

Article

Analysis of The Main Trends In The Development of Tourism Services

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Abstract: The tourism sector is increasingly recognized as a strategic component of national economic development, particularly in countries like Uzbekistan. Despite the rapid post-pandemic recovery and institutional reforms, the academic and statistical frameworks surrounding tourism services remain underdeveloped. This study aims to analyze the current trends, challenges, and strategic initiatives shaping the development of tourism services in Uzbekistan. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the research combines statistical analysis from national and international tourism databases with policy review and qualitative assessments of institutional changes. Key findings indicate a substantial increase in domestic and international tourist flows, with the number of service providers and export revenues significantly rising between 2018 and 2023. However, critical challenges persist, including underutilized regional potential, outdated service approaches, and the absence of a coherent national tourism brand. The results emphasize the need for targeted infrastructural investments, professional training, and international marketing strategies. This analysis contributes to filling the gap in literature on the theoretical and practical dimensions of tourism services in transition economies. The implications suggest that a comprehensive, innovation-driven, and regionally inclusive tourism strategy is essential for enhancing service quality, economic impact, and global competitiveness.

Keywords: tourism services, Uzbekistan, tourism trends, digitalization, domestic tourism, strategic development, infrastructure, service quality, tourism exports

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1. Introduction

Currently, in many countries of the world, as well as in Uzbekistan, attention is increasing to the development of tourism services as a strategic sector of the economy. After all, people are increasingly striving to organize their free time effectively, relax, restore their health, learn about the way of life, customs, traditions and values of the peoples of the world. Tourism services are a result of the development of the tourism sector, it is understood that the tourism industry plays a key role in the national economy and its development is associated with the development of the entire economy. The economic efficiency of the tourism sector is reflected in the comprehensive development of tourism services. The tourism sector achieves economic efficiency as a result of the development of other related sectors in interaction. A tourism product is a right to use certain types of services, which are themselves created in other sectors of the economy. According to statistics provided by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), "In 2023, the number of international tourist arrivals reached 1.3 billion. Also, the global tourism industry revenues amounted to 1.4 trillion US dollars, which is 88 percent and 93 percent

of the figures before the COVID-19 pandemic, respectively. Compared to 2022, in 2023 the number of international travelers increased by 35%, and the revenue of the industry increased by 28%. According to various forecasts, the number of international tourists is expected to reach 1.7 billion by 2025[1].

Today, countries around the world are taking significant measures to restore safe tourism, re-establish pilgrimage processes, increase revenues from the tourism sector, and create new jobs in this area. According to the analysis of the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), "the tourism sector accounts for 10.4 percent (i.e. 8.3 trillion US dollars) of the world's gross domestic product (GDP), and this figure is calculated taking into account only the direct contribution of the sector (3.2%). In addition, every tenth job created worldwide is related to the tourism sector. Tourism services are one of the leading non-manufacturing sectors in the global trade system. According to UNWTO data, the volume of exports in the tourism sector has surpassed the automotive industry in the world and ranks third after the chemical industry and energy products. In addition, tourism plays a leading role in the exports of many developed countries"[2].

In recent years, special attention has been paid to such priority areas as restoring the tourism industry to its former state, forming new tourist products that meet modern requirements, and ensuring the safety of travelers. Also relevant are the issues of training modern, competitive and qualified personnel for the industry, conducting scientific research and implementing its results in practice, and developing proposals and recommendations. In particular, consistent reforms are being carried out in our country to ensure the stability of the tourism industry, turn it into one of the leading areas of the national economy, increase the export of tourist services of the Republic of Uzbekistan, and increase the share of the industry in the gross domestic product. In such conditions, improving the organizational and economic mechanisms for the development of pilgrimage tourism and related destinations is considered an important strategic task.

Analysis of literature on the topic. Uzbekistan's geographical location, fertile nature, being one of the centers of civilization, rich culture and history, art, magnificent architecture, the presence of urban development facilities, delicious fruits, and sacred shrines allow us to develop the tourism industry. In particular, currently there are more than 8 thousand cultural heritage sites in our country. More than 200 tangible and 6 intangible cultural heritage sites are included in the UNESCO World Heritage List[3].

It is no coincidence that in the sustainable development of the tourism sector in Uzbekistan, priority is given to the expansion and parallel development of related industries and various services.

In his speech at the 25th session of the General Assembly of the World Tourism Organization held in Samarkand on October 17, 2023, the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Sh.M. Mirziyoyev touched upon the prospects for the development of tourism in our country and noted with satisfaction that in order to create comfortable conditions for tourists, the number of hotel beds had been increased to 140 thousand, 70 new tourist routes had been opened, 6 private airlines had started operating, great attention was paid to training personnel in the tourism sector, and qualified specialists were being trained in 35 higher educational institutions in Uzbekistan based on international standards, and that a total of 7 million tourists had visited our country this year. It is planned to increase this figure to 15 million by 2030, and the flow of domestic tourism to 25 million[4].

