

DIRECTIONS AND AREAS OF TOURISM RESEARCH IN KAZAKHSTAN

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Abstract: The aim of the article is to analyze research directions in tourism and the geography of Kazakhstan's tourism in order to identify those areas of research that are most often and underrepresented and cited in the literature, which will allow to identify potential, poorly recognized problems and research directions. The research material includes articles from journals indexed in Scopus. Research methods include statistical and bibliometric analysis of the number of authors, articles, journals and citations. In defining the research fields, classical classifications of research in tourism geography were used. Over the last five years, there has been a clear increase in the number of publications indexed in the Scopus database by over 450% in 2020 compared to 2015. Kazakhstan, tourism and tourism is the most frequently used key words. The articles with key words: ecocultural, marketing, sustainability, development and natural values have the highest number of citations, whose citations exceed the average value for the analyzed set of articles. The conducted research has indicated the most frequently chosen directions and areas of research in the field of tourism geography in Kazakhstan. These include articles in the field of development management and marketing. However, the texts from the ecocultural field have the highest impact factor defined by the number of those cited. Marketing, sustainability, development and natural values are on the next positions.

Key words: articles, citation, development, journal, Kazakhstan, research areas and directions, Scopus, tourism.

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INTRODUCTION

The modern world of science is changing at a dizzying pace. There is an increasingly specialized, and sometimes even niche division of disciplines into sub-disciplines. New directions and research fields are discovered, often of an interdisciplinary nature. Sometimes it is difficult to orientate even in the field of research known and practiced by him, so is the number of published research results, analytical works, case studies or descriptions of selected research problems, perhaps even worthy of being called inflationary. The issue of journals indexed by international publishing companies is similar, the best example of which can be the Scopus database, widely known to researchers, run by the Elsevier publishing house, or the Web of Science Core Collection (Archambault et al., 2009; Adriaanse and Rensleigh, 2013), last managed by Clarivate Analytics. In turn, tourism is one of the areas that are particularly strongly affected by the current pandemic related to the spread of Covid-19 around the world and time of terrorist attack influence on tourism (Wendt, 2019).

More and more studies focus on the assessment and analysis of the impact of a pandemic on the decline in tourist traffic and economic changes related to the economic crisis in individual countries, however, at the same time, more works in the field of development, economy, valorization and tourism infrastructure are published. Considering the above and the growing number of publications in the field of tourism geography, it was considered necessary to analyze the directions of research in this field to identify the most frequently discussed problems and to identify research problems that have been poorly identified so far (Dezsi et al., 2014; Deac et al., 2019; Gozner et al., 2017; Herman et al., 2019; Ilies and Grama, 2010; Ilieş et al., 2018, 2020; Azhayev et al., 2020).

Of course, the overall approach to the issue is far beyond the capabilities of a single researcher, the number of texts in the field of tourism in which the keyword tourism appears in the Scopus database in September 2020 reached almost 200,000. Publication, leading to the need to narrow down the research. They can be obtained either by specifying the topic, which excludes the implementation of the research goal, or the time scope, which leads to the research of a selected period of time, reducing the cognitive value of the research, or by regional limitation of the publications used in the analysis. Due to the research interests and the so far poor recognition of the research topic, it was decided that the region analyzed from the point of view of publications in the field of tourism geography will be Kazakhstan, for which a significant increase in the number of publications on tourism geography has been observed in the last ten years.

The aim of this study is therefore to analyze the research directions in the geography of Kazakhstan's tourism to determine those areas of research that are most often and least represented and cited in the literature on the subject. The research goal set in this way will allow to indicate potential, so far poorly identified problems and research directions. Which will enable identification and focus on previously underestimated topics and research problems.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Due to the subject of the research, the analysis included publications from the Scopus database, which indexes more journals related to tourism geography and more publications related to the subject of tourism geography in Kazakhstan. Commonly available system tools on the Scopus website were used to collect the data. The selection of publications is broadly defined, they include works for the two entries "tourism" and "Kazakhstan". The number of such searched publications, indexed in the Scopus database (as of September 30, 2020), amounted to 210 papers, including book chapters, scientific articles published in journals, conference paper and review. As at the date of the query, there were 210 publications registered by Scopus, including 173 articles, 17 conference paper, 11 chapter book, conference review 5 and 4 review. Due to the necessity of comparability of the analyzed materials, the selection was limited to articles in scientific journals.

