

OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF CROSS-BORDER PILGRIMAGE TOURISM IN CENTRAL ASIA

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Abstract: There are wide and different opportunities to develop cross-border tourism in Central Asia. In this article it is examined the necessary conditions for the development of cross-border religious and pilgrimage tourism covering some regions of Uzbekistan and neighboring countries, for instance, Tajikistan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. In this regard, information on the most promising areas of the region, the existing pilgrimage sites there is highlighted on the example of the Lower Amudarya region, the Upper Amudarya region, the Zarafshan region, the Middle Syrdarya region, and the Fergana Valley regions. The pilgrimage touristic routes along the five mentioned cross-border regions have been developed and a map on the relevant topic has been prepared. At the same time, the article examines various problems that restrictive factors for the development of cross-border religious and pilgrimage tourism in the studied regions.

Key words: cross-border tourism, touristic routes, islam, neighboring countries, recreation resources, historical sightseings

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INTRODUCTION

Religious and pilgrimage tourism is one of the fastest growing directions of international tourism in the world. Asia, which is considered the center of most religions, is recognized as the largest region of religious tourism. According to UNESCO, "60 percent of the world's population believes in some religion, and this situation shows that there is a great potential for the development of international and domestic religious tourism". Therefore, in the process of further development of religious and pilgrimage tourism, it is necessary to evaluate the religious tourist resources of the regions, to develop special routes connecting them and to systematically form the necessary infrastructure for religious tourism.

The fact that the countries of Central Asia have a rich history and existence of holy places, religious shrines of who promoted islam and engaged with science of hadith such as Imam Al-Bukhari, Imam At-Tirmizi, Bahavuddin Naqshband, Khoja Ahmed Yassavi, Rabia Sultanbegim Najmuddin Kubro, Sultan Sanjar, Abu Said, Abulfayz, Asaf ibn Burhiya, Hazrat Ali and Ahmadshah Durrani's mausoleum indicates that the country has wide opportunities for the development of religious tourism. Transboundary is an important feature of the recreational and tourist potential of the Central Asia, including religious tourism resources. In this regard, various directions of tourism in the region, in particular pilgrimage tourism, can be developed on a large scale only on a cross-border basis (Fedorko, 2017). The opportunities for the development of the cross-border tourism industry in Central Asia are reflected by the following geographical factors:

1. The presence of a large natural-geographic integrity of a transboundary character, in particular, the presence of intermountain basins, river valleys and basins, delta plains with clear signs of the internal natural-historical unity of the landscape diversity and territorial structure;

2. Territorial nature use and interrelated types of cultural landscapes within transboundary natural and economic geocomplexes - presence of desert-pasture animal husbandry, irrigated and dry farming, mountain-pasture animal husbandry zones;

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3. The presence of many archaeological, historical, cultural and religious monuments and shrines in the territories of the regional states;

4. Diversity of material and spiritual cultures of related ethnic groups of Central Asian peoples, and at the same time complex historical and regional unity, its wealth of cross-border resources for the development of ethno-cultural tourism;

5. An important condition for the activation of interregional cross-border touristic flows is the presence of many business, family and other personal contacts between residents of neighboring countries in the region. These circumstances can be considered as a very strong driving factor for the development of relevant types of cross-border tourism in Central Asia;

6. The countries of the region have an extensive international communication system that connects the bordering countries and their separate regions, which creates high infrastructural conditions for the development of the cross-border recreational and touristic industry (Fedorko, 2011; Fedorko and Kurbanov, 2019; Fedorko, 2022; Torayev, 2022).

It should be noted that in recent years, relations between Uzbekistan and neighboring Central Asian countries have been developing with very positive trends, and this process is causing to increase in the flow of tourists coming to our country. According to official statistics, 1,881,345 foreign tourists visited to Uzbekistan in 2021. Among these tourists, the share of citizens of neighboring countries, in particular Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, is quite high, and most of them visited Uzbekistan for the purpose of visiting to their relatives and pilgrimage.

That is why the development of pilgrimage touristic routes covering the border regions of Uzbekistan and neighboring countries has an urgent importance and wide prospects (Navruz-Zoda and Navruz-Zoda 2016).

