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**TO IDENTIFY THE CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS FOR THE
DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM USING THE SWOT METHOD
THROUGH THE ANALYSIS OF TRIPADVISOR IN SHAKI
DISTRICT, AZERBAIJAN**

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The article examines the prospects for the development of tourism in the Sheki region and the problems which could hamper this development. On the basis of the review of the literature, the positive and negative results of the tourism activities are explained in detail in the article. By analysing the general characteristics of tourism development in the Sheki region, the SWOT analysis was carried out. Factors that positively affect and can affect tourism development in the region are classified as Strengths and Opportunities, while negative factors are classified as Weaknesses and Threats. The data from the tripadvisor.com platform and customer satisfaction have been analysed as a data base. The SWOT analysis revealed that, despite the existence of regional tourism brands, there are serious discrepancies between the current tourism indicators, which do not reflect the potential of the region.

Keywords: SWOT analysis; tourism potential; recreational resources; Shaki district; Tripadvisor; UNESCO heritage.

**ОПРЕДЕЛЕНИЕ ВЫЗОВОВ И ПЕРСПЕКТИВ РАЗВИТИЯ
ТУРИЗМА С ИСПОЛЬЗОВАНИЕМ МЕТОДА SWOT-АНАЛИЗА
ЧЕРЕЗ АНАЛИЗ TRIPADVISOR В РАЙОНЕ ШАКИ, АЗЕРБАЙДЖАН**

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В статье рассматриваются перспективы развития туризма в Шекинском районе и проблемы, которые могут помешать этому развитию. На основе обзора литературы в статье подробно описаны положительные и отрицательные результаты туристской деятельности. Анализируя общие характеристики развития туризма в Шекинском районе, был проведен SWOT-анализ. Факторы, которые положительно влияют и могут повлиять на развитие туризма в регионе, классифицируются как Сильные стороны и Возможности, а негативные факторы – как Слабые стороны и Угрозы. В качестве базы данных были проанализированы данные с платформы tripadvisor.com и удовлетворенность клиентов. SWOT-анализ показал, что, несмотря на наличие

региональных туристических брендов, существуют серьезные расхождения между текущими показателями туризма, которые не отражают потенциал региона.

Ключевые слова: SWOT-анализ; туристский потенциал; рекреационные ресурсы; Шакинский район; Tripadvisor; наследие ЮНЕСКО.

Introduction

Developing tourism, using its resources and increasing its economic efficiency has become a worldwide phenomenon. The tourism industry is more than just a field of tourism, it is one of the most important components in the formation of international economic and political relations and the improvement of standards. The development of the tourism industry and investments in its branches were started with the adoption of the state programme in 2002 in Azerbaijan [3]. The number of hotels and hotel-like establishments covered by the sector has increased considerably [1]. The Sheki region is considered to be one of the most important centres of tourism in the country [7]. Its historical centres and the number of UNESCO monuments set the area apart from other areas. The aim of this study is to have a look at the tourism potential of the Shaki district and the factors that are an obstacle to its development.

Body part

As a sector, tourism is good for business and plays a significant role in budget generation, foreign exchange reserves and employment. However, tourism has negative effects on the economy in addition to the positive effects mentioned above. According to Mason [5] at least the following are among the negative consequences of tourism:

- 1. Inflation: Price rises that may occur in some areas because of tourism activities include increasing land, housing and even food prices. Increased demand for local services by tourists is also an inflationary indicator.*
- 2. Opportunity cost: refers to the cost of engaging in tourism instead of other economic activities. In particular, this can take place at the local and regional level. In predominantly rural coastal areas, these costs may be invested in tourism rather than agriculture, horticulture or fisheries. The result will be a partial or total cessation of activity in other types of farms and a substitution effect.*
- 3. Over-dependence on tourism: The preparation of the regional plan for the area has been problematic in that tourism has been seen as the sole economic driver, to the exclusion of other considerations. This can be the case, for example, in small states where the government's view of tourism is that it is the best method of development. In time, tourism became so important that other approaches to development were virtually neglected. Consequently, the country becomes so dependent on tourism that any change in demand can lead to major economic crisis.*

However, the movement of internal resources within the industry varies depending on the characteristics of the material and financial interchange between the industries, and the value and distribution of the tourism output. Attracting citizens to domestic tourism and increasing their number is one of the main factors influencing the development of tourism. In addition to these factors, the formation of the domestic tourism market is influenced by hospitality, the wealth of recreational resources, excursion services, etc. One of the most important factors hindering the development and expansion of domestic tourism is the significant difference between the current level of prices in the field of tourism, including accommodation and services, and the real income of the population.

As in other sectors of the economy, services in the tourism market are shaped by supply and demand. The demand for tourism varies according to the theme of the traveller's leisure time. This leads to the formation of new service areas and speeds up the formation and development of some sectors. There are many factors that affect how students learn to work in tourism, including.

