

SOCIO-ECONOMIC SIGNIFICANCE OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT ON THE GREAT SILK ROAD (KAZAKHSTAN SECTION)

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Abstract: The Great Silk Road is a historical place for Kazakhstan, promoting mutual understanding and peace between peoples, connecting cultures, developing tourism, trade and business. Therefore, a comprehensive study of the tourism and recreational potential of the sites of the Kazakhstan section of the Great Silk Road, the socio-economic significance of tourism development and tourism attractiveness is very important. The purpose of this study was to determine the socio-economic significance of tourism development in the Kazakhstan section of the Great Silk Road. In the study of tourism and recreational resources of the Great Silk Road, the methods of analysing the theoretical basis, studying statistical data and questionnaires were used comprehensively. As a result, the socio-economic significance of tourism development in Kazakhstan, favourable socio-cultural impact of the Great Silk Road in connection with improving the welfare of the population of the territory, increasing the flow of tourists, income from the tourism industry and improving infrastructure was revealed. The survey showed that 40.9 % of respondents rated the level of satisfaction with transport infrastructure from 5 points to 3 points. 34.1 % of respondents rated the quality of roads as 4 points and 13.6 % as 5 points. It was also found that the most visited tourist sites on the Kazakh part of the Great Silk Road in recent times are the mausoleum of Khoja Ahmed Yasawi, Otrar State Archaeological Museum-Reserve, mausoleum of Aisha Bibi and Karakhan. Thus, it was proposed to form an information base of tourist sites of the Kazakhstan part of the Great Silk Road, to attract qualified personnel in the service sector, to popularise tourist sites by improving Internet resources, advertising and shooting feature films.

Key words: The Great Silk Road, tourism, socio-economic significance, tourist and recreational potential, tourist attractiveness

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INTRODUCTION

As the world's ninth largest state by territory, Kazakhstan profits greatly from the growth of transcontinental trade (Gussenov and Sharipov, 2019). The favourable geographical and geopolitical position, Kazakhstan's location on the Northern arm of the Great Silk Road, its border position with China have a positive impact on the development of the modern economy and tourism (Daye et al., 2020). In this regard, the great socio-economic importance of the Great Silk Road for Kazakhstan lies in its location at the epicentre of trading places (Islamjanova et al., 2017; Baltabayeva et al., 2019). Nowadays, with the development of cities and trade and economic relations along the Great Silk Road, Turkic-speaking peoples are closely interacting with each other (Kantarci et al., 2017). In this regard, the volume of trade, exchange of goods, services, new forms of entrepreneurship and economic relations appeared, the socio-economic development of this territory increased. Based on historical data, with the development of the Great Silk Road in the Kazakh land, social consciousness was formed, not only goods but also information was exchanged, special knowledge, crafts and culture developed (Medeu et al., 2017). The Great Silk Road developed trade relations, influenced the strengthening of cultural and diplomatic ties with other countries. The economic growth and development of the Great Silk Road enabled the construction of settlements, strengthening of infrastructure, building of schools, mastering of crafts, creation of historical and cultural monuments, building of beautiful structures and many other things (Mamirkulova et al., 2020).

Currently, great importance is given to the development of tourism on the Kazakhstan section of the Great Silk Road (Kulgildinova et al., 2019). Also in Kazakhstan the issues of increasing competitiveness and tourist attractiveness of the territory of the republic are often discussed (Baisakalova and Garkavenko, 2014). Special attention is paid to state regulation and tourism policy, legislative and regulatory framework of Kazakhstan, relevant normative acts are adopted. The current State programme for the development of the tourism industry of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2019-2025 confirms its effectiveness, affecting the increase of the socio-cultural impact of tourism (Resolution of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated May 31, 2019). Priority tourist territories of Kazakhstan with financial support from the state have been identified, where preferences have been defined, allowing the development of small and medium-sized businesses, entrepreneurship in the field of tourism (Yesenov et al., 2017; Issakov et al., 2023a). The emergence of new factors affecting the geopolitics and geo-economics of Kazakhstan has led to the attraction of investments into the economy, the development of export potential, and the establishment of Kazakhstan as a cultural and scientific centre in Central Asia (Werner, 2003). Economic and tourism growth in Kazakhstan is linked to the development of the new Silk Road and participation in various economic associations and unions.