The level of learning

In the world, social geographical locations dedicated to the organization of opportunities and problems of developing religious tourism are being developed (Nolan and Nolan, 1992; Prokopenko, 2007; Christov, 2003). Understanding of religious and religious tourism (Gupta and Gulla, 2010; Olsen, and Wilkinson, 2016; Griffin and Raj, 2018; Okhovat, 2022) in these communities, development of religious tourism, development of religious tourism, assistance in harmony with other developments, necessary infrastructure complexes for pilgrimage. Pilgrimage tourism is focused on keeping the region's business. Social geographical studies which are dedicated to the opportunities and problems of developing religious tourism and their territorial foundation are being developed in the world (Babkin, 2008; Pfaffenberger, 1983). It is focused particularly to the essence of the concepts of religious and pilgrimage tourism, assessment of religious tourism resources of the regions, justifying the possibilities of developing religious tourism in harmony with other types of tourism, designing of necessary infrastructure complexes to attract pilgrims, studying and forecasting the demand for religious touristic trips, to analyze the role of religious and pilgrimage tourism in the regional economy in these studies.

Alkhalwaleh (2022) extended the theories of planned behavior and perceived consumer risk during a crisis (e.g. Covid19) in the context of predominantly Muslim countries in his research. He noted that his study may also be the first attempt to integrate the role of perceived health risk as a moderator in the study of religious tourism.

Hronček et al. (2022) provided fundamental theoretical and methodological information on individual sacral tourism as an appropriate type of tourism during the COVID-19 pandemic. Individual (virtual) tourism represented a relatively modern segment of alternative - modern tourism types in the area of the medieval sacral landscape lost due to modern technologies, in the case of Koscelisko locality in Radol'a municipality (north-western part of Slovakia).

Collins-Kreiner (2018) discussed common themes across religions regarding pilgrimage tourism and identified four main objectives: describes the blurring of boundaries between pilgrimage and tourism and the various changes that have occurred in the study of pilgrimage in recent years, in order to draw conclusions about the "pilgrimage tourism nexus", they revisited three types of pilgrimage examples and explored the differences between the "old" paradigm based on the assumption that religious elements are at the core of pilgrimage and the results of recent research on secular models of travel, emphasized alternative and complementary approaches to explain the shift in boundaries.

The researchers who are in the fields of history and ethnography have a great role in the study of religious touristic objects, especially holy places and shrines in Uzbekistan (Fedorko, 2017; Saliev et al., 2011). In the recent period, the scientific analysis and design of cross-border touristic and recreational activities has become one of the main research areas of recreation and tourism geography. These problems are being studied regularly, especially in EU countries and Russia (Dragileva, 2006; Dunets, 2012; Kropinova, 2017; Golomidova, 2020). However, these works do not address the issues of cross-border religious tourism. Currently, the geographical basis of the development of cross-border tourism in the countries of Central Asia, including Uzbekistan, has not been studied sufficiently, and in this regard, several scientific articles of the authors can be cited (Fedorko, 2011; Fedorko and Kurbanov, 2019; Fedorko, 2022). These works explore the general opportunities and prospects for the development of cross-border tourism in the region, the problems of improving the transport system of the region in connection with the issues of intensifying cross-border tourism, as well as the possibilities for developing cross-border religious tourism for Orthodox Christians in the countries of the region. The issues of developing cross-border routes for Islamic religious tourism remain little studied. This article is devoted to this issue.

Aims and objectives

The purpose of the study is to analyze the possibilities of developing pilgrimage tourism in the cross-border regions covering some regions of the Central Asian countries (Lower Amudarya, Upper Amudarya, Zarafshan, Middle Syrdarya basins and Fergana Valley) and to develop pilgrimage touristic circle routes for cross-border regions, their sample programs and maps. Within the scope of the goal, the following tasks were defined:

- Justifying the scientific principles and criteria for the development of cross-border pilgrimage tourism routes covering Uzbekistan and neighboring countries, in particular, Tajikistan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan;