- Natural and geographical factors - natural environment, attractive scenery, pleasant climate, wealth of natural monuments, proximity of leisure facilities to residential area, etc.
- Socio-economic - high standard of living of the people, demographic conditions, level of economic, political and cultural development of the state.
- Financing of the tourist industry - accommodation, catering, transport, communication services, sports centres, etc.
- The quality of the organisation of services in recreational facilities
- Newly developing, most productive and promising areas are referred to as tourism potentials. Tourism potential can be increased and tourism development accelerated through the efficient use of resources and proper positioning. Through the analysis of its resources and products or services, a tourism organisation can assess how well it is equipped to implement its strategic capabilities or strategy. Resources are typically categorised under four headings

Tangible assets, including buildings, plant and equipment, machinery and fleet.

Human resources primarily made up of qualifications.

Financial resources or the creditworthiness of the organization as demonstrated by its liquidity and total indebtedness.

Intangible resources [4], which include acquired knowledge and skills, patents and recipes, goodwill, brands and the image of the company.

Performance monitoring looks at how money is being spent and may include: efficiency, financial, evaluation and benchmark. This section is dedicated to identifying, evaluating and developing Sheki Region's tourism potential.

Method

In order to analyse the tourism potential of the region, the method of SWOT analysis has been used. The SWOT analysis in the study area included a review of the studies carried out in the area, an analysis of hotel prices and customer satisfaction on the tourism platforms. Internal and external factors, comparative analysis of data and the main problems in the direction of development were studied during the SWOT analysis in the research area.

SWOT-Analysis

SWOT analysis is an instrument for strategic planning and strategic management in companies. In the analysis, factors are divided into 2 groups as internal factors and external factors and evaluation and strategic planning are carried out by analysing the factors [6].

Table 1

SWOT analysis of tourism in Sheki district. Source: Prepared by the author

<i>Strengths</i>	<i>Weaknesses</i>
The location of the Kish Albanian temple	Lack of adequate advertising
The Sheki Khan palace and the Caravanserai complex, which are part of the UNESCO heritage, are located here	Lack of local guides on inner-city tourist routes. Consequently, the service is expensive
Full hotel and service provision	Offering local people's homes to tourists and the lack of uniform standards
Wide distribution of rich forest complex and exotic landscape in the area	Weakness of coordination between domestic tourism companies and international tourism firms
The richness of national cuisine	Fewer children's entertainment and shopping malls
The population is interested in renting their houses to tourists	High prices of meals and other food
Interest in rural tourism in some mountain villages	
<i>Opportunities</i>	<i>Threats</i>
It can be the main tourist center of the region	Frequent occurrence of floods in the area and high amount of debris [2]
It is more noticeable in branding than in other districts	High prices of tour packages
Wide possibilities of hunting tourism (Kichik Dahne, Oraban)	

Internal issues can be categorised as strengths and weakness, while external issues can be categorised as opportunities and threats. Strategic management

requires analysis of these environments. The process of analysing organisation and environment is called SWOT.

Discussion. Depending on their location and the services they offer, hotels in the Sheki district range from \$19 to \$87¹². The tour packages that have sold the most in the region are as follows: Shamakhi - Gabala - Sheki, Gabala - Lahic - Sheki, Azerbaijan - Georgia - Armenia, General Azerbaijan Tour, Caspian Pearl Tour, Agrotour, etc. If you look at customer satisfaction, you will see that while service and hospitality are at a high level, prices, especially food and other commodities, are much higher than expected. This is just one of the ways in which the development of tourism is being hampered. International tourism platforms, such as the tripadvisor.com website, clearly show this.

In addition, shops and businesses that sell local products, such as handicrafts, confectionery and silk products, are not adequately advertised on the platforms. Furthermore, in the category of gift shops and farmers' markets, there is no mention of the objects which are part of the market. Despite the fact that the above-mentioned areas have developed in the region.

One of the factors adversely affecting and slowing the development of tourism in the region is the frequency of flooding in the area, which causes severe damage. In the Sheki region, in the village of Kish, the Jannat garden, the Narin gala, the Umid, the Gelarsan-Gorsarsan, the Kish island, the Mekan and Sham gardens, the Kungut recreational centres in the village of Bash Kungut are exposed to floods [7, pp 225].

Conclusion. The SWOT analysis revealed serious discrepancies between current tourism indicators in the Sheki region. For example, the present state of tourism does not reflect its potential and has been rather poor. Despite the existence of regional brands in the area of tourism, the brands of the various regions are poorly developed. Gift shops and farmers' markets are the most obvious examples. In terms of attracting tourists to the region, it has been found that the price factor is more effective. Therefore, there will be a reduction in the number of overnight stays and accommodation as a result of the sale of tour packages.

The service of renting a car does not exist. There is no car rental service and cars are only available for hire from Baku. Both local and international companies operate taxi services. The local people are very interested in renting out their houses and apartments. Depending on the number of beds, local house rentals range from \$11 to \$49. The difference between staying in a hotel and renting out a private house is very small. Houses for rent are offered to tourists in the district, especially in the town of Sheki, in the villages of Kish, Abbas, Okhud, Bash Kungut.

¹² https://www.tripadvisor.com/SmartDeals-g666445-Sheki_Shaki_Zaqatala_Region-Hotel-Deals.html

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