TOURIST ROUND-TRIP MOVEMENT: EMERGING TRENDS AND ITS ROLE IN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract; This article explores the concept of tourist round-trip movement, a form of travel in which tourists return to their point of departure after visiting one or several destinations. The study examines current trends in round-trip tourism, its economic and social impacts, and its significance in shaping interregional tourist flows. Special attention is given to the development of both domestic and international round-trip tourism in Uzbekistan, highlighting infrastructure capabilities, growth dynamics, and limiting factors. Drawing on the works of Hulkarbonu Yoqubjanova and other national and international scholars, this paper presents a comparative and analytical approach. The article concludes with practical recommendations for promoting sustainable round-trip tourism in developing regions.

Keywords; round-trip tourism, tourist flows, regional development, tourism infrastructure, domestic tourism, international travel, sustainable tourism

Introduction:

Tourism is increasingly recognized as a vital sector in the global economy, contributing to employment, regional development, and international cooperation. One of the prominent forms of travel gaining attention in recent years is round-trip tourism a model in which travelers begin and end their journey at the same location, often visiting multiple destinations in between. Round-trip movements are not only logistically efficient but also play a critical role in distributing tourist flows across various regions, thus reducing congestion in over-visited areas and stimulating economic growth in less-explored destinations. These movements foster the development of integrated tourism routes and support the expansion of transport and hospitality infrastructure. In the context of Uzbekistan, recent policy

initiatives have prioritized the growth of both inbound and domestic tourism, with a focus on round-trip packages that connect key cultural and natural attractions. Government support, improved infrastructure, and digitalization of tourism services have created favorable conditions for this form of travel.

This paper investigates the theoretical foundations of tourist round-trip movement, compares global best practices, and applies insights from the research of Hulkarbonu Yoqubjanova and other leading scholars to the case of Uzbekistan. By analyzing current trends, barriers, and opportunities, the study aims to offer a strategic framework for enhancing sustainable round-trip tourism and achieving balanced regional development.1

Literature Review

Tourist round-trip movement, often categorized within circular and circuit tourism models, has gained increasing scholarly attention due to its multifaceted impact on tourism dynamics, infrastructure demand, and regional economic integration. Scholars have examined this phenomenon from logistical, behavioral, and policy perspectives. According to Leiper (1990), tourist movement can be categorized into distinct stages including origin, transit routes, destinations, and return paths. 2Round-trip tourism integrates all these stages into a complete travel cycle, enhancing the efficiency of transport systems and maximizing the use of tourism infrastructure. Buhalis and Laws (2001) emphasize that round-trip travel packages often generate higher economic value, especially when they incorporate multiple destinations within a defined circuit. This model promotes regional cooperation, encourages investment in connective infrastructure (e.g., roads, rail, accommodation chains), and reduces seasonality effects.

1 Yoqubjanova, H. (2022). Innovative approaches to regional tourism development in Uzbekistan. Iqtisodiyot va ta'lim, (1), 102–107. Retrieved from https://iqtisodiyot.tsue.uz/sites/default/files/maqolalar/18_Yoqubjonova.pdf
2 Leiper, N. (1990). Tourist attraction systems. Annals of Tourism Research, 17(3), 367–384. https://doi.org/10.1016/0160-7383(90)90003-A

In the Central Asian context, Yoqubjanova (2022) argues that round-trip tourism can serve as a catalyst for balanced regional development in Uzbekistan, especially when integrated with cultural heritage sites across Samarkand, Bukhara, Khiva, and Fergana Valley. Her work highlights the importance of government policy support and public-private partnerships in expanding tourism connectivity. Additionally, Hall and Page (2014) suggest that regional tourism development through round-trip models requires cross-sector coordination among transport, hospitality, and cultural sectors. They also note the role of digital technologies in mapping optimized routes and enhancing tourist experiences.

Several international studies, such as those by Gössling & Peeters (2015), have examined the environmental footprint of round-trip tourism, especially in long-haul travel. They advocate for more sustainable circuit designs and multimodal transport solutions to reduce carbon emissions. In contrast, UNWTO (2020) reports on the rapid expansion of intra-regional tourism and the growing preference for round-trip itineraries among post-COVID travelers. This shift is attributed to changing traveler behavior, safety concerns, and increased desire for locally immersive experiences.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative-descriptive research design, focusing on the analysis of round-trip tourism dynamics in Uzbekistan within the broader context of global tourism development. The methodology integrates both theoretical research and context-specific case study analysis to evaluate the potential and practical implications of round-trip tourist flows for regional growth. The research is based on a combination of:

Secondary data analysis, including academic articles, reports by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), OECD, and Uzbek tourism authorities (State Committee for Tourism Development of the Republic of Uzbekistan). Content analysis of previous studies by leading researchers such as Hulkarbonu Yoqubjanova, who has contributed significantly to the understanding of

Uzbekistan's tourism infrastructure and policy evolution. Tourism statistics from the State Statistics Committee of Uzbekistan (2020–2024) regarding inbound, outbound, and domestic tourist flows.

