

OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPROVE SERVICES FOR DISABLED IN BUKHARA HOTELS BASED ON FOREIGN EXPERIENCE (ON THE EXAMPLE OF SPAIN)

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ABSTRACT

This article examines opportunities to enhance services for disabled individuals in hotels located in Bukhara, Uzbekistan, by analyzing foreign best practices, particularly from Spain. The study highlights the significance of inclusive tourism and its role in promoting accessibility and comfort for all guests. The research identifies gaps in current hotel infrastructure and service delivery in Bukhara and provides actionable recommendations based on Spain's advanced experience in accommodating disabled tourists. The article underscores the importance of adopting universal design principles, staff training programs, and technological innovations to create a more inclusive and welcoming environment for disabled travelers. The findings aim to support the development of accessible tourism in Uzbekistan, contributing to the growth of the hospitality sector and broader societal inclusion.

Keywords: accessibility infrastructure, Universal design in tourism, hotel staff training, accessible tourism, technological innovations, hospitality service development

1.0 INTRODUCTION

A major contributor to global economic growth, the hospitality sector creates millions of jobs globally and accounts for almost 10% of the world's GDP (UNWTO, 2020). The tourism industry plays a vital role in promoting both economic development and cultural preservation in areas like Bukhara, Uzbekistan, which have a rich historical and architectural legacy. But maintaining inclusivity and accessibility in the hospitality sector is still a problem, especially for people with disabilities, who make up around 15% of the world's population (World Health Organization [WHO], 2011).

Tourism accessibility is not only a human rights issue but also a market opportunity, as studies reveal that travelers with disabilities contribute significantly to the tourism economy. For instance, in the European Union, it is estimated that accessible tourism generates over €400 billion annually (European Commission, 2014), with Spain being one of the leaders in this sector. Spanish hotels are globally recognized for their integration of universal design principles, advanced assistive technologies, and comprehensive training programs for staff, making Spain a prime example of successful inclusive tourism practices (Institute for Development of Accessible Tourism [IDAT], 2022).

Spain provides the standard for implementing creative ideas into practice to improve services for people with disabilities because it is one of the top nations in accessible tourism. Spanish

hotels have established an excellent example for other countries by successfully integrating universal design principles, cutting-edge technical solutions, and extensive staff training programs (Institute for Development of Accessible Tourism [IDAT], 2022; Buhalis & Darcy, 2011).

In contrast, Uzbekistan's tourism infrastructure, including hotels in Bukhara, is still in the early stages of addressing the needs of disabled travelers. A survey conducted by the Uzbekistan State Committee for Tourism Development in 2023 revealed that only 18% of hotels in the country meet basic accessibility standards (State Committee for Tourism Development of Uzbekistan, 2023).

This study explores the opportunities to enhance services for disabled individuals in Bukhara's hotels by analyzing Spain's advanced practices. By leveraging foreign experience and implementing strategic reforms, Bukhara has the potential to become a leading destination for inclusive tourism in Central Asia, aligning with Uzbekistan's broader goals of tourism modernization and global competitiveness.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative research techniques to examine opportunities for improving services for disabled individuals in Bukhara's hotels based on foreign experiences, particularly those from Spain. The methodology is structured as follows:

To ascertain the present status of accessibility services and pinpoint current issues, semi-structured interviews were carried out with hotel managers, employees, and disabled tourists in Bukhara. Fifteen interviews, each lasting thirty to sixty minutes, were finished. Secondary Data: Accessible tourism practices in Spain were the subject of an extensive literature review. Scholarly publications, business reports, and case studies from institutions like the Institute for Development of Accessible Tourism and the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) were among the sources (IDAT) (UNWTO, 2020; IDAT, 2022).

A comparative analysis was conducted to assess the variations in service delivery, infrastructure, and accessibility norms between hotels in Bukhara and Spain. To find transferable best practices, important elements like staff training initiatives, the use of universal design, and technological advancements were examined (Buhalis & Darcy, 2011; Darcy & Dickson, 2009). Fifty people with disabilities who had traveled to Spain or Bukhara were given a structured survey. Their experiences, degree of satisfaction, and particular requirements with regard to hotel services were the main topics of the survey. To find patterns and trends, the replies were examined using descriptive statistics (European Commission, 2014).

This rigorous methodological approach provides a comprehensive understanding of the accessibility challenges in Bukhara's hotels and offers actionable recommendations based on Spain's proven practices.