The analysis of articles was performed for two sets. The entire material collected, a collection of 173 articles, was subjected to quantitative analysis. The dynamics of all publications on the geography of Kazakhstan's tourism in 2010-2020 are presented in succession; differentiation of texts due to the subject area; scientific journals, publishing authors; their affiliation and keywords. Simple statistical and bibliometric methods were used to show these data (Ball and Tunger, 2006; Chen and Huang, 2009; Waltman and Noyons, 2018). For obvious reasons, the sum of all data in each category will be greater than the number of publications. This is due to the fact that most of the publications are multi-author, which gives many affiliations to one article, as well as the classification of the text to several subject areas.

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A subset for qualitative analysis was created in the analyzed set. From 173 articles, 67 texts were selected that are cited and indexed at least once in Scopus. For this group, a qualitative analysis of the text was carried out, in which, while implementing the research goal, research fields in the field of tourism geography were defined. In defining the research fields, classical classifications of research in tourism geography were used (Bógdał-Brzezińska and Wendt, 2018; Wendt and Bógdał-Brzezińska, 2018; Wendt, 2020).

Then, in the next group of 31 articles, the selection of which was determined by the fact that they were cited at least three times, a detailed analysis of the research topic was carried out. Although the level of three citations is arbitrary, it was found to be sufficient to avoid at least some self-citations and indicate the texts with the highest impact factor.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The first of the analyzed shows the dynamics of changes in the number of publications. Worthy of attention and additional research on the factors that influenced it is the significant increase in the number of publications on the geography of tourism in Kazakhstan. In practice, until 2010, only single publications appeared in the literature (in Scopus database) (Figure 1). Over the last five years, there has been a clear increase in the number of publications indexed in the Scopus database by over 450% in 2020 compared to 2015. The significant increase in the number of papers is probably related to the introduction of a new system for evaluating scientific achievements / progress in Kazakhstan, in which the decisive emphasis with a positive assessment, publications indexed in world databases were assigned, in contrast to the previously dominant rank of Russian-language journals (written and published in Cyrillic). This tendency is visible in the countries of the entire former sphere of influence of the former Soviet Union, where, while maintaining the value of the Russian-language heritage and Russian journals, articles from journals indexed in world databases, primarily in English, are beginning to gain advantage.

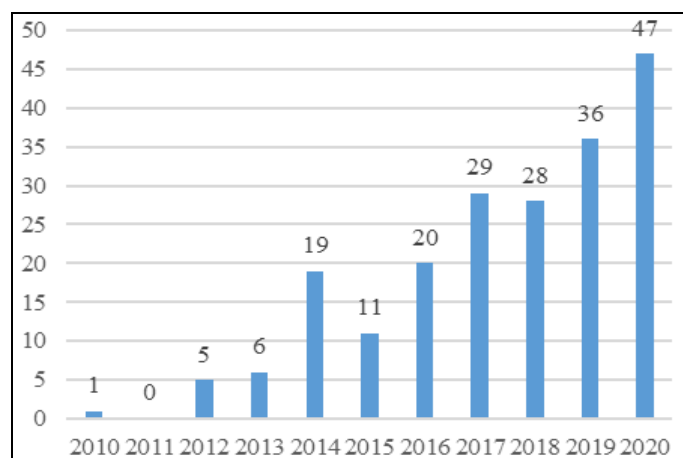


Figure 1. Number of articles "tourism and Kazakhstan" 2010-2020 (Source: own calculations based on data from the database of articles indexed by Scopus)

