SOCIO-GEOGRAPHIC ASSESSMENT OF THE POPULATION'S QUALITY OF LIFE IN THE REGIONS OF UZBEKISTAN BASED ON MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS

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Abstract: *This paper examines the theoretical and methodological approaches to the socio-geographic assessment of the population's quality of life in the regions of Uzbekistan, based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory. Quality of life is determined not only by an individual's level of material well-being but also by their safety, integration into the social environment, access to education, social status, and opportunities for self - actualization. Consequently, Maslow's stages - physiological needs, safety, social belonging, esteem, and self-actualization - were interpreted as the conceptual framework for assessing regional quality of life. The results demonstrate that Maslow's model serves to reveal the multi-component and regionally differentiated nature of quality of life.*

Keywords: *quality of life, Maslow's theory, social geography, territorial differentiation, population well - being, social infrastructure, urbanization, territorial assessment.*

Introduction. The quality of life of the population is a key factor in assessing the socio-economic development of regions. Modern approaches do not limit the concept of quality of life solely to income or material well-being; instead, they encompass healthcare, education, housing, safety, social relations, the environment, and opportunities for personal development. UN-Habitat (the United Nations Human Settlements Programme) emphasizes the use of several interconnected dimensions—such as health, education, housing, the economy, basic services, the environment, and social inclusion—when evaluating the quality of life.

The hierarchy of needs proposed by Maslow in 1943 explains human needs through stages such as physiological needs, safety, social belonging and love, esteem, and self-actualization. [2]

According to Maslow, once lower-level needs are sufficiently satisfied, higher-level needs begin to play a more significant role in human activity. [2]

Relevance of the research topic. By linking this theory with social geography, it is possible to spatially examine the opportunities for meeting human needs within specific regions. The primary focus here is not merely on the population's income levels, but rather on the extent to which individuals in different areas have access to housing, healthcare, education, social services, and opportunities for self-development. [2]

The main objectives of the study are as follows:

- adapting Maslow's theory to the assessment of quality of life;
- identifying the key socio-geographic components of quality of life;
- determining territorial indicators corresponding to each level of needs;
- identifying disparities among the regions of Uzbekistan;
- proposing an integrated approach for the comprehensive assessment of quality of life.

It is based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory as well as the principles of social geography regarding territorial differentiation, spatial organization, and territorial inequality. A crucial point here is that Maslow's classical theory was not originally designed for the

assessment of territories. Therefore, in this study, it is adapted not as a ready-made index, but rather as a conceptual model for the territorial assessment of the quality of life.

Furthermore, the creation of new places in preschool educational institutions is a crucial part of the process of developing regional social infrastructure.

Thus, the transition from lower-level to higher-level needs in Maslow’s model is linked to the socio-geographic process of regional development. In other words, as the population gains the ability to satisfy its basic material needs, the regional significance of opportunities for education, social connections, professional development, and the realization of personal potential increases.[2]

Discussion. A key finding of the research is that assessing the quality of life based on a single indicator fails to fully capture the regional reality.

For instance, a region might have a high per capita income yet offer relatively limited access to healthcare or educational services. Conversely, another region might boast good housing conditions but suffer from poor employment or higher education opportunities. Therefore, the Maslow model allows for the study of regional quality of life as a “space of needs.”

In this approach, the quality of life in a region is analyzed through the following sequence:

- material well-being → safety → social integration → social status → self-development.

However, it is incorrect to regard this sequence as a rigid biological or deterministic law. Maslow himself emphasized that needs are interconnected and that multiple needs can manifest simultaneously in human behavior.

Therefore, in this study, Maslow’s pyramid is employed not as a tool for rigidly categorizing regions into five distinct tiers, but rather as a theoretical model for systematizing the various components of quality of life.

This approach reinforces the socio-geographic nature of the study, as it seeks to answer not only the fundamental question – “How prosperous is the population?” - but also the question: “What territorial opportunities are available to individuals in different regions to satisfy both their basic and higher-level needs?” [1]

In UN-Habitat’s modern approach, too, quality of life is defined not merely by an area’s economic indicators, but through the combined impact of health, education, housing, the economy, services, social inclusion, and other factors.