- To study the possibilities of developing pilgrimage tourism in 5 cross-border regions of Central Asia (Lower Amudarya, Upper Amudarya, Zarafshan, Middle Syrdarya basins and Fergana Valley) and to select the main pilgrimage touristic objects;
- Development of regional circle pilgrimage touristic route program and its map on the example of Zarafshan Valley;
- Determining the necessary measures to accelerate cross-border pilgrimage tourism in the Central Asian region.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Studies show that five regions have the greatest resources for the development of cross-border religious and pilgrimage tourism in Uzbekistan and neighboring countries, including the Upper Amudarya region (which unites the Surkhandarya region, Khatlon region, the Hisar valley with the city of Dushanbe and its surroundings), Zarafshan region (Bukhara, Navoi, Samarkand regions and Penjikent and Aini districts of Sogd region), Middle Syrdarya region (Tashkent city and region, Turkistan region and Shymkent city), Fergana valley (Andijan, Namangan, Fergana, Sogd and Osh city and region) and Lower Amudarya region (Karakalpakistan, Khorezm and Dashoguz regions) (Fedorko and Kurbanov, 2019; Fedorko, 2011). In the article, we considered the flow chart of the methodology steps as follows (Figure 1).

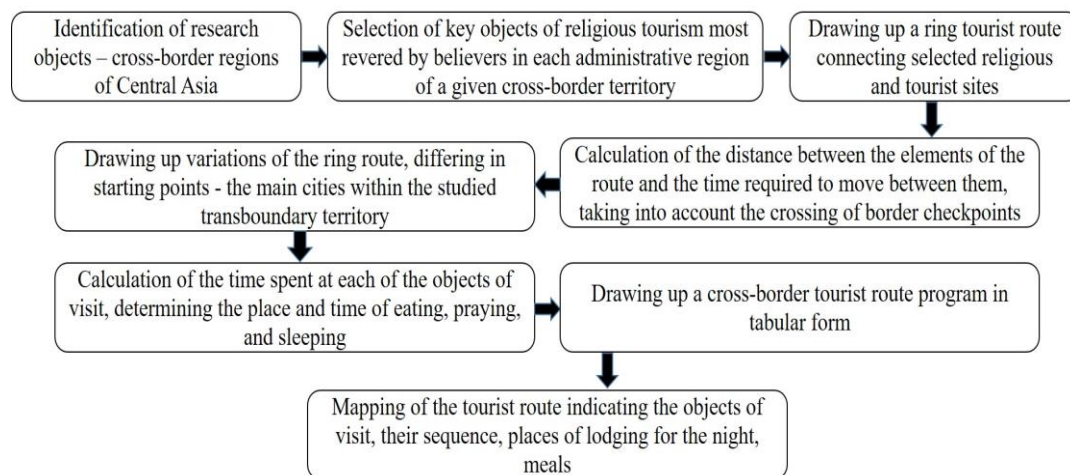


Figure 1. The sequence of research tasks

At the initial stage of the research, the pilgrimage sites in each cross-border region that are recognized and appreciated by the majority of believers were identified. During the determining the number of objects, the condition that the duration of the route does not exceed 4 days was considered. In our opinion, regional pilgrimage tourist itineraries should be relatively short-term (2-4 days), because the population most interested in pilgrimage is the middle-aged and elderly, and it is convenient for them that the duration of the trip should be as short and cheap as possible. At the same time, these routes should cover several pilgrimage sites and thus give pilgrims a broad idea of the religious tourism potential of the regions.

At the next stage, the distances between the selected shrines were determined by hours, and the core of the circle route within the cross-border areas was created. After that, cities in cross-border regions with a relatively large population and located in different parts of the territory were determined as the starting and ending points of the constructed circle route, and a particular version of the circle route was developed for each of them. This includes some factors such as the direction of travel from the starting point, the sequence of seeing the objects, the time required to reach from object to object and visit each object, the time and convenient place to eat, the places where there are suitable hotels for the night and the time to reach them, the time of pray and the suitable places for prayers. As a result, detailed hour-by-hour structured programs of regional popular pilgrimage tourist routes in 3 to 6 options for each cross-border area were developed, and a thematic map was created based on the program. These maps show each variant of the regional circle pilgrimage tourist route (based on the starting point), and the places of pilgrimage, travel routes, places to eat and stay are the special content of the maps.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the article, opportunities for developing cross-border pilgrimage tourism of Uzbekistan and neighboring Central Asian countries are revealed mainly on the example of the Zarafshan Valley, which stands out for its rich pilgrimage tourism potential within the region. Zarafshan Valley is located in the central part of the studied area.

