

DIRECTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE COMPETITIVENESS OF BUKHARA HOTELS

Istamkhuja Olimovich Davronov

Tourism and hotel management department

Bukhara state university, Uzbekistan

E:mail: i.o.davronov@buxdu.uz , istam9229@gmail.com

Annotation: *The thesis examines strategies to enhance the competitiveness of hotels in Bukhara, a city known for its extensive historical and cultural legacy and a major player in Uzbekistan's tourism industry, more competitive. It draws attention to the main issues that local hotels confront, such as their slow adoption of cutting-edge digital technologies, poor service, and a lack of compliance with international hospitality standards. The thesis offers helpful suggestions for enhancing service quality, branding, and marketing initiatives to place Bukhara hotels competitively in the worldwide market by examining best practices in the global hospitality sector. The results help to build a strong framework for improving the hotel sector's cultural and economic influence in Bukhara, which will ultimately increase the area's allure as a top travel destination.*

Keywords: *hotel services, service quality, branding, marketing efforts, competitiveness, tourist destination*

INTRODUCTION

The hospitality sector is essential to promoting cultural interaction and economic prosperity in tourist areas. The hotel industry plays a crucial role in serving the increasing number of domestic and foreign tourists in Bukhara, Uzbekistan, a city known for its rich historical and architectural legacy. Notwithstanding its potential, Bukhara hotels' competitiveness is nevertheless hindered by a number of issues, including as their uneven adoption of contemporary digital technology, uneven service standards, and a lack of integration with international best practices in managing hotels.

Traveler expectations are shifting toward individualized experiences, smooth digital connections, and ecologically friendly activities, according to worldwide tourism trends. Accessible online booking alternatives, excellent customer service, and genuine cultural value are becoming more and more valued by tourists. The hotel sector in Bukhara has been sluggish to fully adopt these improvements, but many other places across the world have effectively adjusted to these changes by utilizing cutting-edge technologies and contemporary management techniques. While digital tools like online booking platforms, customer relationship management (CRM) systems, and artificial intelligence (AI)-driven

technologies are now thought to be crucial for operational efficiency and guest satisfaction, many hotels continue to rely on traditional methods with little integration.

Furthermore, issues including uneven service quality, a shortage of trained workers, and a lack of funding and technology make it difficult for nearby hotels to satisfy the demands of contemporary tourists. Simultaneously, the hotel sector is seeing increased worldwide competition as new destinations consistently raise the bar for operational and service quality. For hotels in Bukhara to remain competitive, draw return guests, and take full use of the city's tourism potential, these shortcomings must be filled.

Travelers are calling for more individualized services, seamless digital experiences, and sustainable practices as global tourism patterns change. A strategic change in Bukhara hotels' management and operations is necessary to meet these expectations. The city has a distinctive cultural character and many tourism resources, but its hotels need to change to be competitive in a market that is changing quickly. This entails raising the caliber of services, funding employee training, implementing digital transformation technologies, and conforming to global hospitality norms.

By tackling technological, operational, and marketing issues, this paper examines the main paths for enhancing Bukhara hotels' competitiveness. In order to improve operational efficiency and customer happiness, it emphasizes the significance of implementing cutting-edge solutions including online booking systems, customer relationship management (CRM) platforms, and artificial intelligence (AI) technology. The survey also highlights how branding tactics and ecological practices help Bukhara hotels stand out as appealing travel destinations for a range of traveler demographics.

This study aims to offer a thorough framework for boosting the competitiveness of Bukhara's hotel industry by proposing workable solutions and using insights from worldwide hospitality trends. These suggestions are meant to support the region's overall economic development as well as the expansion of the local tourism sector. These tactics guarantee that Bukhara's hospitality industry continues to be a major contributor to the region's tourism economy by addressing both short-term issues and long-term growth. The ultimate goal of this study is to enable industry participants to establish Bukhara hotels as premier suppliers of contemporary and genuine hospitality experiences that meet international standards.

Tourism research has focused on the competitiveness of the hotel industry, highlighting the necessity of ongoing innovation, quality improvement, and conformity to international trends. The main determinants of hotels' competitiveness are examined in this literature review, with an emphasis on workforce development, sustainability, service

quality, and digital transformation. These observations offer a starting point for comprehending the unique opportunities and difficulties that hotels in Bukhara encounter.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The hospitality industry has seen a revolution because to digital transformation, which has changed how hotels run and interact with their patrons. Digital tools including online booking platforms, customer relationship management (CRM) systems, and artificial intelligence (AI) can improve customer experiences and operational efficiency, according to studies by Buhalis and Law (2008) and Sigala (2018). In order to remain competitive in a market driven by technology, hotels must be able to assess client preferences, streamline operations, and provide individualized services. However, studies highlight issues such as inadequate training, a lack of technology infrastructure, and financial limitations in underdeveloped nations (Ali & Frew, 2014).

In the worldwide hotel sector, sustainability has become a crucial element of competitiveness. Studies by Chan and Wong (2006) and Font et al. (2021) show that eco-friendly procedures draw in eco-aware tourists while also lowering operating expenses. The use of local products, trash reduction programs, and energy-efficient technologies are examples of sustainable activities that improve a hotel's marketability and reputation. Sustainability in culturally significant areas like Bukhara also entails promoting local customs and preserving heritage sites, which is in line with the rising demand for genuine and ethical travel.

Hotels looking to stand out in a crowded market, strong branding and marketing are essential. The significance of developing a powerful brand identity that appeals to target audiences is emphasized by Kotler and Keller (2016). Hotel services are now primarily promoted through digital marketing, which includes influencer partnerships, social media, and search engine optimization (SEO) (Leung et al., 2013). Hotels can use visual branding and storytelling to cater to specialized audiences like Bukhara, where cultural heritage is a differentiator.

