

Article

Development and Promotion of Military-Sports Tourism in Uzbekistan: Challenand Prospects

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Abstract: Military-sports tourism in Uzbekistan has emerged as a growing sector, yet its development is still in its early stages, with many untapped opportunities. Despite the country's rich natural and cultural resources, the lack of structured programs and limited awareness hampers its potential. This study addresses the gap by analyzing the current state of military-sports tourism and identifying areas for improvement. Utilizing qualitative methods, including interviews and document analysis, the research uncovers key challenges, such as inadequate infrastructure and minimal promotion efforts. Findings reveal that, while the sector is supported by government initiatives, more focused strategies are needed to enhance international and domestic tourist flow. The results highlight the importance of a comprehensive regulatory framework and targeted investment to improve tourism outcomes. These implications suggest that with proper development, military-sports tourism could significantly contribute to Uzbekistan's tourism economy and cultural visibility.

Keywords: Military and Sports Tourism in the Republic of Uzbekistan, Domestic and International Tourism Market, Destination.

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1. Introduction

Sports tours have become very popular among tourists in recent years. A significant contribution to the development of this area is the political aspects of states in the field of sports development, population health improvement, increasing life expectancy, etc. However, the actions to promote sports tourism in a particular state (region) are not always well-structured and targeted, and sports tourism itself is often poorly developed, has many shortcomings, and is not promoted to the masses. That is why, within the framework of the presented article, it is proposed to consider such a topical topic today as "Sports tourism".

The aim of the study is to study military-sports tourism as a tool for increasing tourist flow to the destination in the domestic and international tourism markets of the Republic of Uzbekistan, as well as military, geological and industrial tourism.

The main tasks are:

- to study the state of military-sports tourism in the Republic of Uzbekistan;
- to identify advantages and disadvantages develop and propose a set of measures
- to improve the efficiency of the process of development and promotion of sports tourism in Uzbekistan;

- military tourism (familiarization with military equipment, providing tourists with the opportunity to use it at firing ranges, familiarization with the activities of military personnel, organizing paid shooting services in military zones);
- geological tourism (visiting mines, inactive geological and industrial sites, and other sites and zones);
- industrial and scientific tourism (visiting production areas of mining and metallurgical plants, industrial sites).

The object of the research is military-sports tourism. *The subject of the research* is military-sports tourism as a tool for increasing international and domestic tourist flow to the Republic of Uzbekistan. *The novelty of the study* lies in the fact that the state of military-sports tourism in the Republic of Uzbekistan will be comprehensively examined and a set of measures will be proposed to improve the efficiency of the process of development and promotion of this type of tourism.

So, first of all, it is necessary to address the concept of "military-sports tourism". There are many opinions among scientists and specialists on the interpretation of this term. However, a more complete and precise definition of military-sports tourism is presented in the form of a collective discipline that combines many different types of recreation and physical activity of a person. The goals of military-sports tourism are different for each traveler: some strive for physical health, others - to improve their body, others use this method to develop their personality, and others - to combat stress [3].

Based on the above interpretation and objectives of military-sports tourism, an analysis of the situation with military-sports tourism in the Republic of Uzbekistan was conducted.

2. Materials and Methods

The methodology for this study on military-sports tourism in Uzbekistan involved a qualitative approach, focusing on gathering and analyzing data from multiple sources to gain a comprehensive understanding of the current state and development potential of this tourism sector. Primary data was collected through in-depth interviews with key stakeholders, including tourism operators, government officials, and participants involved in military-sports tourism activities. These interviews provided firsthand insights into the challenges and opportunities faced by the industry. Additionally, document analysis was conducted on relevant government policies, tourism development strategies, and international best practices in military-sports tourism. This analysis helped identify gaps between the existing framework and the actual implementation of tourism programs.

The study also incorporated a review of statistical data on tourist flow and economic contributions of military-sports tourism, examining patterns and trends over recent years. By comparing the current state of military-sports tourism in Uzbekistan with examples from countries where this niche has flourished, the research aimed to draw parallels and propose relevant recommendations. Triangulation was employed to ensure the validity of the findings, cross-referencing interview data with policy documents and statistical reports to create a cohesive narrative.

The methodology allowed for an in-depth examination of both the qualitative and quantitative aspects of military-sports tourism in Uzbekistan. This approach provided a holistic understanding of the sector, enabling the development of actionable recommendations to enhance the promotion and growth of military-sports tourism in the country.