All 33 sites along the Great Silk Road have been inscribed on the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) World Heritage List (Saduov et al., 2019). These include cities and palace complexes of states and empires, trading settlements, Buddhist cave temples, ancient roads and passes, watchtowers, sections of the Great Wall of China, fortresses, tombs and religious buildings over 5,000 kilometres of territory (Usmanova, 2018). Eight cities of the Great Silk Road located in Kazakhstan have been inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List: the cities of Aktobe, Kostobe, Kulan, Kayalyk, Talgar, Ornek, Akyrtas and Karamergen (Bayandinova et al., 2019). The purpose of this study was to determine the socio-economic significance of tourism development in the Kazakhstan section of the Great Silk Road. The attractiveness of tourist and recreational facilities of the Kazakhstani part of the Great Silk Road was defined as objectives (Artemyev et al., 2019); socio-economic situation of the regions located in the direction of the Kazakhstan part of the Great Silk Road (Kulakhmetova et al., 2019); qualitative and quantitative analyses of the attendance and ratings of sites and determining the socio-economic importance of tourism development in the regions (Teczke et al., 2022). Because now it is very important to determine the socio-economic importance of tourism development on the Kazakhstan section of the Great Silk Road to accommodate tourists and holidaymakers within the framework of the implementation of the international transport corridor Western Europe-Western China, to provide the necessary services at the unique tourist sites of the country (Kurmanaliyeva et al., 2018). The Great Silk Road is now tourism, developing trade and business, promoting mutual understanding and peace between peoples, linking cultures. The Silk Road promotes the establishment of multilateral ties between countries (Gursoy and Altinay, 2021). The Great Silk Road currently has all the necessary opportunities for prosperity, dynamic development and adaptation. Taking into account this situation, it is possible to intensively develop tourism on the Great Silk Road. The Great Silk Road crosses the famous territories of Kazakhstan. The main tourist sites and resources are gathered in Almaty region and South Kazakhstan, including Turkestan, Taraz and Almaty are of special importance (Baypakov and Nurzhanov, 1992; Nagy, 2019). The Kazakhstan territory of the Silk Road route is a unique complex of monuments of history, archaeology, architecture, town-planning and monumental art, reflecting the deep processes of interaction between nomadic and sedentary-agricultural culture of the peoples of Central Asia (Raimkulov et al., 2021; Issakov et al., 2022). In this regard, the socio-economic importance of tourism development in the Kazakhstan section of the Great Silk Road is high. This is due to the fact that the Great Silk Road is a caravan route starting in China and heading to the Far East and Europe, most of this route passed through the lands of Central Asia and Kazakhstan. Therefore, the development of tourism in the Kazakh territory of this road is of great importance.

Thus, the ancient cities located on the Kazakh section of the Great Silk Road witnessed a number of wars, fires, famines and disasters. In addition, the Great Silk Road not only developed the trade system, but also crossed the Eastern and Western civilisations, established culture and diplomatic relations through the Great Silk Road (Fayzullaev et al., 2021). The caravan, which originated in the VI-VII centuries from China, passed through the ancient cities of Otyrar, Taraz, Sayram (Ispidjab), Turkestan (Yassy), Suyab, Balasagun and others in Semirechye and South Kazakhstan economic region. Earlier, those who saw the trade market in Taraz said: "Taraz market-mirror of the world (Tolstova, 1962). That's because on this side any world could be exchanged, sold and bought. Household items and weapons, clothes and saddles made of

