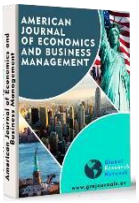

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Article

Tourism Service Exports and Their Role in the Economy of Uzbekistan

Bakayev Ziyovuddinxon Toshbolta o'g'li[*1]

1. Researcher, Silk Road International University of Tourism and Cultural Heritage

Abstract: This article analyzes the development trends of tourism service exports in Uzbekistan and their role in the national economy on the basis of statistical data. The study examines foreign tourist arrivals, the volume of tourism service exports, and their share in the structure of total service exports. The results of the analysis demonstrate the importance of tourism service exports in increasing foreign exchange earnings, diversifying service exports, and strengthening economic stability. Based on the obtained findings, scientific conclusions and recommendations for the further development of tourism service exports were formulated.

Keywords: Tourism Service Exports, Foreign Tourists, Service Exports, Foreign Exchange Earnings, Tourism Infrastructure, Economic Stability.

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1. Introduction

Under the conditions of modern globalization and the rapid development of the service economy, tourism service exports are becoming one of the fastest-growing and highest-income sectors of the global economy. International experience demonstrates that tourism is not only an important source of foreign exchange earnings, but also a strategic sector that expands employment, accelerates regional development, and ensures the sustainable growth of the service industry. In particular, for developing countries, tourism service exports play a significant role in diversifying the economy and strengthening external economic relations.

In recent years, the development of the service sector, including tourism service exports, has also been identified as one of the priority directions of economic policy in Uzbekistan. The government has been implementing systematic measures aimed at modernizing tourism infrastructure, expanding transport and logistics opportunities, simplifying visa procedures, and improving the quality of service provision. As a result of these reforms, the number of foreign tourists visiting Uzbekistan, the volume of tourism services, and the foreign exchange revenues generated through this sector have increased significantly [1].

At the same time, the sharp decline in the tourism sector during the global pandemic, followed by the subsequent recovery process, has made it even more relevant to study the role of tourism service exports in the economy on a deep statistical and analytical basis. In particular, determining the share of tourism service exports in gross domestic product, their role within the structure of service exports, their impact on the balance of payments, and their importance in employment generation is one of the key scientific and practical tasks.

This article analyzes the development trends of tourism service exports in Uzbekistan based on official statistical data, evaluates their role and significance in the national economy, and develops scientific conclusions and recommendations for further sectoral development. The results of the research will contribute to improving strategies for tourism service export development, strengthening the service economy, and enhancing the country's competitiveness in the global economic arena [2].

Literature Review

The issue of tourism service exports and their role in economic development has been widely studied by foreign, CIS, and local economists through various theoretical and practical approaches. An analysis of these scientific views makes it possible to determine the theoretical foundations of the topic, generalize existing approaches, and define the scientific direction of the present research.

Experts of United Nations World Tourism Organization interpret tourism service exports as an independent and strategic form of international trade in services. According to their view, tourism exports are generated through the expenditures made by foreign tourists within a country and represent one of the principal positive sources in the services account of the balance of payments. United Nations World Tourism Organization studies emphasize the rapid recoverability of tourism exports, their strong multiplier effect, and their role as a stable source of foreign exchange earnings [3].

Stephen W. Smith and William C. Gartner evaluate tourism service exports as a form of "invisible export," arguing that unlike industrial exports, tourism generates foreign currency revenues without physically moving products beyond national borders. In their opinion, this characteristic makes tourism exports one of the most suitable external economic directions for developing countries.

In the studies of Larry Dwyer and Peter Forsyth, the macroeconomic efficiency of tourism service exports is analyzed in depth. These scholars demonstrate that the contribution of tourism exports to GDP is reflected not only through direct revenues, but also through indirect and induced effects. According to their conclusions, tourism exports possess a greater capacity for employment generation compared to many other branches of the service sector [4].

John Fletcher proposed an expenditure model for evaluating tourism service exports, scientifically explaining how the spending of foreign tourists is distributed throughout the economy. According to his research, tourism exports also serve as a factor that reduces regional income disparities within the economy.