It consists of three large tectonic and landscape-geographical divisions - the upper valley, which is administratively located in the Sogd region of Tajikistan, the middle valley, which covers the areas adjacent to the Samarkand and Navoi regions of Uzbekistan, and the plain-delta part (Bukhara and Karakol). Almost the entire area of the region, except perhaps the highest reaches of the river, has a rich and unique history, one of the cradles of the civilization of the nations of Central Asia. The tourist route, covering historical and modern cities of the region, reflects the rich cultural heritage of the Zarafshan basin with all its geographical and historical diversity (monuments of the Sogdian culture, the Somonids, the Timurids, the various dynasties of the rulers of Bukhara). There are many cultural monuments in the Zarafshan basin that are revered as religious pilgrimage sites, such as the madrasahs and mosques of Samarkand, Bukhara, Gijduvan, Penjikent, and of course the mausoleum of one of the greatest hadith collectors in history, the famous theologian Imam al-Bukhari, located in the village of Khartang, near Chelek, Samarkand province.

Table 1. A sample program of cross-border pilgrimage tourist routes created in the Zarafshan region (Source by the authors)
 Route 1: Bukhara c. - Kogon dis. - Romitan dis. - Vobkent dis. - Shafirkon dis. - Gijduvan dis. - Karmana dis. - Nurota dis. - Payarik dis. - Samarkand c. - Nurabad dis. - Penjikent c. – Aini dis. - Samarkand c. - Bukhara c.

Day	Places	Type of vehicle	Plans	Daily plan program
Day 1	Bukhara city	A bus	Departure by 5.30	Meeting at the appointed place.
	Kogon district	A bus	05:30 – 06:00 06:00 – 06:40 06:40 – 07:00 07:00 – 07:30	Go to Bahavuddin Naqishband complex. Time to visit. Going to the shrine of Said Amir Kulol. Time to visit.
	Romitan district	A bus	07:30 – 08:30 08:30 – 09:00 09:00 – 09:20 09:20 – 09:50	Going to the shrine of Khoja Mahammad Boboy. Time to visit. Going to the shrine of Khoja Ali Romitani. Time to visit.
	Vobkent district	A bus	09:50 – 10:50 10:50 – 11:20	Going to the shrine of Khoja Mahmud Anjir. Time to visit.
	Shafirkan district	A bus	11:20 – 11:40 11:40 – 12:10 12:10 – 13:00 13:00 – 13:40	Going to the shrine of Khoja Arif ar Revhari. Time to visit. Lunch time. Afternoon prayer time.
	Gijduvan district	A bus	13:40 – 14:20 14:20 – 15:00	Go to Abdukholik Gijduvani shrine. Time to visit.