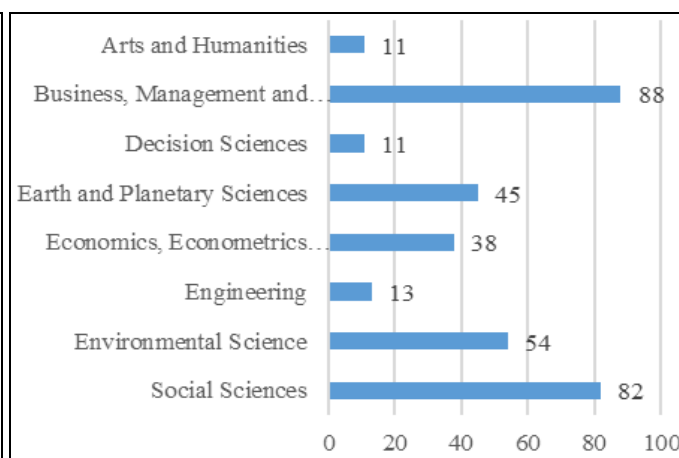


Figure 2. Division of publication for subject area (Source: own calculations based on data from the database of articles indexed by Scopus)

Another differentiation of the studied works shows a clear concentration of texts in the Business, Management and Accounting as well in Social Sciences group (Figure 2). More than 30 articles were qualified in the Scopus database for Earth and Planetary Sciences (45); Economics, Econometrics and Finance (38) and the Environmental sciences group (54). Such an arrangement in the areas of science indicates primarily the interdisciplinary nature of the research conducted. The dominance of research areas in the field of economic sciences, taking into account the main premise of the development of world tourism, is obvious. However, strongly represented social sciences, environmental science and also earth sciences clearly point to the geographical basis of the analyzed articles.

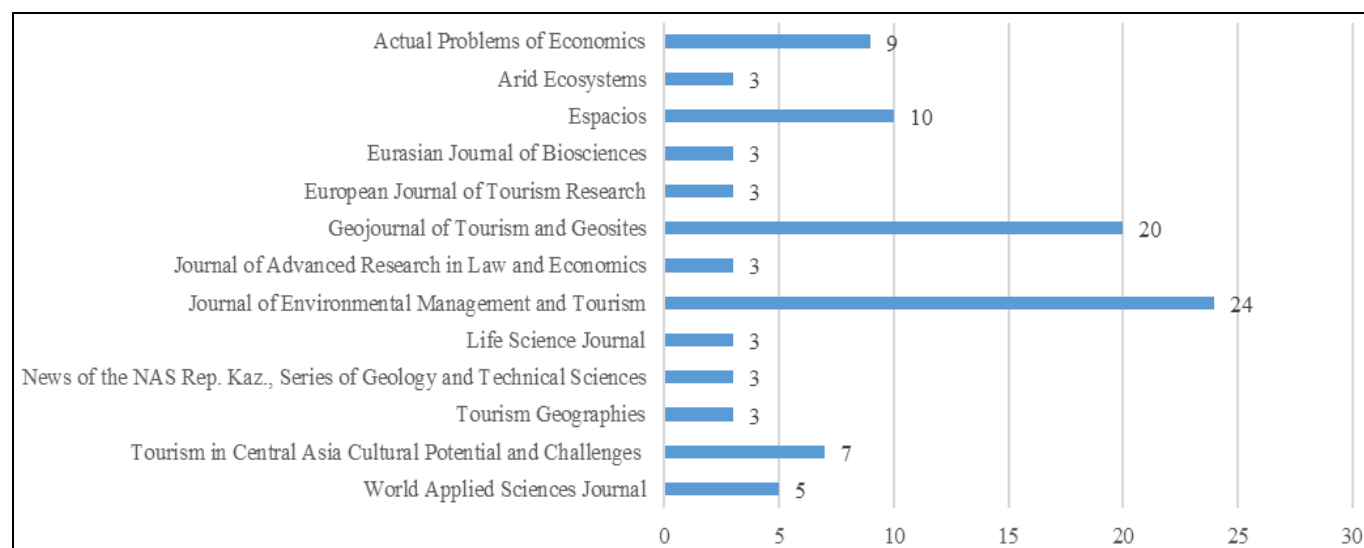


Figure 3. Articles divided by journals (Source: own calculations based on data from the database of articles indexed by Scopus)