copper were traded. The Otyrar valley included over one hundred and fifty small towns, these settlements were rich in barrow palaces (Akishev et al., 1996). Along with trade, education and science also developed in this region (Lengyel et al., 2019). In addition, the ancient city of Turkestan is now becoming a world centre of tourism (Abdrasilova et al., 2021; Garda, 2022). The hubs of the Great Silk Road were large and small cities settled on the banks of the Syr Darya and Talas, Arys and Irtysh, near passes and crossings, in the mountains and steppes. The names of some of these cities (Taraz, Turkestan) are known to all regions, and many scientific works have been written about them (Aldybayev et al., 2021). Among them, Dmitriyev et al. (2021) surveyed the regions to assess the tourism and recreational potential of Kazakhstan's Great Silk Road sites, local tourism development opportunities and recreational sites of North Kazakhstan region for tourism industry development. Kuralbayev et al. (2017) studied Turkestan residents' perceptions of tourism and their attitudes towards tourism. In addition, Mukayev et al. (2022) investigated the landscape and recreational potential of mountainous areas in Turkestan region of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Also Shalekenov (2014) identified attractive areas and tourist sites along the Great Silk Road and noted the socio-economic importance of tourism development for the economy of Kazakhstan, Assylbekova et al. (2022) nevertheless, the continuity of past and present civilisations, the invaluable experience of spatial movement of past generations, explored the fact that it has not lost its functional importance to this day. Thus, this study is aimed at determining the socio-economic significance of tourism development in the Kazakhstan part of the Great Silk Road and examines the tourist and recreational facilities of the Kazakhstan part of the Great Silk Road, the socio-economic situation of the regions where the facilities are located, and the socio-economic significance of tourism development in the regions.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The Great Silk Road (Silk Road) is a caravan route that begins in Shi An, China, and heads to the Middle East via Xinjiang, Central Asia (Von Richthofen, 1882). Currently, the Republic of Kazakhstan is an active participant of the International Tourism Project The Great Silk Road. The Great Silk Road is one of the historical monuments of the detachment of human civilisation (Bayandinova et al., 2016). This road, dating back to the 2nd century BC, was a bridge that connected Europe and Asia-West and East. During the period of its crossing with Kazakhstan, starting from the 6th century, two directions were widely developed: the Syr Darya and Tien Shan roads. The first road starts in China and passes through East Turkestan Kashgar to Zhetysay, then along the Syr Darya coast and further along the island to the western countries (Groshev, 1998). In general, the Great Silk Road contributed to the intensive development of science, engineering and technology, interethnic and interregional relations and the exchange of cultural values in general. Because the continuity of past and present civilisations, the invaluable experience of spatial movement of past generations has still not lost its functional significance. In retrospect, the Great Silk Road is a system of caravan routes leading from China to the Middle East and Europe (Akhmetzhanov and Alimzhanova, 2019). The Silk Road as a trade route emerged in the 3rd century BC and existed until the 16th century AD (Zanadiluly, 2022). The northern branch of the ancient caravan route passed through the territory of Kazakhstan. In ancient times the main cities of the country were Otrar, Turkestan, Taraz, Ispidjab (Zhakupov, 2022; Aktymbayeva et al., 2020a). In modern Kazakhstan the main regions connected with the Silk Road route are Turkestan, Zhambyl, Almaty, Mangistau and Kyzylorda regions. At present, 57 historical, cultural and ecological directions have been developed for Turkestan region (Kurmanbayeva and Umirbekova, 2022; Sataeva and Bekseitov, 2017). Within the framework of implementation of the international transport corridor Western Europe-Western China modern tourist infrastructure is being created for accommodation of tourists, holidaymakers and obtaining necessary services at the unique tourism objects of the country and at the western and eastern border gates of the republic (Boranbayeva and Tulentayeva, 2020).

In this regard, the Republic of Kazakhstan announced plans to reconstruct the ancient Great Silk Road. In 1992, the Dostyk-Alashankou international crossing was put into operation, connecting Kazakh and Chinese railways with the new routes of the Trans-Asian Railway (Tursynbayeva et al., 2015). The construction of the transcontinental motorway Western Europe-Western China in 2008 strengthened mutually beneficial trade and economic relations between the countries along this transport corridor. One of the largest transnational projects, geographically large in scale, was the One Belt and One Road project (Mylkaidarov et al., 2020). It made it possible to revive the Great Silk Road route, establishing close ties between the continents at a new qualitative level. The implementation of these projects had a positive impact on the countries' tourism development, revitalisation and restoration of tourist sites and attractions, and improvement of tourism infrastructure. This is confirmed by the increase in tourist flows and the increase in tourist attractiveness of historical and cultural heritage sites of the Great Silk Road on the section of Kazakhstan (Tuyakbayev et al., 2021; Aktymbayeva et al., 2020b). With its diverse and huge tourist and recreational potential, favourable climatic conditions, diverse landscapes, and attractions, the Republic has a unique opportunity to take its place in the world tourism market.