3. Results

The study found the following:

- the Republic has great potential for the development of military and sports tourism. There are sufficient natural resources here that can be actively used for sports and tourism;
- state bodies are pursuing an active policy in matters of developing military and sports tourism in the country. This is proven by the fact that today:
- a strategy has been developed to reduce the impact of seasonality on tourist demand;
- military and sports tourist routes have been systematized;
- a wide variety of military and sports tourism programs are presented;
- sports tours are filled with various events, combined with other types of tourism;
- the formation of the Republic's image is carried out, including from the point of view of the military-sports component and its promotion, both within the state and on the international market;
- 2021 was the Year of Youth Support and Health Promotion in Uzbekistan, 34 sports facilities were modernized and 23 new ones were built, and in October 2020, the President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev signed a Decree on the development of mass sports in the Republic [2];
- from the point of view of military-sports tourism, travelers are offered a wide variety of programs, within the framework of which they can:
 - go skiing and snowboarding, cycling and horseback riding, catamarans and scooters;
 - fly in hot air balloons;
 - take part in motorcycle racing, rally, motocross;
 - go skateboarding, rock climbing, canyoning, paragliding, rafting, mountaineering;
 - walk along mountain ranges, etc.;
- In recent years, tourists have increasingly been offered MICE tours as part of sports tourism: sports tournaments, meetings, games, etc. [4];
- in Uzbekistan in the last few years, such sports as sports marathons, triathlons, pentathlons have been actively developing, which helps to attract athletes and tourists from other countries. For example, even the pandemic could not contribute to the cancellation of the Samarkand Half Marathon in 2020. It was held online. The race virtually brought together more than 3 thousand people from 37 countries.

If we consider statistical data, we can note that travelers visit the Republic quite rarely for the purpose of receiving services in the field of military-sports tourism. Basically, this happens within the framework of some world, European military-sports events. This is due to the fact that military-sports tourism in Uzbekistan is just beginning to form and develop, but many steps have already been taken today to establish it [5].

Thus, it can be noted that today, within the framework of the development of military-sports tourism in the Republic of Uzbekistan, many effective and targeted actions are being carried out by the state and the tourism industry, and the natural resource potential largely contributes to this.

However, despite all this, the flow of tourists entering the Republic, or represented by local residents, wishing to receive services within the framework of military-sports tourism, is small today (Fig. 1).

The targeted process of formation and development of this type of tourism began not so long ago



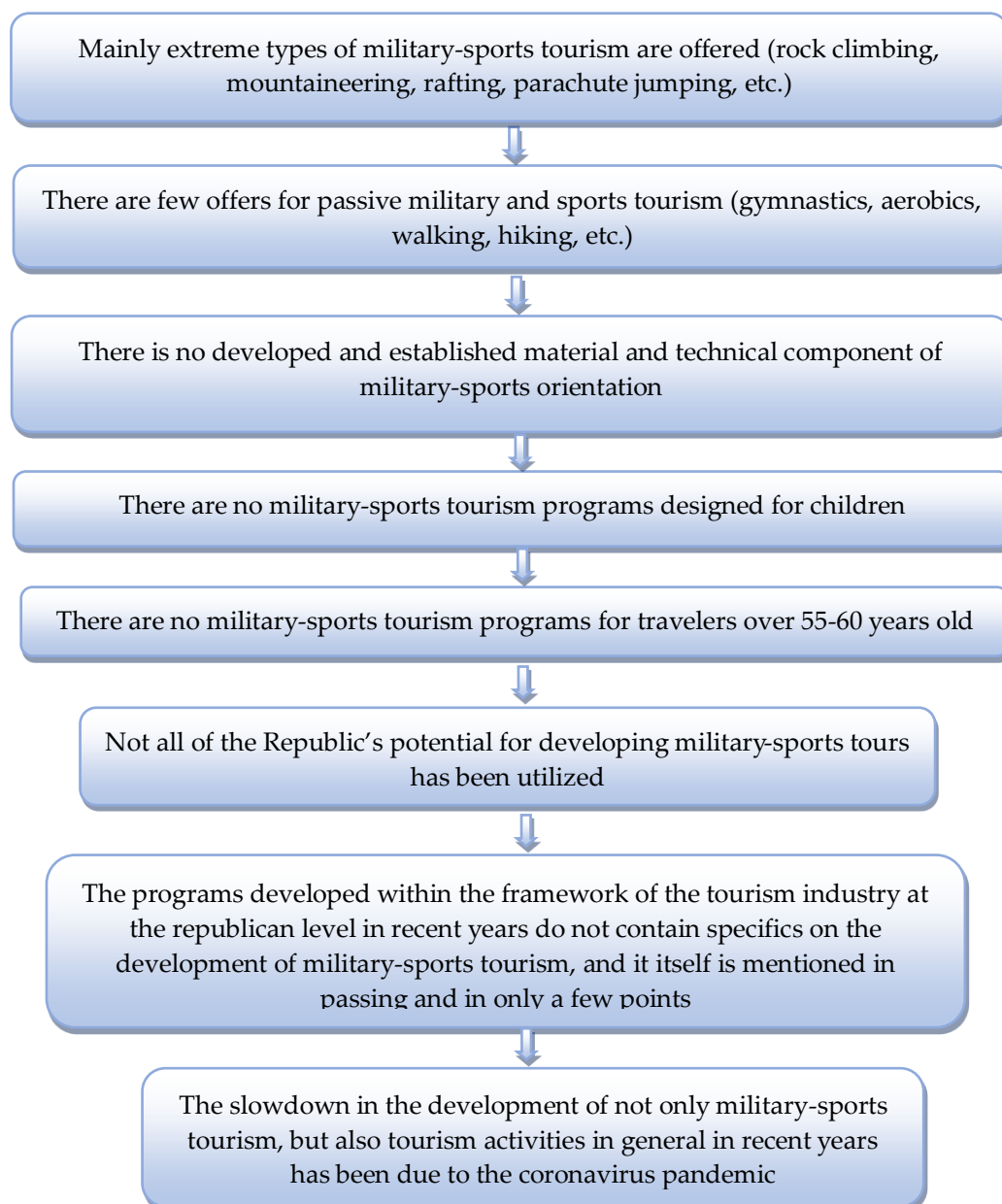


Figure 1. Underdevelopment of military-sports tourism.