	Karmana district	A bus	15:00 – 16:20 16:20 – 16:50	Going to the shrine of Maulana Arif Deggarani. Time to visit.
	Nurata district	A bus	16:50 – 18:20 18:20 – 19:00 19:00 – 20:30	Go to Payarik district. Check into the hotel. Have dinner and return to the hotel.
Day 2	Nurata district	A bus	05:30 – 06:30 06:30 – 07:00 07:00 – 07:40	Have breakfast in the hotel Going to the “Chashma” complex Time to visit
	Payarik district	A bus	07:40 – 10:40 10:40 – 11:40 11:40 – 12:30	Going to the complex of Imam Bukhari. Time to visit. Lunch time.
		A bus	12:30 – 12:50 12:50 – 13:20 13:20 – 14:00	Going to the shrine of Makhdumi Azam. Time to visit. Afternoon prayer time.
	Samarkand city	A bus	14:00 – 14:20 14:20 – 14:40 14:40 – 15:00 15:00 – 15:40 15:40 – 15:50 15:50 – 16:20 16:20 – 16:50 16:50 – 17:30	Going to the mausoleum of Khoja Daniyor. Time to visit. Go to Shahi Zinda complex. Time to visit. Going to the shrine of Hazrat Khizr. Time to visit. Going to the shrine of Khoja Ahror Vali. Time to visit.
	Samarkand city	A bus	17:30 – 18:00 18:00 – 18:50 18:50 – 19:50	Going to the hotel Check into the hotel. Have dinner and return to the hotel.
Day 3	Samarkand city	A bus	05:30 – 06:30	Have breakfast in the hotel.
	Nurabad district	A bus	06:30 – 07:30 07:30 – 08:30	Going to "Hazrat Davut" shrine. Time to visit.
	Border post	A bus	08:30 – 10:10	Go to Jartepa border post.
		A bus	10:10 – 10:50	Time to pass Jartepa border post
	Penjikent city	A bus	10:50 – 11:20 11:20 – 12:00 12:00 – 13:00 13:00 – 14:00	Going to A. Rudaki complex. To visit. Lunch time. Afternoon prayer time.
	Aini district	A bus	14:00 – 16:30 16:30 – 17:10	Going to the tomb of Naqibkhan Tughral. Time to visit.
	Aini district	A bus	17:10 – 18:00	Go to the center of the district.
	Aini district	A bus	18:00 – 18:30 18:30 – 19:40	Check into the hotel. Have dinner and return to the hotel.
Day 4	Aini district	A bus	05:30 – 06:30	Have breakfast in the hotel
	Aini district	A bus	06:30 – 07:00 07:00 – 07:30	Go to Chashma shrine. Time to visit.
	Penjikent district	A bus	07:30 – 09:10 09:10 – 09:40	Go to Khoja Muhammad Boshoro complex. Time to visit.
	Border post	A bus	09:40 – 10:50	Go to Jartepa border post.
		A bus	10:50 – 11:30	Time to pass Jartepa border post
	Samarkand city	A bus	11:30 – 12:20 12:20 – 13:00 13:00 – 14:00	Go to the city of Samarkand. Lunch time. Afternoon prayer time.
	Bukhara city	A bus	14:00 – 18:20	Return to the place of pilgrimage to the city of Bukhara.