A number of state programmes have had a beneficial impact on the development of the Great Silk Road, one of the first being the 1997 programme Revival of Historical Centres of the Silk Road, Preservation and Continuous Development of the Cultural Heritage of Turkic-speaking States, Creation of Tourism Infrastructure (State program of the Republic of Kazakhstan "Revival of historical centers of the Silk Road, preservation and joint development of cultural heritage of Turkic-speaking states, creation of tourism infrastructure", 1998). In this regard, Turkestan region, unlike other regions, has its own features and opportunities for the formation of the tourism industry in the region. Namely, the presence of the main route of the Great Silk Road and, accordingly, a significant potential of tourist objects of Turkestan region (Sevim et al., 2017). Historical and cultural heritage, high degree of urbanisation and dynamics of population growth as a carrier of culture favourably affect the development of tourism. To date, in Turkestan city, one of the main and popular tourist destinations of the Silk Road, in 2021 in the buffer zone of the cultural reserve Azret-Sultan on an area of 20.5 hectares the largest in Central Asia multifunctional tourist complex Keruen-Saray was opened, where more than 4 thousand permanent

jobs were created (Nurmukhamedova and Myrzakhan, 2023; El Archi et al., 2023a, 2023b, 2023c, 2023d). The development of the Great Silk Road will undoubtedly have a positive impact on the economy, tourism, community life, job creation, infrastructure development, etc. After all, in the data of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2022 on the Great Silk Road, the dynamics of the tourism industry was high. Therefore, in the course of the study, we conducted a statistical analysis of the current state of tourism development in Kazakhstan. Also, in accordance with the purpose of the study, we received answers to questionnaires aimed at determining the socio-economic importance of tourism development in the Kazakhstan section of the Great Silk Road. 441 respondents voluntarily participated in the survey. 59% of respondents were male and 41% were female. The flowchart of the study is summarised in more detail in Figure 1 below.



Figure 1. Research Flowchart (Source: compiled by the authors)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Current state of tourism development on the Kazakhstan section of the Great Silk Road

In the economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan 2022 along the Great Silk Road, in particular, in the field of tourism, there was a high dynamics. It was found that for the year 2022 on domestic tourism (residents) provided services in accommodation 6,407,318 people. In the previous year 2021, 5,145,217 persons were served and in 2020, 3,328,614 persons were served. The total number of domestic tourists for the year 2021 was 9,003,292 persons, of which 5,145,217 persons were served by accommodation places, which was 57 % (Bureau of National Statistics, 2022). The data show that in 2021, the year of the coronavirus pandemic, there was an increase in domestic travel due to the COVID-19 pandemic and restrictive border crossing measures, which had a positive impact on the revival of domestic tourism infrastructure, increased revenues of local tourism enterprises, and generated domestic tourist flows. During this period, domestic tourist facilities in Kazakhstan were popular. This is confirmed by the given indicators (Table 1).

Table 1. Distribution of domestic visitors by travel purpose, 2021 (Bureau of National Statistics, 2021)