Results. It can serve as a key indicator in the spatial analysis of the physiological needs stage of Maslow’s model. This is because housing is not merely a physical space but a spatial resource linked to an individual's health, safety, and access to social services. UN-Habitat also emphasizes the close connection between housing and access to employment, education, healthcare, and social services.[2]

Socio-geographic adaptation of Maslow's model

Maslow's stage	The content of quality of life	Socio-geographic indicators
1. Physiological needs	Essential living conditions	income per capita, provision of housing, drinking water, communal services

2. Safety requirements	Healthy and safe living	life expectancy, medical facilities, availability of doctors, environmental conditions
3. Social affiliation	Integration into society and the local environment	social services, cultural facilities, transport and communication infrastructure, level of urbanization
4. Respect and Recognition	Education, employment, and social status	level of education, employment, wages, access to higher education
5. Self-expression	Personal and intellectual development	higher education, digital opportunities, cultural services, innovative environment

Life expectancy is one of the key indicators reflecting safety and health needs. According to data from the National Statistics Committee, life expectancy at birth in Uzbekistan was 75.4 years in 2025. There are also disparities in this figure across different regions.

Educational infrastructure plays a significant role in the regional assessment of the higher levels of Maslow’s hierarchy - specifically, the needs for esteem and self-actualization - as education is a crucial regional factor for an individual’s professional opportunities, social mobility, and intellectual development. The expansion of school and preschool infrastructure in Uzbekistan varies across regions; for instance, in 2024, a total of 293,344 new student places were commissioned in general and specialized schools nationwide, with 214,087 of these located in rural areas.

Statistical data on Uzbekistan’s regions indicate that the components of quality of life are not distributed evenly across the regions.

For instance, as of January 1, 2025, the average level of housing provision nationwide was 18.9 m² per person. By region, this figure stood at 27.4 m² in the Navoi region, 24.1 m² in the Khorezm region, and 22.9 m² in Tashkent city, whereas it was 13.4 m² in the Surkhandarya region.[4]

Conclusion. The study substantiated the feasibility of applying Maslow’s hierarchy of needs theory to the socio-geographic assessment of the quality of life of the population in Uzbekistan’s regions.

The five stages of Maslow’s model were linked to the following aspects of regional quality of life:

1. Physiological needs - income, housing, and basic utilities;
2. Safety - health, life expectancy, medical services, and environmental safety;
3. Social belonging - social services, transport, cultural environment, and territorial integration;
4. Respect and recognition - education, employment, professional opportunities, and social status;
5. Self-realization - higher education, digital opportunities, and cultural and intellectual development.

The primary scientific significance of this model lies in its ability to assess the quality of life not merely through economic indicators, but through human needs and the regional opportunities for meeting them.

Furthermore, by standardizing indicators across regions and calculating an integral index, it is possible to map regional disparities in the quality of life within Uzbekistan. The use of GIS technologies in this process further strengthens the socio-geographic dimension of the research.

In the future, based on this model, it will be possible to develop a comprehensive regional quality - of - life index - grounded in Maslow’s framework - for the Republic of Karakalpakstan, the 12 regions, and the city of Tashkent; to map the results; and to identify at which stage of needs the primary disparities between regions exist.

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BEYOND THE VIRAL BOOM: TOURISM FLOW LIFECYCLE AND DESTINATION GOVERNANCE IN SILK ROAD HERITAGE CITIES — LESSONS FROM DUNHUANG FOR SAMARKAND

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Abstract. *In the all-media era, viral fame can arrive overnight, yet "famous for no more than three months" has become the fate of many internet-famous cities. For cultural heritage destinations the stakes are higher, because damage to fragile monuments is irreversible. Adopting a tourism flow lifecycle perspective—ignition, monetization, and sustained prosperity—this paper examines how heritage cities move from "wild popularity" to "rational long-term prosperity." Drawing on Dunhuang as a benchmark of long-term flow governance, it diagnoses Samarkand's lifecycle position and proposes a three-pronged framework: platform aggregation, innovation-driven attraction, and institution-based flow management. The paper is a phased outcome of a National Social Science Fund project on tourism flow economy (Grant No. 24AGL032).*

Keywords: *tourism flow economy; flow lifecycle; destination governance; sustainable tourism; Dunhuang; Samarkand; heritage city*

Introduction. The all-media era has reshaped how destinations gain attention: a short video or influencer recommendation can turn an obscure city into a travel hotspot within weeks [1]. Yet the same dynamics produce rapid decay. Many destinations suffer the "three-month curse": visitor numbers spike, congestion follows, media narratives turn negative, and the boom collapses. For cultural heritage cities the question is more acute. Unlike a food street, a heritage site cannot be redesigned or expanded to absorb demand; each physical visit permanently consumes a small unit of the resource, and UNESCO has warned that overcrowding accelerates degradation [10]. Governance must therefore manage the destination across the entire tourism flow lifecycle, not merely respond to spikes. This paper develops a lifecycle framework, examines how Dunhuang's Mogao Caves moved from crisis