In assessing the diversity of published texts, the number of journals was limited to the group of those with at least three articles indexed in the Scopus database, including 96 publications in total (Figure 3). Their analysis shows an obvious point. Almost 57 articles have been

published in magazines with tourism in the title. Of these, 24 works were published in the Journal of Environmental Management and Tourism and 20 in Geojournal of Tourism and Geosites. However, another compilation seems interesting cognitively, which shows that also in classic journals dealing with tourism issues, such as Current Issues in Tourism, Landscape Tourism and Meaning, Tourism Economics or Tourism Planning and Development in the analyzed period of time (2000-2020) only two texts on tourism in Kazakhstan were published. The remaining journals in which two articles have also been published are: European Research Studies Journal, International Journal of Economic Perspectives, Izvestiya Akademia Nauk, Seriya Geograficheskaya, International Review of Management and Marketing and Sustainability. The next chart shows the differentiation of the authorship of texts for authors and co-authors who signed at least four texts from the studied group (Figure 4). Commonly available search databases, Google Scholar, Research Gate, Academia or search engines allow for the conclusion that half of the authors / co-authors work scientifically at universities in Kazakhstan, and the next group are researchers from Turkish universities, which may indicate good relations of scientific cooperation between these countries.

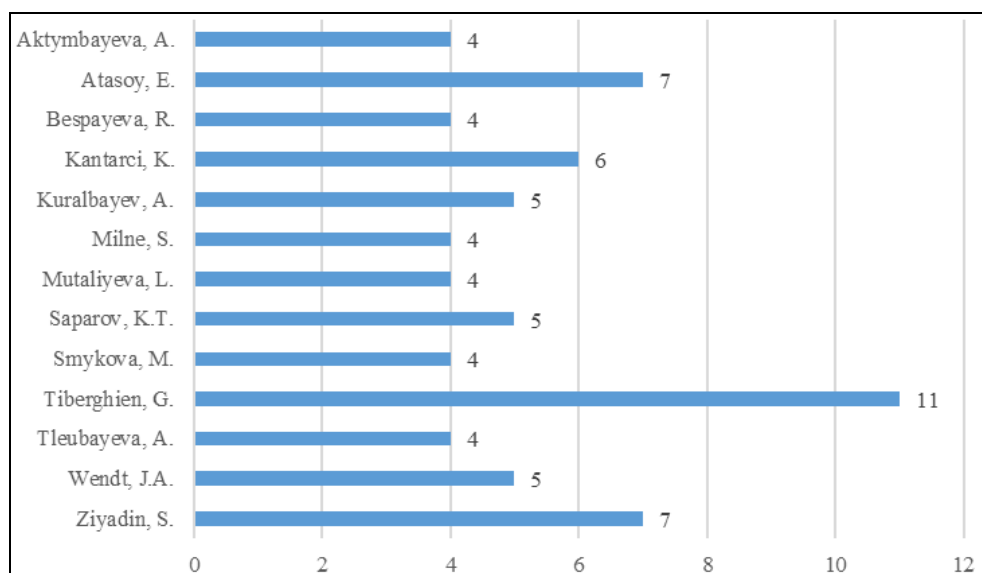


Figure 4. Articles divided by authors (Source: own calculations based on data from the database of articles indexed by Scopus)

The above conclusions are confirmed by another chart showing the differentiation of texts due to institutional affiliation (Figure 5). Among the nine universities with the number of publications above five, there are seven Kazakhs, one Scottish and one Turkish. Universities whose affiliation is included in at least five articles include, apart from Kazakh, obviously, institutions from the United States, and interestingly, from New Zealand and Poland.