Based on this, within the framework of the presented research work, the author proposes a set of recommendations for increasing the efficiency of the implementation of military-sports tourism in the Republic of Uzbekistan, as a tool for increasing the tourist flow, both inbound and domestic (Fig. 2).



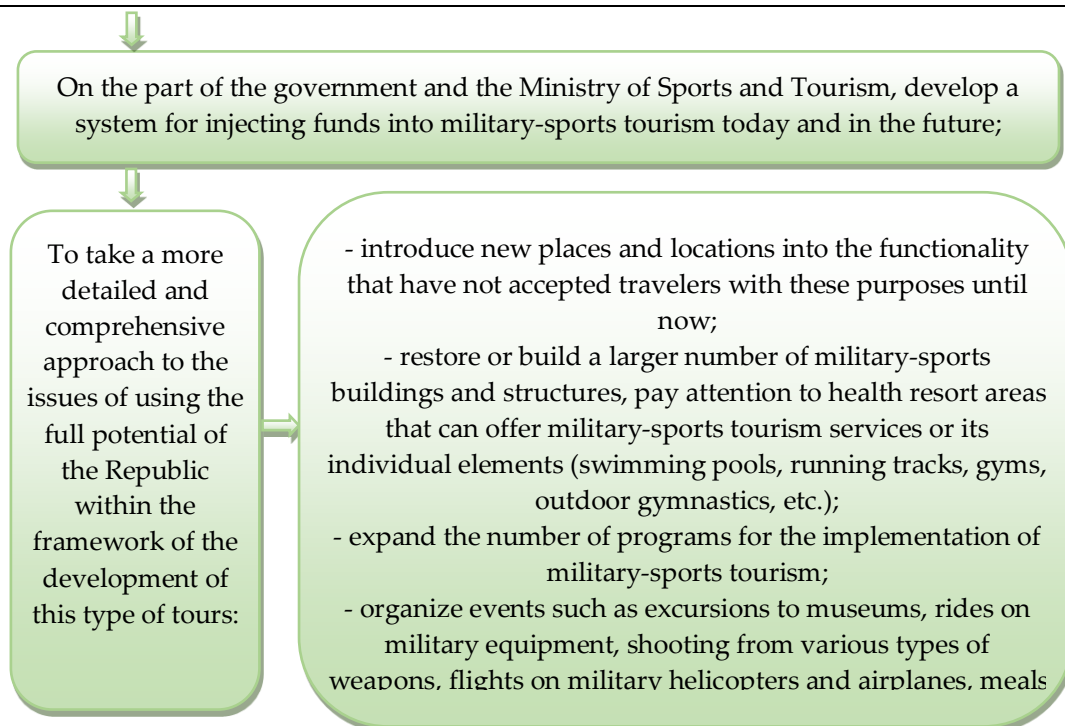


Figure 2. Recommendations for the development of military-sports tourism.

4. Conclusion

It is worth noting that the presented set of measures is introductory and has a recommendatory nature. However, as a result of the conducted research, the author suggests getting acquainted with the assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation of the proposed measures in the field of development of military-sports tourism in the Republic of Uzbekistan:

- the image of the Republic on the world stage will improve;
- the cultural, social and tourist components of Uzbekistan will begin to develop more effectively;
- the flow of tourists will increase, both among the local population and from abroad;
- the economic component from the implementation of military-sports tourism will increase;
- the population of the Republic will become healthier and more athletic;
- the number of unemployed people will decrease;
- the Republic will have more chances to hold military-sports events, both domestic and international;
- the regulatory framework in the field of military-sports tourism will become more comprehensive, systematic, and all-encompassing.

Uzbekistan has set its sights on developing non-standard types of tourism – military, geological and industrial. In particular, travelers will be offered to visit mines, inactive geological and industrial sites, and even use military equipment at training grounds.

The Agency for Strategic Reforms has developed a draft presidential resolution on additional measures to develop tourism in Uzbekistan.

The document's developers note that military tourism is becoming popular in many countries around the world today. The United States, Russia, and China offer a variety of military tourism activities: museum tours, riding military equipment, shooting various types of weapons, flights on military helicopters and airplanes, meals in field kitchens, and overnight stays in open tents at training grounds. These activities allow tourists to immerse themselves in a military atmosphere and gain a unique experience.

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