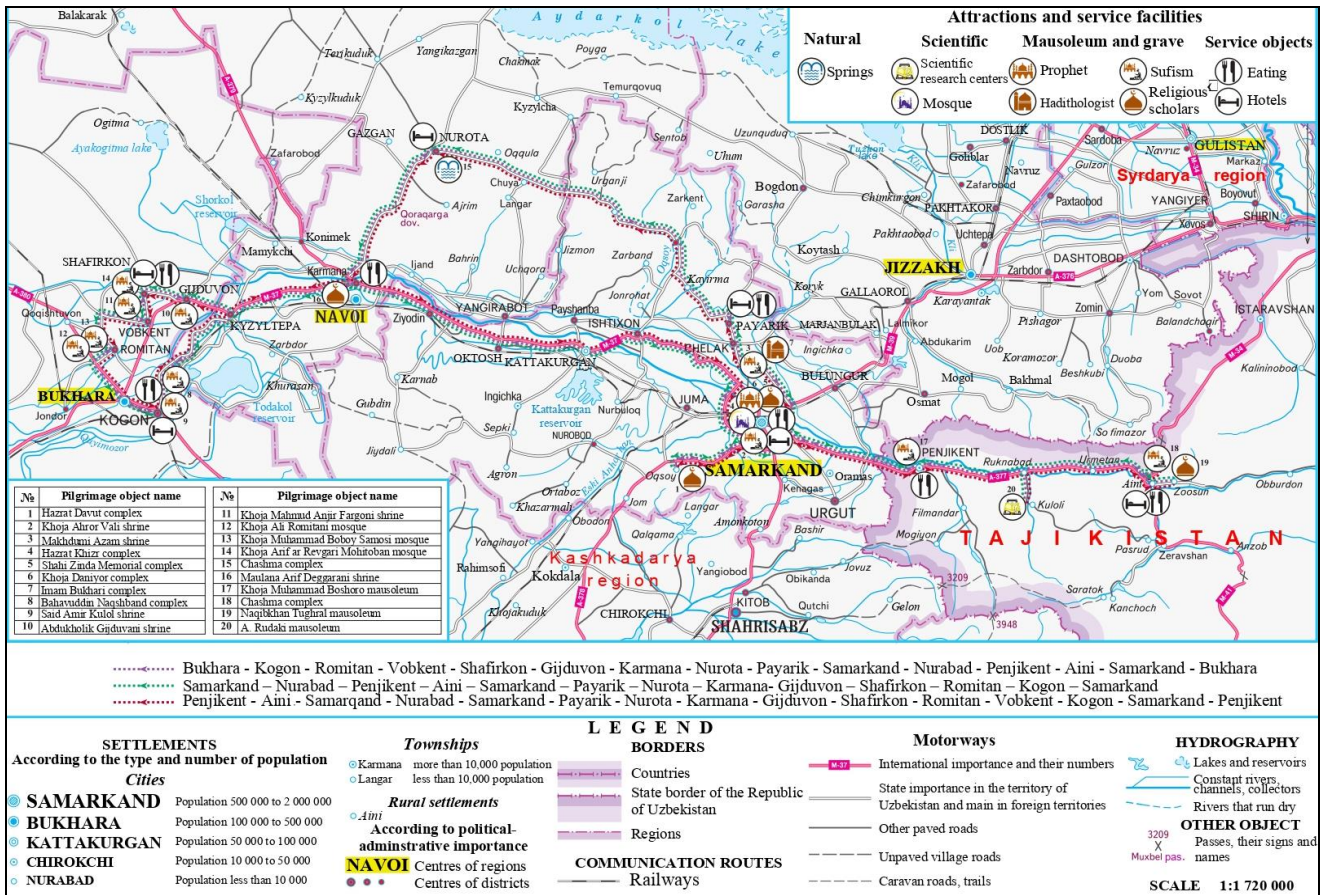


Figure 2. Cross-border pilgrimage tourism map of Zarafshan region (Source: by the authors)

This cross-border pilgrimage tourism route includes "Hazrat Davut" complex, "Khoja Ahror Vali" shrine, "Hazrat Khizr" complex, "Shahi Zinda" memorial complex, "Khoja Daniyov" complex, "Khoja Ishoki Vali" shrine, "Imam" shrine in Samarkand region; "Bukhari" complex, "Bahavuddin Naqshband" complex in Bukhara region; "Said Amir Kulol" shrine, "Abdukholik Gijduvani" shrine, "Khoja Mahmud Anjir Fargoni" shrine, "Khoja Ali Romitani" mosque, "Khoja Muhammad Boboy Samosi" mosque, "Khoja Shrines such as Arif ar Revgari Mohitoban mosque, Chashma complex in Navoi region; Maulana Arif Deggarani shrine, Khoja Muhammad Boshoro mausoleum, Chashma shrine, Naqibkhan Tughral mausoleum, A. Rudaki mausoleum in Tajikistan were selected (Akchaev, 2020). In this case, 3 options of pilgrimage routes have been worked out, they are given below: Samarkand, Bukhara and Penjikent (Figure 2 and Table 1).

Because of the limited size of the article, the programs of the variants of the regional circle pilgrimage tourist route along the Zarafshan Valley, starting from the cities of Samarkand and Penjikent, are not presented. The lower Amudarya transboundary region includes the modern and ancient (Khorazm and Sarikamish) deltas of the Amudarya within the administrative boundaries of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, the Khorezm region of the Republic of Uzbekistan, and the Dashoguz region of Turkmenistan. The presence of historical and cultural centers such as Khiva, Urganch, Beruni, Torkol, Kokhna-Urganch, Tashkhovuz and other cities and rural settlements in this region is the main resource in the development of religious tourism (Abidova, 2018). Also, the closeness and interaction of the material and spiritual cultures of the Uzbek, Karakalpak and Turkmen ethno-regional groups in this region determines the religious tourist attraction of the region.