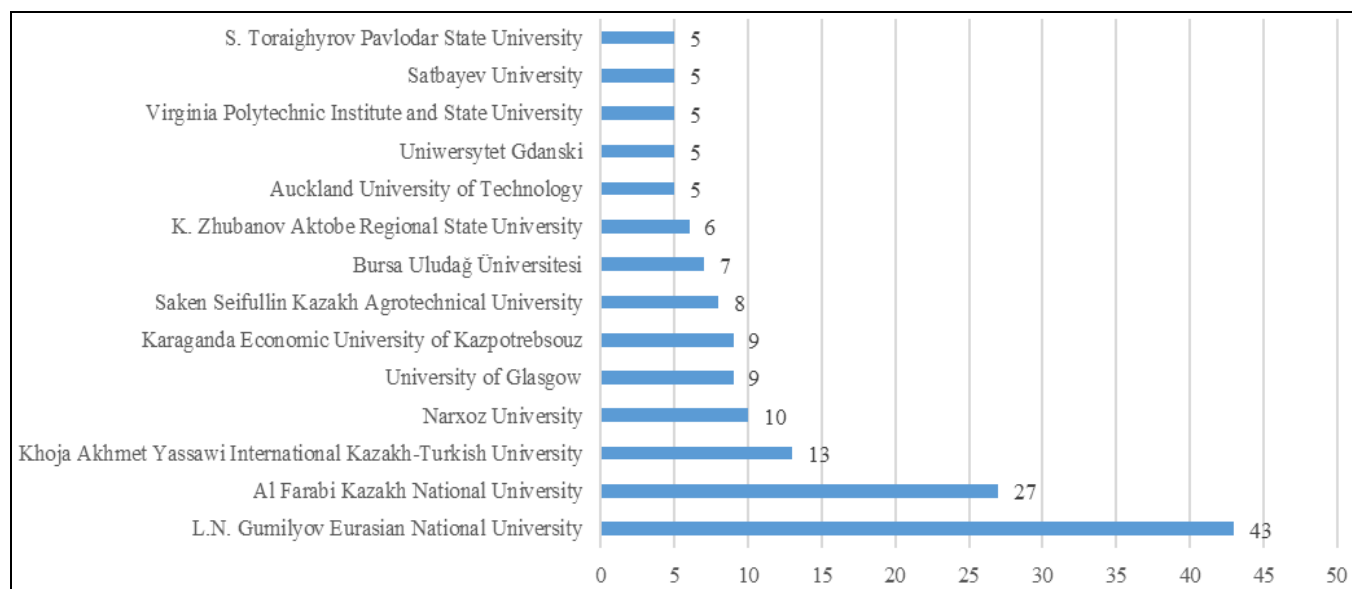


Figure 5. Articles divided by institutional affiliation (Source: own calculations based on data from the database of articles indexed by Scopus)

The case of the USA can be explained on the one hand by the multi-ethnic nature of the American population, and on the other hand by the comprehensive research interest of American universities. The New Zealand and Polish cases are probably the result of established research relations and scientific cooperation. The last of the analyzed categories of differentiation of the texts indexed in the Scopus database shows and to some extent achieves the research goal indicated in the introduction to this work. The table below shows the frequency of occurrence of key words in the analyzed works. As was to be expected, such key words as Kazakhstan, tourism and tourism development are among the most frequently quoted by the authors of the publications, each appearing more than 30 times in the works assessed. Next in the ranking of frequencies of occurrence are ecotourism, tourist, tourism management, sustainable development, all at least ten times (Table 1).

As shown by the data from the table above, articles with key words: ecocultural, marketing, sustainability, development and natural values have the highest number of citations, whose citations exceed the average value for the analyzed set of articles. Against this background, the most frequently represented texts, with key words development and economy, fare relatively poorly.

The next stage of the analysis includes a collection of 31 texts cited at least three times in the literature. In fact, with the average citation of the analyzed group of 61 articles at the level of 4.07, only at least four times cited texts should be included in the study, however, due to the representativeness of the entire research, it was decided to enlarge the influenza of the analyzed texts, including those that were cited three times, creating a set of 31 articles for final analysis (Table 3).