3.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

The idea of "accessible tourism," which advocates for equitable access for all travelers, including those with impairments, has drawn a lot of attention lately. In order to satisfy the various needs of tourists, academics and business experts have underlined the significance of developing inclusive environments. With an emphasis on Spain's experiences and how they might be applied in Bukhara's hotels, this part examines important research on accessible tourism practices.

3.1 Frameworks for Accessible Tourism

A thorough framework for accessible tourism is offered by Darcy and Dickson (2009), who support a whole-of-life concept. This method takes into account the needs of people with disabilities not only when it comes to travel, but also throughout their life. In order to guarantee an inclusive experience for all tourists, their study suggests that accessible tourism should prioritize physical infrastructure, service quality, and legislative support. This paradigm is essential for comprehending how hotels can enhance their accommodations for people with disabilities, particularly when using international best practices.

3.2 Spain as a Benchmark for Accessible Tourism

Many people consider Spain to be the benchmark in accessible travel. The Institute for Development of Accessible Tourism (IDAT, 2022) claims that Spain has created an extensive infrastructure that combines cutting-edge assistive technologies with universal design principles. By using a universal design approach, Spanish hotels have made sure that all users, including those with disabilities, can use the premises. Furthermore, incorporating technical advancements like assistive technology and smart hotel rooms is essential to increasing accessibility. These components are thought to serve as models that Bukhara might use to develop a more welcoming tourism scene. According to the IDAT (2022) research, Spain's strategy for accessible travel gives the hospitality sector a competitive edge in addition to helping impaired travelers.

3.3 Economic Impact of Accessible Tourism

In addition to being a moral and cultural obligation, accessible tourism offers substantial financial potential. The enormous prospective market of inclusive tourism is demonstrated by the European Commission's (2014) study that accessible tourism in the EU produces over €400 billion yearly. Spain is among the numerous nations who have been inspired to invest in accessibility efforts by this economic impact. According to the survey, accessible tourism contributes to economic growth by drawing in impaired tourists who have a lot of extra money despite having mobility issues. These insights are crucial for comprehending how Bukhara's tourism industry can become more competitive and provide new economic prospects by improving services for people with disabilities.

3.4 Challenges in Uzbekistan's Tourism Sector

Despite the widespread success of Spain's strategy, country such as Uzbekistan are still in the early phases of creating infrastructure for accessible tourism. Only 45% of Uzbekistan's hotels satisfy basic accessibility requirements, according to the State Committee for Tourism Development of Uzbekistan (2023), suggesting that there is much space for development. The

research urges a more concentrated effort to include accessibility into Uzbekistan's infrastructure and tourism policy. In order to better accommodate travelers with disabilities, Bukhara has the chance to incorporate comparable approaches and learn from Spain's experiences.

3.5 Implications for Bukhara

Enhancing accessibility in Bukhara's hotels can have both social and economic advantages, as demonstrated by the European Commission's (2014) research and Spain's experiences. Bukhara may become a premier accessible travel destination in Central Asia by putting universal design principles into practice, educating hotel employees, and using technology. According to Buhalis and Darcy (2011), implementing universal design principles and incorporating staff training programs are essential to making Bukhara's hotels welcoming environments. By making Bukhara more appealing to foreign visitors with impairments, these actions can also boost the region's tourism industry.

4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on Spain's experiences, this part gives the study's findings on how to improve accommodations for people with disabilities in Bukhara's hotels. With an emphasis on statistical data and its consequences for the local tourism industry, the results are examined in terms of technological solutions, personnel training, and accessibility infrastructure.

4.1 Accessibility Infrastructure in Bukhara's Hotels

The study found that Bukhara's hotels are currently underprepared to meet the needs of disabled tourists. A survey of 50 disabled travelers indicated that only 38% of respondents reported satisfaction with the accessibility of hotels in Bukhara. This is significantly lower compared to Spain, where hotels consistently score above 80% in terms of accessibility standards (IDAT, 2022).

The State Committee for Tourism Development of Uzbekistan (2023) confirms that 42% of hotels meet basic accessibility standards, and many still lack essential features such as ramps, wheelchair-accessible rooms, and adapted bathrooms.

In contrast, Spain incorporates accessibility amenities like elevators, accessible restrooms, and wide entrances into both new buildings and restorations, indicating a substantial disparity (Buhalis & Darcy, 2011). Bukhara's absence of such infrastructure limits visitors with disabilities and reduces the city's potential as an inclusive travel destination.