In the development of the tourist route, the shrine of Sultan Uwais, the Shrine of the Forgiving Father, the "Ichan Kala" in Khiva, the shrine of Yusuf Khamadoni, and the shrine of Najmuddin Kubro in Turkmenistan, the mausoleum of Sultan Ali, the mausoleum of Turabek Khanim, the mausoleum of Syed Ahmed, the Kutlugh Temur tower, the mausoleum of Sultan Tekesh, 11 Shrines such as Arslan Mausoleum, Mazlumkhan-Suluv Mausoleum were selected. There are 3 versions of pilgrimage routes, which differ from each other according to the place of departure (starting point) of the route (Urganch, Nukus and Dashoguz cities). Duration of time on all routes is 3 days and a bus is chosen as the mode of transport. The route program includes the average amount of time to get to each object, to visit it, to pray, as well as to eat and spend the night, as well as convenient places.

The cross-border pilgrimage tourist route along the Upper Amudarya region includes Al Hakim at-Tirmizi shrine, Imam Termizi shrine, Sufi Olloyar shrine, (Djuraeva, 2018) Mavlonoi Zahid shrine, Ok Astana shrine (Toraev, 2022) in Uzbekistan and Balogardon shrine, Khoja Nakhshron mausoleum, Makhdumi Azam mausoleum, Hazrat Movlono complex, Mir Syed Ali Hamadani, Khodja Mashhad in Tajikistan. In this case, 4 options of pilgrimage routes have been prepared, the departure points from the following cities: Termiz, Denov, Dushanbe and Bakhtar (Turaev, 2020).

Cross-border pilgrimage tourism route of the Middle Syrdarya region includes in Uzbekistan the following sites were received: Zangi Ata shrine, Parpi Ata shrine, Hazrat Ali, Sheikh Umar Vali shrine, Shoabdumalik Ata shrine in Tashkent

region; Hazrat Imam Complex, Center of Islamic Civilization, Chimir Ata shrine, Sheikh Zayniddin bobo shrine, Sheikh Khovand Tohur Complex, Suzuk Ata Complex, Khuja Allambardar Shrine, Khayrabadi Shrine, Sugalli Ata Shrine, Koylik Shrine in Tashkent city, Ibragim Ata Shrine, Akhmat Yassavi Shrine, Gauhar Ona Shrine, Arslan Bab Complex from the territory of the Republic of Kazakhstan. There 4 options of pilgrimage routes have been worked out, and the departure points are from the cities of Tashkent, Ohangaron, Turkistan and Shymkent.

The Fergana Valley is a large intermountain basin bounded by the Western, Central and Southern Tien Shans. Administratively, it is located in Andijan, Namangan and Fergana regions of Uzbekistan, Osh, Jalalabad and Botken regions of Kyrgyzstan, Sogd region of Tajikistan. The studied region is a typical transboundary territorial formation, where transboundary nature is inherent in the problem of resource potential, infrastructure and sustainable development (Nizamiev, 2005; Abdulahatov, 2008; Fedorko, 2011; Ovsyannikov and Yakunin, 2016). The high potential of the development of the cross-border recreation and tourism industry in the Fergana Valley is connected with a number of factors. First of all, this area is a vivid example of intermountain depth with different natural and economic zones, alternating with height and representing a very interesting object from the point of view of broadening the tourists' geographical views. Secondly, the Fergana Valley is a multi-ethnic region where Uzbek, Tajik and Kyrgyz cultures are geographically adjacent and historically connected. This predetermines the wealth of ethno-cultural tourist resources of the analyzed area. The diversity of ethnic cultures serves the diversity of the material and spiritual culture of the rural population along with the stratification of the natural and economic image.

Thirdly, there are several cities with a rich historical past in the territory of all three countries: Kukand, Margilon, Rishton, Andijan, Namangan, Chust, Kosonsoy (Uzbekistan), Osh, Uzgan, Jalalabad. (Kyrgyzstan), Khojand, Kanibodam (Tajikistan) and others. This is due to the fact that there is a great potential for the development of historical, cultural and religious tourism in the Fergana Valley.

