultural features of Turkestan region make it possible to turn the region into a tourist center of international level (Aktymbayeva et al., 2020). Therefore, the cluster approach to development affects not only economic but also social change.

In order to develop the tourist cluster of the Turkestan region, it is necessary to strengthen the advertising of unique tourist routes in the region and mandatory propaganda on national channels. It is important to develop and support wide distribution of guidebooks and thematic maps on tourist routes in Kazakh, Russian and English languages. In addition, it will be profitable for foreign tour operators and media representatives to organize information tours including special itineraries (Gidebo, 2021). One of the priorities should be the popularization of tourism as an integral part of a healthy lifestyle and the development of the necessary infrastructure for this purpose. The active participation of private tourism business owners in these processes contributes to the effective utilization of the advantages of the cluster approach. The growing demand for tourism leads to the emergence of new tourist facilities in the region and expansion of the scale of operations. Attracting investment in the construction of small and medium-sized hotels and resorts is an important part of cluster development (Rakhmetulina & Omurzakov, 2018). Moreover, due to the development of new tourist facilities and services, Turkestan Oblast can become an attractive tourist region. Using the natural and cultural potential of the region, it is possible to create a world-famous tourist center (Seken et al., 2019). These steps will contribute to increasing the economic and social importance of the tourism industry in the Turkestan region.

In this direction, foreign scientists who have studied tourism clusters in different countries and regions of the world have highlighted a number of important aspects. For example, in Australia and New Zealand the development of tourism industry is based on the conservation of natural resources and environmental sustainability (Jackson & Murphy, 2006), this corresponds to the practice of sustainable eco-tourism development in the Turkestan region. According to German experience, public-private partnerships and the introduction of modern technologies are particularly important for the effective organization of tourism clusters (Dressler & Paunović, 2021), this provides great opportunities for the development of public-private partnerships in Turkestan. Meanwhile, Spain and Italy focus on the development of cultural tourism and historical heritage preservation (Tóth et al., 2014), which has great practical significance in the effective utilization of historical and cultural heritage of Turkestan.

Analyzing the strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and risks associated with the sustainable development of tourism in Turkestan region, it is possible to identify similarities and differences with foreign experience. The main advantage of the region is its rich historical and cultural heritage and infrastructural development potential, which echoes the special attention to historical and cultural tourism in Spain and Italy. However, there are also weaknesses such as inadequate infrastructure and lack of human resources, which is comparable to similar problems we have encountered in developing tourism clusters in Germany and Australia. In terms of opportunities, the potential for the development of ecological and cultural tourism, as well as social-private partnerships and the introduction of modern technologies is particularly important, which shows the region's flexibility in adapting foreign experience. But threats such as economic instability, natural disasters, political factors can hinder the development of international tourism, which is one of the main issues often discussed in foreign studies.

4 Conclusion

So, a large number of historical and natural objects in Turkestan region is a prerequisite for the formation of a tourist cluster, which determines the tourist potential of the region. However, the scattered location of objects is unfavourable for tourists. The quality and price of services provided in the relevant infrastructure of Turkestan region such as roads, transport, accommodation and recreation facilities may cause difficulties in the formation of a tourism cluster. This is because the quality of services may not match the price or may not exist at all. To attract tourists to the Turkestan tourism cluster, it is very important to have effective marketing and promotion strategies and plans. Therefore, in order to create a successful tourism cluster in the Turkestan region, it is necessary to convince local businesses, government agencies and community members to co-operate with one goal. This is necessary to increase tourism activity and form a tourism cluster. Competing tourist destinations can make it difficult to attract visitors to the cluster, so clusters need to identify and utilise their unique selling points to stand out from

competitors. Also, it is necessary to maintain high standards of quality of services, attractions, facilities, create a positive reputation and encourage repeat visitors to the tourism cluster. Enterprises within the tourism cluster should be prepared to work closely with government agencies to clearly understand regulatory requirements and address any problems. This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. The interview sample of 30 respondents, while appropriate for qualitative inquiry, limits the generalisability of findings to the wider population of Turkestan region stakeholders. Additionally, the data collection period of approximately two months may not capture seasonal variations in tourism activity. Future research should employ larger-scale quantitative surveys to complement the qualitative insights obtained here. Comparative studies examining mutual tourist flows among Central Asian countries – particularly between Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan along the Silk Road corridor – would significantly deepen understanding of cross-border cluster development opportunities and regional tourism integration.

In this regard, based on the evaluation of the development of tourism clusters, the proposed model of tourist cluster to systematise the service of tourist facilities in Turkestan region will help to increase the tourist flow in the region and increase the number of tourists coming from abroad. Besides, among Turkic countries Turkestan region will become the basis for the development of International tourist destination, attraction of investments through positive tourist image of the region, development of agrotourism (rural tourism) as a new tourist destination and construction of a new resort town (through expansion of the resort area) in Saryagash district corresponding to international standards. This will also help to address pressing issues such as the lack of compliance of roadside facilities (food outlets and toilets) with international standards, lack of roads to tourist sites and slow development of infrastructure around historical and natural tourist sites.

Author contributions statement:

Name of Author	C	M	So	Va	Fo	I	R	D	O	E	Vi	Su	P	Fu
Ulzhalgas Tokbergenova	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		

- C : Conceptualization
- M : Methodology
- So : Software
- Va : Validation
- Fo : Formal analysis
- I : Investigation
- R : Resources
- D : Data Curation
- O : Writing - Original Draft
- E : Writing - Review & Editing
- Vi : Visualization
- Su : Supervision
- P : Project administration
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