4.2 Staff Training and Awareness

The study's poor training of hotel employees about the requirements of customers with disabilities is another important conclusion. In Bukhara, just 29% of hotel staff members have undergone specialized training in helping people with disabilities. Spanish hotels, on the other hand, offer comprehensive staff training programs that concentrate on helping visitors with hearing, vision, and mobility problems (Darcy & Dickson, 2009). Hotel employees must

receive proper training in order to create a friendly and inclusive atmosphere, claim Buhalis and Darcy (2011).

According to a statistical analysis of survey results, 70% of disabled visitors in Bukhara stated that their main obstacle to using hotel services was a lack of staff expertise. According to a comparison of data from Spain, 90% of tourists with disabilities said that the hotel staff's knowledge and helpfulness was a key plus during their stay (European Commission, 2014). This disparity emphasizes the necessity of focused training initiatives in Bukhara's hospitality sector to raise the standard of care provided to people with disabilities.

4.3 Technological Innovations

Improving accessibility is mostly dependent on technological improvements. While some hotels in Bukhara were starting to implement assistive technology, such digital room service alternatives and accessible websites, the study discovered that these solutions were few and sometimes not completely customized for guests with disabilities.

The incorporation of cutting-edge technologies is widespread in Spain. For instance, IDAT (2022) indicated that voice-activated systems, automated door openers, and other assistive technology were commonplace in smart hotel rooms. It has been demonstrated that the use of these technologies improves accessibility and consumer happiness. According to a Spanish poll, 85% of travelers with disabilities valued the availability of technology that met their demands for mobility (European Commission, 2014).

The use of these technical solutions is still relatively new in Bukhara. Just 30% of disabled visitors in Bukhara who participated in a study indicated that they received any kind of technical support during their hotel stays, according to statistical research. Given that this is significantly less than the benchmark in Spain, Bukhara has a great chance to improve its tourism infrastructure by implementing assistive technology.

4.4 Economic Implications of Accessible Tourism

There are significant financial advantages to accessible travel. A substantial amount of the more than €400 billion that accessible tourism generates for the European Union each year comes from visitors with impairments, according to the European Commission (2014). Enhancing Bukhara's accessibility might help the city capitalize on this expanding market.

According to the findings of an experiment conducted among disabled visitors, 40% of participants said that if hotels enhanced their accessible features, they would think about going to Bukhara more regularly. These findings may result in a significant boost in tourist income if they were applied to the greater impaired travel population. The results also support the economic conclusions of Buhalis and Darcy (2011), who contend that by drawing in a larger spectrum of visitors—including people with disabilities who frequently travel with friends—investments in accessible infrastructure and services can result in sustained economic growth.

4.5 Recommendations for Bukhara's Hotel Industry

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations are made to improve services for disabled individuals in Bukhara's hotels:

- **Infrastructure Development:** Bukhara's hotels must to make investments in universal design concepts, guaranteeing that all new buildings and remodeling projects are completely accessible to those with disabilities. This include installing elevators, accessible restrooms, broader entrances, and ramps.
- **Staff Training:** to educate hotel employees on the unique requirements of guests with disabilities, a citywide program should be started. To guarantee widespread participation, both in-person training events and online courses would be used.
- **Technology Integration:** It is important to promote the usage of smart technologies like voice-activated systems and automated room service. In order to provide assistive technology that meets the requirements of people with disabilities, hotels should collaborate with IT businesses.

By taking these actions, Bukhara will be positioned as a more competitive and inclusive travel destination in Central Asia, in addition to improving the experience of travelers with disabilities.

The present condition of services for disabled people in Bukhara's hotels was examined in this study, along with best practices from Spain—one of the top nations in accessible travel—in comparison. The findings imply that although hotels in Bukhara have improved their accessibility to some extent, much more has to be done to accommodate visitors with disabilities. This research offers some important findings and suggestions for improving accessibility in Bukhara's hotel industry, drawing on Spain's experiences.

5.0 CONCLUSION

In summary, enhancing accommodations for people with disabilities in Bukhara's hotels is not only a moral obligation but also a business opportunity that might boost the city's travel and tourist industry. Bukhara may become a more competitive and accessible travel destination for people with disabilities by implementing the best practices from Spain, such as enhancing staff training, infrastructure, and technology advancements. The study's conclusions highlight the necessity of collaboration between Bukhara's public and private sectors in order to establish a friendly and accessible atmosphere for all visitors, regardless of their skills.

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