Uzbekistan, with its rich cultural heritage, historical monuments and beautiful nature, is one of the countries that pays great attention to the development of tourism. The strategy "Uzbekistan - 2030" sets the task of increasing the number of tourists by creating broad conditions for the development of external and internal tourism in Uzbekistan, and within the framework of fulfilling these tasks, broad opportunities are provided for the development of the tourism sector[5].

The growth and development of domestic tourism is currently recognized as an important sector of the global economy. In 2023, the share of domestic tourism in the world

will be around 70-80 percent, and only some countries will have a higher share of outbound travel. In addition, the demand for domestic tourism has increased significantly since the pandemic, as people have chosen to vacation in their home countries for safe and short-term trips[6]. According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), domestic tourism is recovering faster than international tourism.

2. Materials and Methods

The essence of the reforms carried out in the sphere of tourism in our country is significant in that they are aimed at modernization and diversification of the industry from the point of view of increasing the welfare of the population in a broad sense, conquering new unexplored areas of tourism, boldly entering the international tourism market and taking a worthy place in it.

3. Result and Discussion

From the first days of independence, tourism services in Uzbekistan have been treated as modern types of services and an active source of foreign exchange earnings, and attention to these services has been raised to the level of state policy. The necessary organizational, economic and legal mechanisms for the development of the industry have been created, and relevant regulatory documents have been adopted. It can be noted that work in this direction continues at the present time.

In our country, comprehensive measures are being gradually implemented to diversify tourism services, expand tourism destinations, and develop the tourism sector as one of the strategic sectors of the economy.

In a short period of time, more than 20 regulatory legal acts aimed at developing tourism in our country have been adopted, in particular, the relevant Decrees and Resolutions of the President. According to these documents, a number of innovations related to the development of the industry have been implemented. The State Committee for Tourism Development has been created. It is noteworthy that its activities are aimed, first of all, not at implementing control and administrative tasks, but at strengthening entrepreneurial activity in the tourism sector. It is responsible for creating a favorable business environment, eliminating obstacles and barriers to tourism development, developing competition in the services market, issuing licenses, certificates and other permits.

As a result of the measures taken, the development of the tourism industry in our country has reached a new level. As a result of large-scale reforms in the tourism sector in the country, from 2018 to 2023, the number of tourism organizations increased from 502 to 593, and the number of services they provide increased from 713.2 to 1157.1, see Table 1.

Table 1. Main indicators of tourism enterprise services in Uzbekistan [7]

Indicators	Years						
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	In 2023 , as a percentage of 2018
Number of tourist organizations, units (tour operators and travel agencies)	502	517	337	288	348	593	18, 1 percent

Number of tourist tickets sold by tourist organizations	102.9	289.8	78.2	147.7	95.3	262.3	1.5 times
Number of services provided by tourist organizations (thousand people)	713.2	942.0	212.3	577.8	673.7	1157.1	62.2 percent
Export of tourist services (millions of dollars)	1041.1	1313.0	255.8	422.1	1609.8	2143.1	105.8 percent
Import of tourist services (millions of dollars)	1506.9	1,651.5	442.5	886,9	1429.8	1339.3	-11.1 percent

These works were carried out within the framework of the tasks of "...giving tourism the status of a strategic sector of the economy, transforming this sector into a powerful tool for diversification, structural transformation and sustainable development of the economy, which should become a leading force for the comprehensive and accelerated development of all regions and interrelated sectors..." [8], as one of the target tasks and priority areas of state policy in the tourism sector in the medium term.

In our country, modern hotels with a large capacity and a high level of comfort have recently become a rather complex organism. This complex includes various buildings and premises that perform various functions, in particular, buildings intended for business meetings (conference halls or multifunctional halls), cinema and concert halls, swimming pools, saunas, gyms, buildings intended for organizing exhibitions, retail outlets, garages.

At this point, it can be seen that positive changes have been achieved in the post-pandemic period in the forms of tourism, including domestic tourism, outbound tourism, and inbound tourism. For example, the number of domestic tourism participants increased from 441,547 in 2018 to 728,581 in 2023, or 65 percent. During this period, the number of outbound tourism participants almost quadrupled from 31,981 to 156,636, and the number of inbound tourism participants from 224,796 to 237,693, or 5.7 percent, indicating that our country has become an equal subject of the international tourism market and the structural changes taking place in the industry, see Figure 1.