	Total	Holiday and relaxation	Visiting friends and relatives	Education and training	Medical and recreational procedures	religion and pilgrimage	Shopping	Other purposes	Business and professional
Republic of Kazakhstan	9003 292	2 331 851	4 405 554	163 212	657 193	63 824	753 448	100 442	527 768
Akmola	402 241	85 959	192 105	3 998	41 800	-	53 911	5 242	19 226
Aktobe	493 842	78 031	325 263	5 676	24 555	-	44 567	-	15 750
Almaty	1289 694	269 738	658 217	44 081	103 403	6 515	138 306	13 196	56 238
Atyrau	98 741	20 627	49 163	1 697	10 587	-	9 297	1 884	5 486
West Kazakhstan	331 606	105 924	146 824	10 177	22 267	2 707	21 968	3 947	17 792
Zhambyl	501 569	138 017	263 078	7 074	28 872	1 094	45 298	6 220	11 916
Karaganda	686 290	206 327	339 893	9 643	55 054	5 251	30 310	6 930	32 882
Kostanay	454 653	38 510	224 659	6 394	44 528	2 160	93 722	6 056	38 624
Kyzylorda	424 661	113 148	203 763	17 299	38 263	5 022	26 938	-	20 228
Mangystau	307 589	49 767	207 090	7 066	33 463	1 760	-	-	8 443
Pavlodar	334 529	65 712	153 328	2 411	31 030	532	57 370	12 153	11 993
North Kazakhstan	244 087	54 790	120 010	1 257	23 612	1 660	30 604	2 608	9 546
Turkestan	883 893	172 256	420 416	13 854	79 781	28 341	121 712	22 118	25 415
East Kazakhstan	651 301	196 218	284 878	5 480	49 411	4 662	71 594	188	38 870
Astana city	703 826	366 082	247 722	9 149	25 848	952	3 041	1 684	49 348
Almaty city	716 134	287 459	298 216	10 354	21 237	385	1 983	-	96 500
Shymkent city	478 636	83 286	270 929	7 602	23 482	2 783	2 827	18 216	69 511

One of the largest historical and cultural objects of Turkestan region and the most visited object is the state historical and cultural reserve-museum Azret Sultan (Concept of cultural policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2023-2027). According to official data, the state historical and cultural reserve-museum Azret Sultan for 5 months of 2022 was visited by 296 919 people, in 2021-1417372 people, in 2020-382606 people, in 2019-1148426 people. The number of visits of foreigners is increasing, before the lockdown visited up to 2000 people in the warm period from April to September, during the year from 60 to 300 foreigners per month, depending on the time of year (Official website of the Hazrat Sultan state historical and Cultural Reserve-Museum, 2023). Taking into account the ethno-cultural peculiarities of Kazakhstan, the main purpose of domestic trips in 2021 was to visit friends and relatives (4,405,554 people), for recreation purposes-2,331,851 people, for medical and health purposes-657,193 people, 753,448 Kazakhstanis, for business and professional purposes-527,768 tourists (Resolution of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2021). Pandemic and postpandemic periods formed a favourable trend of domestic tourism growth among Kazakhstanis, which led to the creation of a competitive business environment, promotion of domestic tourism product. Currently, in Kazakhstan, public libraries,

cultural and leisure organisations, museums, amusement and recreation parks, cinemas, theatres, concert organisations, zoos and circuses provide services on tourist and local lore objects (Issakov et al., 2023b). In 2022, libraries (51239.3 thousand visits), cinemas (17047.5 thousand visits), amusement and recreation parks (14273.7 thousand visits), museums (6097.3 thousand visits) had the largest number of visitors. At the same time, the largest number of events was held by cultural and leisure organisations (196,700 units), theatres (15,400 units), amusement and recreation parks (6,700 events) and concert organisations (5,900 units) (Official Information Resource of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2023). Statistical data shows the sufficiency of leisure facilities in the Republic of Kazakhstan. The development of domestic tourism has a positive trend, inbound tourism is related to visits to places of interest, business purposes, relatives and family events.

Analysing the data of socio-economic development, living standards and employment of the population of Kazakhstan, in the city of Almaty, according to the estimates of the Bureau of National Statistics of the Agency of the Republic of Kazakhstan on Strategic Planning and Reforms, the average per capita nominal cash income of the population for the 1st quarter of 2023 was 230743 tenge, which is 15.8% higher compared to the 1st quarter of 2022. Money income for the period decreased by 2.9 per cent. Average per capita nominal monetary income of the population in Astana city for the first quarter of 2023 was estimated at 226196 tenge. 16.1% in nominal growth compared to the corresponding period of 2022 -, and decreased by 5.1% in actual cash income. In Almaty region in the I quarter of 2023, the average per capita nominal cash income of the population was 119,029 tenge, which is 111.4% higher compared to the I quarter of 2022, for this period real cash income decreased by 5.6%. Average per capita nominal cash income of the population in Zhambyl oblast estimated in the first quarter of 2023 was 121857 tenge, the growth compared to the corresponding period of 2022 was 21.2% in nominal income and 1.5% in actual cash income. Average per capita nominal cash income of the population in Turkestan region in the first quarter of 2023 in average per month amounted to 91576 tenge and increased by 20.1% compared to the corresponding period of 2022, and real cash income remained at the level of (Nakhipbekova et al., 2023).

