

## AVIATION AND TOURISM: IMPACT OF AVIATION ON THE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT OF UZBEKISTAN

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### INTRODUCTION

Tourism and aviation regularly interact with each other. These industries play an important role in the country's economy, as both of them create a large number of jobs and generate an income stream to the country's economy. The valuable and dynamic interaction of these two aspects of the economy can lead to the country's economic growth. Although air transport and tourism are interdependent sectors, there is little research on their interaction (Spasojevich et al., 2017). In addition, it is important to indicate the impact of aviation on development of tourism.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1. Impact of aviation to tourism development

According to Graham, transport is significant component of tourism which links the tourist generating area with tourist destinations and aviation is growing mode of transport for tourism market in modern times (Graham et al., 2008). Another statement was mentioned by Theobald 'tourism has grown significantly since the creation of the commercial airline industry and the advent of jet aircraft in the 1950s' (Theobald, 2005). Indeed, following this incident, there has been an explosive growth in the tourism sector. In addition, another reason of tourism development is that air travel prices have dropped by up to 60% since the 1970s, people began to travel more, as it became accessible (Spot, 2018). Accessibility is very important for destination and further development of tourism of that area. It is not enough to prepare comfortable tourist destinations, amazing tourist attractions and unique tourist products for developing tourism. All of them are useless if there is no any transport to get to this place. Aviation is most reliable mode of transport which can connect any destinations from short to long distance. According to the UNWTO, 'the share of air travel has increased from 46% in 2000 to 59% in 2019, while land transport has decreased from 49% to 35% in the same period' (UNWTO, 2020). These statistics show that the role of aviation in tourism industry is becoming increasingly important.

#### 2.2. The role of airlines and airports on the development of tourism in Uzbekistan

Aviation plays an important role in the development of tourism in Uzbekistan. It is impossible to develop the tourism sector in the country without aviation. Because Uzbekistan, in terms of its geographical position, belongs to a "double landlocked country", since it does not have a direct outlet to the sea. Aviation is the main way for international tourists to arrive in Uzbekistan (Spot, 2018). Uzbekistan visitor Economy Survey 2014 (UNWTO) shows that the most common mode of transport (74%) arriving in Tashkent was aircraft (UNWTO, 2016).

According to the UNWTO survey, more than half (56%) of international tourists came to Uzbekistan by Uzbekistan Airways (UNWTO, 2016). One of the reasons that most tourists chose Uzbekistan Airways is preference of direct flights. Uzbekistan's national airline uses

direct flights with Europe, Asia and even USA with its Dreamliner Boeing-787. This safest national airline (Airline Ratings, 2021) of Uzbekistan almost always leads the rating among the airlines of the CIS countries. Uzbekistan has great potential for improving aviation. Because, as shown above, it already has its own reliable airline that can withstand the competition in the market among airlines. All 11 airports have international status and are being reconstructed.

### METHODOLOGY

Secondary data is collected from earlier researches, official websites, government publications and etc. Secondary data is essential for conducting this research and author collected them from above mentioned sources. In addition, author used primarily existing data recently published by the Ministry of Tourism and other reputable internet sites to conduct a global and Uzbekistan comparative analysis. The GDP of Uzbekistan was determined using tourist satellite accounting data from the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2021).

### RESULTS

The aviation industry is a complex system that plays an indispensable role in the global transportation of people and freight on scheduled domestic and international flight connections. It encompasses all units that actively participate in the execution of air traffic, such as airlines, airports and aircraft producers (Air Transport Action Group, 2014). The importance of the air traffic sector has been concluded in scientists researches. Based on his findings, this sector is not only a major contributor to the economic prosperity, it also plays an important role in the performance of related sectors such as tourism. Additionally, it allows people to conveniently travel around the world and reach their target destination within shortest time.

The aviation benefits report published by ICAO (2019) reveals that approximately 65 million job opportunities are created by this industry. The research has shown that the aviation sector contributes on average with around 3.6% to the worldwide GDP (ICAO, 2019). Furthermore, the sector forms a significant part of modern logistics systems. Due to its speed, convenience and efficiency air transport is highly sought for important freight transport. It is the fastest and safest way of transporting perishable freight and freight of high value over larger distances. This makes the aviation industry to a facilitator of global trade by enabling the access to foreign marketplaces around the globe. Aviation also encourages the process of innovation and it aids to increase the overall productivity levels.

### OTHER POSSIBLE FACTORS IN UZBEK CONTEXT

Other possible factors are found to be responsible for affecting air transport for tourism.

1) **Seasonality** : Tourists mostly prefer to visit Uzbekistan in spring and in autumn because in these periods, the weather is balmy, the air is clean, visibility is perfect and the countryside is lush and green following the monsoon. Autumn is the time of good harvest as well. might be due to seasonality as there is less flow of tourists in certain months as mentioned above. Winter is not enough snowy and summer is too hot for tourists from Europe. So, it proves that seasonality is one of the factor affecting air transport for tourism.

2) **Choice of destinations** : As mentioned in literatures, the travel decision of people depends on the availability of technological advancement and other necessary facilities. Based on observations, this study found that capacity constraints at airports limit the effectiveness of the system and offer opportunities for specialization and growth at other airports. In this context, insufficient terminal capacity and crowded as well as congested airport was one of the factors affecting air transport for tourism. Furthermore, in Uzbekistan, the condition of many highways and roads, continuous load shedding for 16 hours per day now, slow internet facility and inadequate health services due of the lack of modern equipment are further impeding the growth of tourism.

3) **Word-of Mouth** : On the basis of direct conversation with the experts, despite the improved situation of tourism due to the stable political situation the country is still the victim of the past image which is visible as travel reluctance for Uzbekistan and through negative and strong travel advisories. This kind of situation will be spread out immediately as word-of mouth among friends, relatives and colleges.

### CONCLUSION

The future of tourism and its contribution to the economy depends to a large extent on the development of air transport (UN news, 2013).

From the above, it follows that there is a delicate connection between tourism and aviation. From the provided statistics and sources, it is noticed that for the further development of the tourism industry in Uzbekistan, the simultaneous development of aviation is important. Ensuring safety and high quality of service both at air travel and at the place which is destination point, demonstrates a good relationship between tourism and aviation, and will have a positive impact on the further development of tourism in Uzbekistan.

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