Even if worldwide trends offer insightful information, the particular circumstances of Bukhara offer special opportunities and challenges. According to local research, the city relies heavily on customary hospitality methods, which might not fully meet the needs of contemporary tourists (Jabborov, 2021). In addition, Bukhara's rich cultural legacy provides a competitive edge that can be used to differentiate services and create creative branding. However, filling in the gaps in worker skills, financial resources, and technical infrastructure is necessary to achieve these aims.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION. The study examines how competitive Bukhara hotels are now, examining the variables affecting their performance and suggesting

workable plans to improve their standing in the market. The conclusions are supported by surveys, statistical evaluations, and qualitative interviews with Bukhara visitors, staff, and hotel management.

Key results:

Expectations of Visitors and Hotel Performance. According to survey results, most visitors (73%) place a high importance on individual encounters and cultural authenticity while visiting Bukhara. Only 58% of the hotels examined, meanwhile, regularly live up to these standards. This disparity emphasizes the necessity of more cultural integration, employee training, and service personalization in hotel offers.

Adoption of technology and digital presence. In Bukhara, almost 65% of hotels make use of simple digital technologies like social media marketing and online reservation platforms. However, just 27% of the establishments use cutting-edge technologies like AI-powered analytics and customer relationship management (CRM) systems. In order to compete in the current hospitality market, operational efficiency and customized guest experiences are hampered by the restricted adoption of cutting-edge digital technology.

Levels of customer satisfaction. Hotels in Bukhara have an average Net Promoter Score (NPS) of 45, which indicates a modest level of customer satisfaction. Older facilities, poor hygiene standards, and a lack of bilingual employees are common grievances. International service standards have been adopted by certain boutique hotels, although many mid-range lodging options fall short in terms of consistently high quality.

Sustainable methods. Only 30% of hotels in Bukhara have adopted green practices, such as using locally sourced items, managing waste, or installing energy-efficient lighting, despite global trends toward sustainability. Their lack of emphasis on sustainability makes them less appealing to tourists who care about the environment.

DISCUSSION

Improving the quality of services. The findings highlight how crucial it is to match guest expectations with hotel services. Hotels may enhance the quality of their services by funding staff training initiatives, especially in areas like cultural immersion and multilingual communication. In order to draw in tourists who are interested in culture, hotels should also include traditional Uzbek aspects in their décor and guest activities.

Ensuring advantage of digital transformation. A sizable percentage of hotels in Bukhara have not yet completely embraced digital transformation. By increasing their usage of CRM systems, data analytics, and AI-powered solutions, hotels may improve operational efficiency and offer customized visitor experiences. Predictive analytics, for example, could help with forecasting demand from tourists and optimizing hotel pricing tactics.

Concentrating on sustainability. Bukhara hotels may be able to get a competitive edge by implementing sustainable practices. Installing energy-efficient appliances, cutting back on single-use plastics, and promoting locally produced goods are some ways to lessen their environmental impact and attract eco-aware visitors.

Attempts at strategic marketing. Marketing strategies ought to draw attention to Bukhara's distinctive history while highlighting the contemporary conveniences that its hotels provide. These marketing can reach a wider audience through partnerships with foreign travel companies and internet sites. Additionally, digital marketing tactics catered to particular groups, like millennials looking for genuine experiences, may increase exposure and interaction.

Creating Public-Private Alliances. The results also emphasize how important it is for governmental organizations and private hotel operators to work together. The entire hospitality industry stands to gain from increased tourist inflows brought about by improving tourist information services, building infrastructure, and hosting international events in Bukhara.

CONCLUSION

Significant gaps and chances for development in a number of operational areas are shown by the competitiveness analysis of Bukhara hotels. The results show that although the city's tourism sector has the advantages of abundant cultural and historical resources, a number of issues, including service quality, technological adoption, and sustainability practices, continue to impede the hotels' capacity to compete.

First of all, Bukhara hotels should do a better job of satisfying the demands of contemporary travelers, particularly with regard to offering individualized experiences and integrating cultural authenticity into their offerings. Only 58% of hotels satisfy the 73% of travelers who prioritize cultural immersion, suggesting that more money has to be spent on staff training, competence, and service personalization.

Second, improving operational effectiveness and the visitor experience requires the incorporation of digital technologies. Only 27% of hotels have implemented cutting-edge technologies like AI or CRM systems, despite the fact that 65% of them employ simple digital tools. This disparity implies that a large number of hotels in Bukhara are falling behind in terms of digital transformation, which may make it more difficult for them to successfully compete in a market that is becoming more and more reliant on technology.

The satisfaction of consumers is another crucial element. The customer experience at Bukhara hotels is mediocre, with an average NPS of 45, but there is still much space for improvement. Hotels must concentrate on quality management and ongoing improvements to sustain greater satisfaction ratings, as seen by complaints about antiquated amenities, unhygienic conditions, and a lack of multilingual staff.

Last but not least, the lack of emphasis on sustainability practices in Bukhara hotels (just 30% have green initiatives in place) points to a missed chance to draw in eco-aware tourists. By adopting sustainable practices like waste management systems, energy-efficient solutions, and marketing locally sourced goods, hotels can gain a competitive advantage and attract more eco-conscious travelers.

To sum up, increasing the competitiveness of Bukhara hotels necessitates a multipronged strategy that includes focusing on sustainability, expediting the digital transformation process, investing in staff development to improve cultural and service quality, and utilizing contemporary marketing techniques. Bukhara may improve its standing as a competitive travel destination in Uzbekistan by tackling these important issues and providing a distinctive fusion of traditional history and contemporary hospitality standards.

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