Fergana Valley Cross-Border Pilgrimage Tourism Route includes some shrines in Uzbekistan territory such as Khoja Muhammad Valipirim shrine in Fergana region, Mirpostin Ota shrine in Andijan region, Qutayba ibn Muslim shrine, Fazilman Ota shrine, Muhammad ibn Hanafia Imam Ota shrine, Satkak saints shrine, Sir Poshota shrine, Offaq Khojam Podshah shrine, Kosonsoy Jame' Mosque, Mahdumi Azam Kosani Complex, Sultan Uwais Qarani Complex, Eleven Ahmad Shrine in Namangan region, Vafai Complex, Hazrat Shah Complex, Sheikh Muslihiddin Shrine, Hazrat Baboi Mausoleum in the Republic of Tajikistan, Uzgan Tower and Complex, complexes of Sulaimontov and Asaf Ibn Burkhia in the Kyrgyz Republic. At the same time, the article examines various problems that limit the development of cross-border religious and pilgrimage tourism in the studied regions at this stage.

CONCLUSION

Uzbekistan is closely connected with the border regions of the neighboring Central Asian countries through a system of various historical and geographical connections. This situation is also reflected in the high potential for developing cross-border pilgrimage tourist routes in the Central Asian region. In the course of the research, pilgrimage sites in the territory of neighboring countries and their possibilities to combine into single tourist routes with pilgrimage sites in Uzbekistan were studied, as well as the Fergana Valley (Andijan, Namangan, Fergana regions of Uzbekistan, Osh of Kyrgyzstan, Sogd regions of Tajikistan), the Middle Syrdarya region (Tashkent city and region of Uzbekistan, Turkistan region of Kazakhstan), Zarafshan Valley (Sogd in Tajikistan, Samarkand, Navoi, Bukhara regions in Uzbekistan), Upper Amudarya region (Khatlon region in Tajikistan and republican districts and Uzbekistan's Surkhandarya region) and Lower Amudarya region (Khorezm region in Uzbekistan, the Republic of Karakalpakstan and Dashoguz region in Turkmenistan) it was determined that they are the most promising areas. A 4-day cross-border public pilgrimage route along the Zarafshan Valley was developed and mapped in three options, differing by the point of departure (the cities of Samarkand, Bukhara, Penjikent). In our opinion, cross-border tourism in the countries of Central Asia should be developed on the basis of inter-state integration in the relevant sphere of economic, social and environmental interests of bordering countries, because such mutually beneficial cooperation leads to a number of positive consequences, including:

- the analysis shows that the opportunities for development of the studied sector of the economy at the scale of cross-border regions are much higher than at the border, and therefore the overall increase in the touristic attractiveness of the region and its separate parts;

- in addition to the territory of the neighboring countries, the recreation and tourism space of Central Asia, the attraction of regions that are distinguished by their unfavorable economic and geographic location, distance from the main centers and directions of recreation and tourism development, has been formed in the region to this day (for example, the upper reaches of Zarafshan, some parts of the Fergana Valley within Kyrgyzstan etc.);

- improvement of the general environment of interstate relations based on mutually beneficial cooperation in the field of tourism, if it becomes the main source of investments and budget revenues, will increase the objective interest of the regional states in the integration and long-term perspective;

- interregional tourism, getting to know the culture of neighboring peoples has a positive effect on the mutual understanding between the peoples of Central Asia, and the population, especially the young generation, serves to better understand the commonality of the past, present and future.

However, at the current stage, there is a complex of interrelated and often interrelated problems in Central Asia, which to one degree or another prevent the intensive development of cross-border tourism in the region. Among the main tasks that need to be solved in order to achieve the common goal, that is, because of the activation of cross-border tourism in Central Asia, we consider it appropriate to solve the following issues:

- creation of real integrated economic and political space;
- development of legal frameworks, strategic and conceptual frameworks for the development of cross-border recreation and tourism in the considered geopolitical region at the national and interstate level;
- development of infrastructure necessary for the development of tourism in the region, in particular, optimization of the network of railways and highways, as well as international airports;
- cooperation between local historians (geographers, historians, ethnographers) and regional economists in assessing the recreational and tourist potential of some regions of Central Asia and developing cross-border tourist routes;
- coordination of activities of tourist companies of neighboring countries of the region; • training of highly qualified professional personnel for recreation and tourism industry and cooperation of specialized educational institutions of various countries of Central Asia;
- ensuring the safety of vacationers and tourists with the joint efforts of the countries of the region;
- advertising of cross-border tourist areas of Central Asia in the world market of tourism services.

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