✓ To place Uzbekistan's round-trip tourism trends in a global context, the research compares:

✓ Tourism route development strategies from countries with similar cultural heritage circuits (e.g., Turkey, India, and Morocco).

✓ Infrastructure development and intermodal connectivity supporting round-trip tourism.

The methodology utilizes:

✓ Descriptive analysis to outline trends in tourist behavior, route preferences, and regional accessibility.

✓ Thematic synthesis of scholarly literature and government reports to identify common challenges and best practices.

✓ Policy analysis to evaluate national strategies that influence the expansion of round-trip circuits, including visa reforms, digital platforms, and public-private initiatives.

Analysis and Results

This section presents a structured analysis of round-trip tourism patterns, their evolution, and implications for regional development, with a focus on Uzbekistan's tourism sector. The findings are derived from secondary data analysis and policy documents from 2020–2024.

1. Growth of Round-Trip Tourism in Uzbekistan

Between 2020 and 2024, Uzbekistan witnessed a steady increase in round-trip tourist flows, particularly among domestic travelers. According to data from the State Statistics Committee:

In 2020, round-trip domestic travel accounted for only 31% of internal tourism activity.

By 2024, this figure had risen to 57%, indicating a strong rise in circular travel packages and multi-destination tours within the country.

Government investment in inter-regional transport infrastructure (e.g., Afrosiyob high-speed rail links between Tashkent, Samarkand, Bukhara, and Khiva).

Promotion of "Golden Ring of Uzbekistan" tour circuits targeting cultural heritage routes.

Rise of digital platforms offering customizable round-trip itineraries.

2. Key Destinations and Circuit Patterns

❖ Round-trip tourism in Uzbekistan typically follows heritage-rich circuits. Based on travel agency data

❖ The most common route: Tashkent → Samarkand → Bukhara → Khiva → Tashkent.

❖ Secondary routes include connections to the Fergana Valley, which are increasingly integrated into circular tours with stops in Kokand, Margilan, and Andijan.

❖ This trend has created balanced tourist distribution across regions and helped prevent overcrowding in central destinations.

3. Economic Impact and Regional Benefits

The economic impact of round	**trip tourism is reflected in increased service sector growth across secondary cities. For example:**
Bukhara region reported a 22% increase in SME	based guesthouses between 2021 and 2023.
Khiva saw a 35% increase in guided tours purchased as part of round	trip circuits, according to the Ministry of Tourism.
These patterns confirm that multi	point tourism stimulates broader

	regional participation in the tourism economy.

Conclusion

The analysis of tourist round-trip movement in Uzbekistan reveals its growing importance as a strategic tool for regional development and sustainable tourism planning. As shown in the findings, round-trip tourism has evolved from a limited travel model into a dynamic force that connects cultural, historical, and natural attractions across multiple regions. The increase in round-trip circuits supported by improvements in transportation infrastructure, government incentives, and digital tour services has resulted in more evenly distributed tourist flows, reduced pressure on central destinations, and enhanced economic opportunities in peripheral regions.

This study highlights several key conclusions: 1. Round-trip tourism fosters regional inclusivity, allowing lesser-known cities to benefit from tourism inflows.

2. Infrastructure investment and route planning are critical to maximizing the potential of round-trip travel models. 3. Cultural heritage circuits, such as the Golden Ring of Uzbekistan, have demonstrated success in attracting both domestic and international tourists. 4. Continued policy coordination, digital innovation, and public-private collaboration are necessary to overcome current limitations such as seasonality and access barriers. The research suggests that round-trip tourism should be prioritized within Uzbekistan’s national tourism development strategy. Future research could expand on this study through primary data collection, including tourist interviews and impact assessments, to further evaluate traveler satisfaction and economic outcomes.

By strengthening round-trip tourism, Uzbekistan can not only enhance its tourism brand internationally but also achieve more balanced and sustainable regional development.

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