Table 1. Articles divided by key words (Source: own calculations based on data from the database of articles indexed by Scopus)

	Key words
Kazakhstan	80
Tourism	62
Tourism Development	34
Ecotourism ; Tourist	12
Tourism Management	11
Sustainable Development	10
Tourism Industry	9
Recreation	8
Authenticity; Central Asia; China; Landscape; Recreational Activity	7
Agriculture; Environmental Technology; Heritage Tourism ; Infrastructure; Sustainable Tourism ; Tourist Attraction	6
Cluster; Cultural Heritage; Inbound Tourism; Kyrgyzstan; Rural Tourism ; Russian Federation; Tourism Market	5
Almaty; Biodiversity; Competition; Competitiveness; Development; Ecology; Environmental Management; Geopolitics; International Tourism; International Trade; Perception; Silk Road; Tourism in Kazakhstan; Tourist Behavior	4
Agritourism ; Assessment Method; Balneology; Business Tourism; Domestic Tourism; Eco-cultural Tourism ; Ecological Tourism ; Economic Development; Economic Impact; Economics; Ecosystems; Environment; Hotels; Information Management; Investment; Landscape Change; Management; Marketing; Mountain Region; National Park; Natural Resources; Recreational Activities; Spiritual Tourism ; Strategic Approach; Tourism Economics; Tourism Experience; Tourism Infrastructure; Tourist Infrastructure; Tourist Market; Transboundary Cooperation; Turkmenistan	3

Among the remaining key words, three groups can be distinguished: types of tourism, organizational and economic aspects of tourism and geographical names. The first describes the types of tourism highlighted in the various texts. It includes key words such as: heritage tourism; sustainable tourism (6); rural tourism (5); agritourism; eco-cultural tourism, ecological tourism and spiritual tourism (3). A comparison with the classic divisions of tourism shows that research in the geography of tourism in Kazakhstan has only just begun and many subject areas are waiting for their researchers. The key words describing tourism in general, its development and economic issues look relatively better against this background. The key words include tourism development (34) and other terms relating to development, management and business: sustainable development (10); tourism industry (9); infrastructure (6); tourism market (5); development; international tourism (4). The remaining key words were indicated three or less times in the analyzed texts.

The third group of key words are geographical terms. The latter include the names of countries and regions: Central Asia and China (7), Kyrgyzstan, Russian Federation (5); Almaty (4) and Turkmenistan (3). The collected key words show an obvious focus on the research region, but the surprising thing is the small number of local terms, cities, national parks, or case studies. The next part of the research, which realizes the aim of the work, covers the analysis of selected 67 texts cited in the Scopus database. They were assessed and classified in terms of the number of articles, citations and citation index per article (Table 2). The table omits the articles for which the variety of the problems discussed did not allow for their classification, and the texts that appeared singular in their categories.

Table 2. Classification of article and their citation (Source: own calculations based on data from the database of articles indexed by Scopus)

Area of tourism	Articles	Citation	Citation / articles
Ecocultural	2	22	11,00
Marketing	4	35	8,75
Sustainability	3	19	6,33
Development	15	77	5,13
Natural values	3	14	4,67
Economy	8	26	3,25
Management	3	9	3,00
Ethnotourism	2	5	2,50
Ecotourism	2	4	2,00
Medical	2	4	2,00
Case study	2	3	1,50
Ecosystem	2	2	1,00
Geotourism	2	2	1,00
Hospitality	2	2	1,00
Industry	2	2	1,00
Landscape	2	2	1,00
Total number of classified articles	56	228	4,07

The analysis of the last data set confirms the previous conclusions. The most frequently discussed topics, among the most cited works, are articles in the field of development management and marketing (Herman et al., 2019; Wendt et al., 2019), which leads to the conclusion that there is a significant share of economists or researchers dealing with this subject among the authors of publications on tourism in Kazakhstan. The most frequently cited works are "The new silk road: Mediators and tourism development in Central Asia" (Werner, 2003) and "Digital tourism as a key factor in the development of the economy" (Watkins, 2018). First concern wide area of the Silk Road and is interesting as well for modern policy. The second concerns development issues in terms of modern tools supporting the development of tourism. One of the most frequently published and cited authors (Kantarci, 2007a; 2007b; 2007c) owes the high number of cited only three works, apart from substantive issues, also to a broad, geographical approach to the topic (Table 3). The articles devoted to

theory, infrastructure, recreation, ecotourism and anthropogenic values are poorly represented among the works cited. Which may indicate, on the one hand, the lack of interest of researchers in this subject and, on the other hand, the weakness of, for example, anthropogenic values in the region. The latter conclusion is confirmed by the texts on spiritual tourism and ethnotourism and ecocultural tourism.