According to the data of the sample survey of employment in the first quarter of 2023 in various sectors of the economy of Kazakhstan employed 9 million people, of which 6.9 million people (76.4% of the total number of employed in the economy) employed by hired labour, 2.1 million people (23.6% of the total number of employed in the economy) self-employed. Compared to the first quarter of 2022, total employment increased by 250.8 thousand people, mainly due to hired workers (197.7 thousand people), the number of self-employed (53.1 thousand people) (Figure 2) (Bureau of National Statistics, 2023).

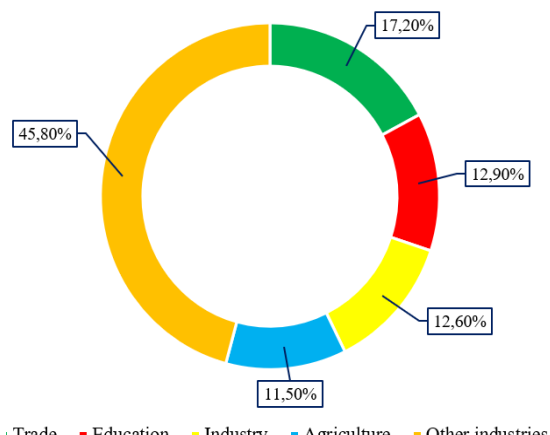


Figure 2. Share of employment, 2023 (Figure based on information from the National Bureau of Statistics, 2023)

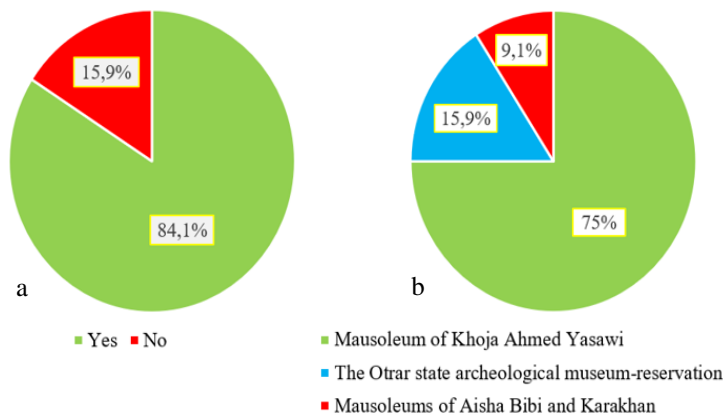


Figure 3. a) Tourists visiting unique sites on the Kazakhstan section of the Great Silk Road, %. b) According to respondents, the most interesting objects of the Great Silk Road are, % (Source: compiled by the authors)

Thus, in the capital of the republic Astana and Almaty city of republican importance, cash incomes are 45-50% higher than in the southern regions, respectively, the standard of living, accessibility of tourist facilities and travel for the population is higher. In addition, in the densely populated Turkestan region, the population's income was 91576 tenge. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) in 2021, Kazakhstan ranks 129th on the list with a tourism share of 6.2% of GDP and a monetary volume of 77.9 billion, with the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan making ambitious plans to increase the industry's contribution to GDP to 15% within five years. It should be noted that consumption in relation to tourism within the country increased by 40.1 per cent in nominal terms to KZT 1,131 billion in 2021 (KZT 807.2 billion in 2020), including KZT 344.4 billion for business travel. Expenditure related to inbound tourism in 2020 is \$568.9 billion from KZT in 2021 \$786.4 billion to KZT. Of this, inbound tourism expenditure in 2021 was \$324.5 billion, domestic tourism expenditure-461.9 billion (in 2020, \$233.1 billion and \$335.8 billion respectively).