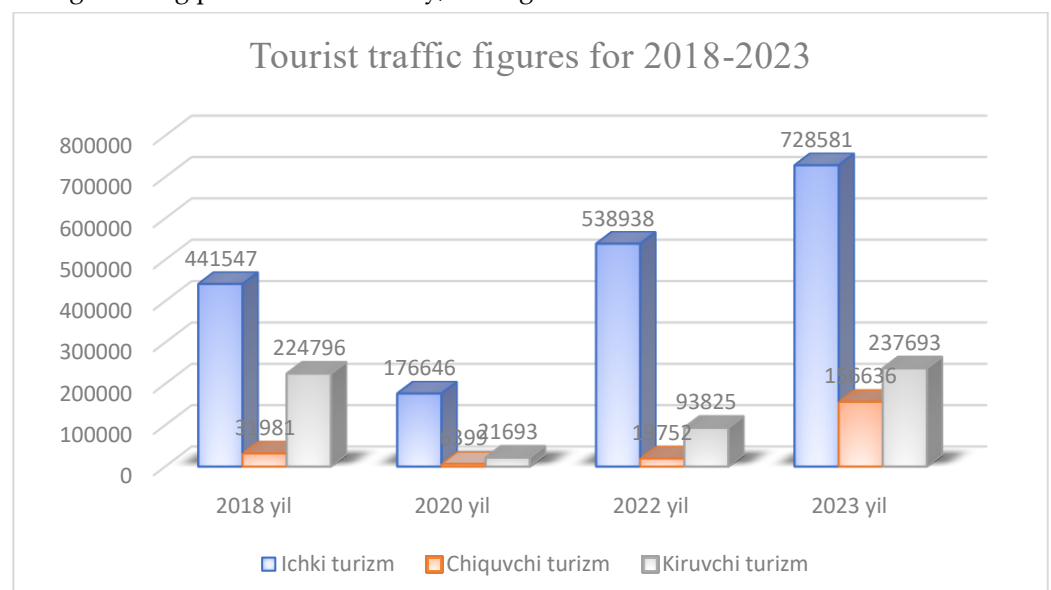


Figure 1. Uzbekistan in 2018-2023 internal, output and incoming tourism main indicators [9]

Our country, located in the center of the "Great Silk Road", is among the top ten countries in the world in terms of tourism and the number of historical sites[10]. Our republic is a country rich in historical and cultural monuments. Each of the historical and cultural monuments has always fascinated people of the world[11], [12]. For example, the Registan of Samarkand, the observatory of Ulugbek, the ancient fortress of Ark Bukhara, Ichan-Kala of Khiva, the monuments of Odin and Kokgumbaz of Karshi, the cultural monument of Oksaroy of Shakhrisabz, the Kokand Horde are always overcrowded with tourists[13], [14]. Over the years of independence, such memorial complexes as Abdulkholik Gijduvani and Bakhaudiddin Naqshband, Imam Bukhari and Imam Moturidi, Burkhoniddin Marginoni and Hazrati Imam have been restored, and great respect has been shown to the memory of our great ancestors and dear saints. Today, these complexes are still visited by pilgrims[15].

In order to restore the place and significance of the "Great Silk Road" in the history of countries, the Council of the World Tourism Organization was held in Uzbekistan in October 1994 with the participation of the UN and its influential organization UNESCO. The members of the Council adopted the Samarkand Declaration aimed at restoring and developing tourism activities on the Silk Road. On October 3-6, 1995, the first International Tourism Fair was held in Tashkent under the name "Tourism on the Silk Road".

This event is the only fair in Uzbekistan and the largest in Central Asia. Every year, this event brings together hundreds of tourism industry professionals from all over the world, creating conditions for the international development of this industry.

4. Conclusion

In Uzbekistan tourism of the field in development, tourism services high at the level developed countries with In comparison, there is still a lot of work to be done in our country. In our opinion, the most important of them are:

- tourism services are not studied and analyzed separately and to a sufficient extent, the lack of comprehensive studies analyzing the theoretical, practical, financial and organizational aspects of tourism services, as well as the lack of improved tourism statistics for a complete analysis of tourism services do not allow for effective decision-making;
- due to the lack of a single national tourism brand, the Republic of Uzbekistan is unable to sufficiently penetrate the international tourism market;
- the lack of well-developed infrastructure in remote areas and its inability to fully meet modern requirements, the quality of service and due to low cultural diversity, the tourism potential of the regions is not being fully utilized;
- the inability of some managers working in the tourism sector to properly assess the contribution of tourism services to the economy and their outdated approach to work are hindering the opening of tourism service enterprises;

The solution to such problems will lead to an increase in the supply of modern tourist services, a competitive environment, and an increase in foreign exchange earnings through the provision of quality tourist services. brings .

In general, the current state and development trends of the tourism services sector in Uzbekistan show positive results. Analysis of the measures being taken to further develop tourism in our country and its future prospects confirms the strategic importance of this sector. Also, the tasks for the development of tourism, envisaged in the "Uzbekistan - 2030" strategy, serve to increase the income of the population, create new jobs and ensure the well-being of the people.

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