For obvious reasons, the presented bibliometric analysis is not free from certain limitations. Only the selected period of time and articles from the list of works cited by Scopus were taken into account when selecting the restrictions that were necessary for the implementation of the research. However, before 2000, relatively few works devoted to the subject of Kazakhstan's tourism were published, therefore the above-mentioned limitations could only slightly affect the final results of the research. It was also assumed, in accordance with the commonly used research workshop, that key words have a value representative of the content of the work. Chapters in books and books devoted to the analyzed issues were not included, which reduced the number of analyzed works, in this case influencing the representativeness of the obtained results. The indexing base was also arbitrarily adopted, but the justification for this choice is also confirmed in the literature on the subject (Vaughan and Shaw, 2008; Archambault, et al., 2009). Also, a query in the Web of Science Core Collection database indicated a much smaller number of indexed works in this database than when Scopus was selected. Another problem may be, for example, technical deficiencies in the Scopus database, where not all works published in journals indexed by Scopus appear, e.g. the work "Assessment of landscape ecological - recreational capacity of north Kazakhstan region" (Mazhitova et al., 2018; Ramazanova et al. 2019; Nazarova et al., 2019) it was not among the indexed works at the time of the data query. Of course, it is possible to comprehend the thesis of tourism in Kazakhstan as a whole, but it goes far beyond the purpose of the research that has been carried out, which can be treated as preparatory studies for a full coverage of the subject matter.

Table 3. Article about tourism in Kazakhstan (2000-2020) cited minimum 3 times
(Source: own calculations based on data from the database of articles indexed by Scopus)

Title of articles	Classification	Authors	Cit.	
The image of central Asia countries: Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan	Anthropogenic values	(Kantarci, 2007a)	7	
The life cycle of authenticity: neo-nomadic tourism culture in Kazakhstan	Culture	(Tiberghien and Xie, 2018)	6	
The new silk road: Mediators and tourism development in Central Asia	Development (8)	(Werner, 2003)	29	
Development of scientific tourism at Baikonur Cosmodrome Kazakhstan		(Koshim, et al., 2019)	4	
The question of Kazakh national and geographical toponymic as a potential factor of tourism development		(Saparov, et al., 2017)	4	
State policy of tourism industry development in the Republic of Kazakhstan		(Zhidkoblinova, 2013)	4	
The characteristic features of the development of tourism in the mountainous regions of Kazakhstan		(Espenbetov, et al., 2017)	3	
Modern changes in Zhezkazgan city: Positive and negative factors of tourism development (Kazakhstan)		(Aliaskarov, et al., 2017)	3	
Research note: Evaluation and projection of economic indicators of tourism development in Kazakhstan		(Sydykbayeva, et al., 2015)	3	
Trends and problems in tourism development on the territory of Eastern Kazakhstan region		(Ziyadin, et al., 2014)	3	
Performance and visitors' perception of authenticity in eco-cultural tourism		Ecocultural (2)	(Tiberghien, et al., 2017)	15
Managing the Planning and Development of Authentic Eco-Cultural Tourism in Kazakhstan			(Tiberghien, 2019)	7
Economic problems of Kazakhstan's competitiveness in the international tourist business	Economy	(Batyrova, et al., 2018)	5	
Digital tourism as a key factor in the development of the economy	Economy / Development	(Watkins, 2018)	24	
Authenticating eco-cultural tourism in Kazakhstan: a supply side perspective	Ecotourism	(Tiberghien, et al., 2018)	3	
International tourists' awareness and attitude about environmental responsibility and sustainable practices	Environment	(Mazhenova, et al., 2016)	10	
Formation of ethnocultural tourism clusters in Russia-Kazakhstan borderline territory	Ethnotourism	(Bancerova and Kasimova, 2018)	3	
Optimization problems distribution of investments for the implementation strategy of domestic tourism in Kazakhstan	Management (3)	(Tulbayeva, et al., 2017)	3	
Organizational and economic problems in the management of the spiritual - Historical development of tourism in South Kazakhstan Region		(Kuralbayev, et al., 2016)	3	
Public-private partnership as a tool of public tourism sector administration		(Zhidkoblinova, et al., 2016)	3	
Perceptions of foreign investors on the tourism market in central Asia including Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan	Marketing (3)	(Kantarci, 2007b)	20	
Specificity of using information technologies in the digital transformation of event tourism		(Ziyadin, et al., 2019a)	7	
The Borat effect: Film-induced tourism gone wrong		(Pratt, 2015)	7	
Determination of Southern Altai geography propitiousness extent for tourism development	Natural values (3)	(Zhensikbayeva, et al., 2017)	5	
Geosystems geoeological assessment of the basin of rivers for tourist valorization. Case study of Ilel river basin		(Berdenov, et al., 2016)	5	
Natural potential for tourism development in Southern Altai (Kazakhstan)		(Zhensikbayeva, et al., 2018)	4	
Fundamentals of recreation-geographic assessment for tourism development	Recreation	(Zhakupov, et al., 2015)	6	
Rural tourism as one of the priority factors for sustainable development of rural territories in Kazakhstan	Rural	(Tleubayeva, 2018)	3	
Model of sustainable development of tourism industry in Kazakhstan (regional perspective)	Theory	(Aimagambetov, et al., 2017)	7	
Diversification tourism in the conditions of the digitalization		(Ziyadin, et al., 2019b)	10	
Perceptions of central Asia travel conditions: Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan	Transport infrastructure	(Kantarci, 2007c)	8	