In 2021, the expenditure of resident visitors prevails, whose share in total domestic tourism consumption is 58.7% (the share of non-resident visitors' expenditure is 41.3% respectively). In 2020, the share of expenditure of non-resident visitors in the structure of tourism consumption within the country is 41%, resident visitors: 59%. So, the analysis of demographic indicators, the main indicators of economic development, tourism, employment of the population showed a positive trend in the development of tourism, its significant socio-economic importance for the studied region.

2. Results of the survey on the level of attractiveness of Silk Road sites in Kazakhstan

A total of 441 respondents took part in the survey to determine the level of attractiveness of the Great Silk Road sites in Kazakhstan. 59% of respondents were male and 41% were female. 39% of respondents were young people aged between

16 and 34, 61% of respondents were aged between 35 and 54. 88.6% of respondents work in private business, education, construction, government, etc. And the vast majority have higher education. 84.1% of respondents visited unique objects of historical and cultural heritage of the Great Silk Road (Figure 3a). The most interesting in historical and cultural terms for tourists were the mausoleum of Khoja Ahmed Yassawi (75% of respondents), in the next rating are Otyrar State Archaeological Museum-Reserve (15.9%) and the mausoleum of Aisha Bibi and Karakhan (9.1%) (Figure 3b). 47.7% of respondents share of respondents visiting the Great Silk Road sites once in 1-4 years, 13.6% per year (Figure 4).

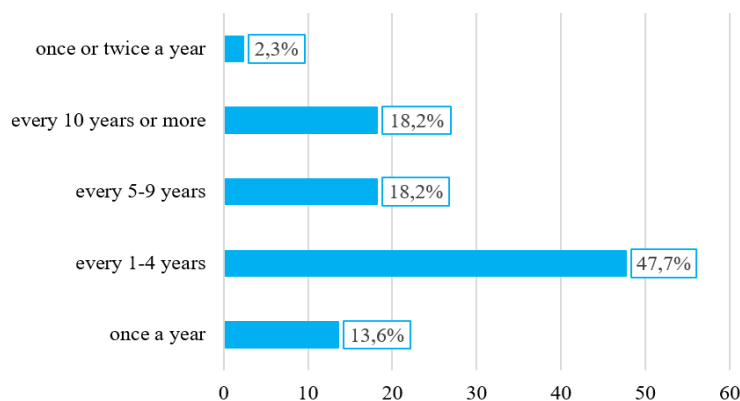


Figure 4. Frequency of tourist visits to the Great Silk Road sites, % (Source: compiled by the authors)

The survey found that 40.9% of respondents rated the level of satisfaction with transport infrastructure as 3 points out of 5. 34.1% of respondents rated the quality of roads as 4 points, 13.6% - as 5 points. Thus, the transport infrastructure provided by the transcontinental road corridor Western Europe - Western China satisfies tourists with the quality of road traffic. The level of satisfaction with service at catering enterprises was rated by 45.5% of respondents as 3 points, 20.5% - as 4 points, 11.4% - as 5 points. Excursion activities were evaluated by the majority of respondents, i.e. 34.1% - by 3 points and 40.9% - by 4 points, 15.9% - by 5 points (Figure 5a). In general, the service at the Silk Road facilities is rated at 3 points. The question Assess the level of attractiveness of the Great Silk Road facilities in Kazakhstan was answered with 5 points (47.6% of respondents), 4 points - 30.8% (Figure 5b). The question "Assess the tourism potential of the Great Silk Road sites for visiting foreign tourists" was answered by 52.3% of respondents, 31.8% - 4 points (Figure 5c).