CONCLUSION

Over the last five years, there has been a clear increase in the number of publications indexed in the Scopus database by over 450% in 2020 compared to 2015. The significant increase in the number of papers is probably related to the introduction of a new system for evaluating scientific achievements / progress in Kazakhstan, in which the decisive emphasis when positively assessed, publications indexed in world databases were placed, in contrast to the previously dominant rank of Russian-language journals. The diversity of the researched works shows the clear concentration of texts in the Business, Management and Accounting as well as in Social Sciences group. More than thirty Scopus articles have been categorized under Earth and Planetary Sciences; Economics, Econometrics and Finance and the Environmental sciences group. However, the strongly represented social sciences, environmental science and also earth sciences clearly indicate the geographical basis of the analyzed articles.

In the assessment of the diversity of published texts by journals, in the collection of 96 works, 57 articles were published in journals with tourism in the title. Of these, 24 works were published in the Journal of Environmental Management and Tourism and 20 in Geojournal of Tourism and Geosites. Half of the authors / co-authors work scientifically at universities in Kazakhstan. Another group consists of researchers from Turkish universities, which may be evidence of good relations in scientific cooperation between these countries. Among the nine universities with the number of publications above five, there are seven Kazakhs, one Scottish and one

Turkish. Universities whose affiliation is included in at least five articles include, apart from Kazakh, of course, institutions from the United States, and interestingly, from New Zealand and Poland.

The key words analysis showed that such terms as Kazakhstan, tourism and tourism development are among the most frequently quoted by the authors of publications, each appearing more than 30 times in the assessed works. Next in the ranking of frequencies of occurrence are ecotourism, tourist, tourism management, sustainable development, all at least ten times. The highest number of citations in the literature has articles with key words: ecocultural, marketing, sustainability, development and natural values, the citations of which exceed the average value for the analyzed set of articles. Against this background, the most frequently represented texts, with key words development and economy, fare relatively poorly. The analysis of the last set of data, including 31 texts, confirmed the earlier conclusions. The most frequently discussed topics, among the most cited works, are articles in the field of development, management and marketing, which leads to the conclusion that there is a significant share of economists or researchers dealing with this subject among the authors of publications on tourism in Kazakhstan. The articles devoted to theory, infrastructure, recreation, important like shopping tourism (Bar-Kořelis and Wendt, 2018), VR-tourism (Korinth et al., 2019) ecotourism and anthropogenic values are poorly represented among the works cited. Which may indicate, on the one hand, the lack of interest of researchers in this subject and, on the other hand, the weakness of, for example, anthropogenic values in the region.

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