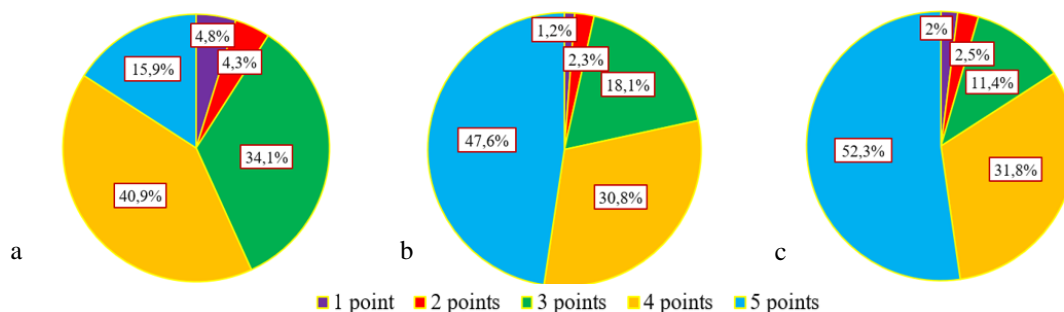


Figure 5. Survey results: a) level of excursion service. b) The level of attractiveness of the Great Silk Road sites in Kazakhstan. c) Assessment of the potential of the Great Silk Road to attract foreign tourists (points) (Source: compiled by the authors)

Those who suggested to their acquaintances to visit the Great Silk Road sites rated 63.6% - 5 points and 20.5% - 4 points. In addition, the popularity of the Great Silk Road sites in Kazakhstan was rated by 43.2% of respondents as 5 points and 31.8% as 4 points. Thus, on the basis of the conducted research the most priority and visited historical and cultural objects of the Kazakhstani part of the southern arm of the Great Silk Road were identified, the socio-economic importance of tourism development was studied, problems in the organisation of tourist services were identified, recommendations were developed in terms of creating and improving the quality of information on historical and cultural objects of the Kazakh part of the Great Silk Road for the promotion and popularisation of tourist routes (Ogutu et al., 2023).

CONCLUSIONS

Thus, the Great Silk Road remains an innovative trade route that provides an outstanding model of long-term peaceful relations between different cultures, societies and civilisations. As a result of the analysis of the study, it was found that in the southern part of the Kazakh section of the Great Silk Road, unique historical and cultural sites included in the UNESCO World Heritage List play an important role in welcoming tourists. The historical past and the role of the Great Silk Road in our time are enormous. Western Europe-Western China makes an invaluable contribution to the development of tourism through a modern transport corridor and increasing tourist flow in the study area. The fact that the region has favourable natural-geographical and socio-economic prerequisites is evidenced by the increase in tourism revenues, the increase in the number of travellers, and the employment of people in the hospitality industry of this region. The city of Turkestan has gained significant recognition as a new attractive destination. The study provides a thorough and detailed overview of the

study of this area. The importance of the Great Silk Road in the development of the population of this area in relation to trade and social construction of the population is identified. In addition, the Great Silk Road is one of the best world-class brands. The Great Silk Road can become a region where interesting cultural tourism routes can be created for different tourists to travel along. Kazakhstan land plot of historical and cultural heritage of the Great Silk Road is a sustainable factor in the development of tourism industry. The Great Silk Road has all opportunities and advantages to attract travellers at the way station and in Kazakhstan. Due to the fact that cultural tourism is one of the most demanded and fast-growing types of tourism at the international stage, its further development in Kazakhstan should be carried out through state support.

So, as a result of the survey it was found that the most visited tourist sites on the Kazakh section of the Great Silk Road in recent times are the mausoleum of Khoja Ahmed Yassawi, Otyrar State Archaeological Museum-Reserve, mausoleum of Aisha Bibi and Karakhan. Catering and accommodation services were found to have problems that should be addressed. The deficit of qualified personnel was felt in the sphere of tour guide services. Respondents also offered the following recommendations to improve the services for tourists along the Great Silk Road route, which can be categorised in the following areas:

- attracting qualified personnel to the tourism industry;
- formation of the information base of the Great Silk Road tourist sites;
- popularisation, promotion of tourist sites, development of souvenir farming through the creation of Internet resources, advertising, documentaries and feature films about the Great Silk Road sites;
- improvement of infrastructure and service, material and technical base, development of competitive market of accommodation and catering enterprises, alternative instruments of accommodation and catering;
- strengthening the work of the tourist police. In conclusion, it was found that the most visited tourist sites on the Kazakhstan section of the Great Silk Road are the mausoleum of Khoja Ahmed Yasawi, the state archeological museum-reserve Otyrar, the mausoleums of Aisha Bibi and Karakhan. It will be effective to form an information base of tourist sites of the Kazakhstan section of the Great Silk Road, attract qualified personnel in the service sector, popularise tourist sites by improving Internet resources, advertising and shooting feature films.

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