V. Endovitskiy considers tourism service exports one of the most profitable forms of service exports and views them as an instrument for diversifying external economic activity. In the scholar's opinion, as tourism exports develop, the overall stability of service exports increases and external economic risks decline.

In the studies of I. Valdaytsev, the principal problems of tourism service exports are identified as seasonality, transport-logistics limitations, and differences in service quality. He substantiates that institutional support from the state is essential for improving the efficiency of tourism exports [5].

N. Karbovskiy examined the impact of tourism service exports on regional economies and emphasized that foreign tourist inflows create opportunities for forming an export-oriented growth model in less developed regions. According to this view, tourism can become an effective instrument for activating regional economic potential and increasing local incomes.

In the studies of R. X. Nematov, tourism service exports are interpreted as a tool for diversifying the structure of Uzbekistan's service exports. Based on statistical data, he explains that foreign exchange revenues generated through tourism strengthen the country's external economic stability and positively affect the balance of payments [6].

B. B. Boltayev analyzed the tourism sector from the perspective of regional economic development and emphasized that the expansion of tourism services contributes to the growth of infrastructure, small business, and the wider service sector in the regions. In the scholar's opinion, tourism service exports represent an effective mechanism for reducing regional income disparities.

Sh. A. Mustafoyev, in his scientific studies, examined the issue of export-oriented tourism services in Uzbekistan, analyzing this process in relation to state policy, the institutional environment, and marketing strategies. According to his conclusions, the formation of a national tourism brand is of key importance for the sustainable development of tourism service exports [7].

In the research of D. A. Toshpo'latov, the interrelationship between domestic and international tourism is analyzed, demonstrating that the development of domestic tourism creates a strong foundation for tourism service exports. He emphasizes that without the advancement of tourism infrastructure and service quality, it is difficult to ensure sustainable growth in export volumes [8].

2. Materials and Methods

In this study, the role of tourism service exports in the economy of Uzbekistan was analyzed on the basis of official statistical data. During the analytical process, statistical, comparative, and structural analysis methods were applied to evaluate the relationship between tourism service exports, foreign tourist arrivals, and foreign exchange earnings. In addition, scientific conclusions were formulated through the use of economic-logical analysis, induction, and deduction methods.

3. Results and Discussion

In recent years, tourism service exports in Uzbekistan have become one of the fastest-growing sectors of the national economy. Government measures aimed at developing tourism infrastructure, liberalizing visa procedures, expanding transport and logistics opportunities, and improving the quality of service provision have created a solid basis for the sustainable growth of tourism service exports. The analysis of statistical data clearly demonstrates the positive dynamics of this process [9].

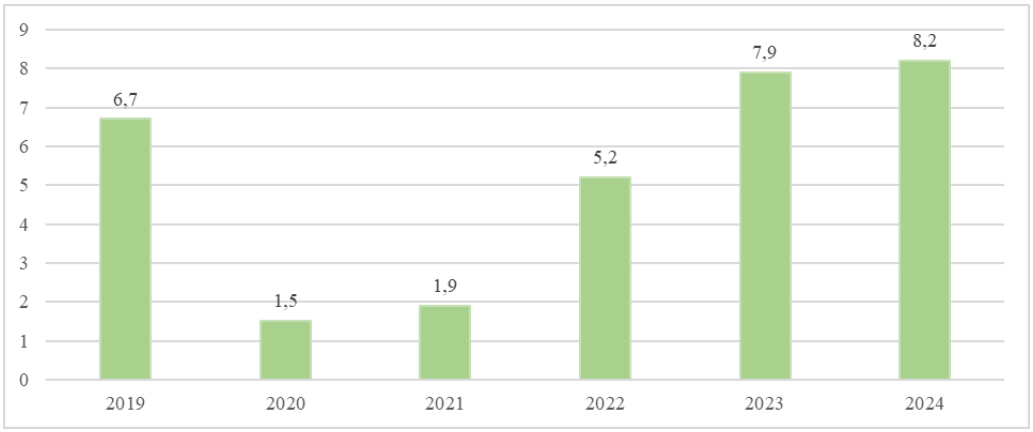

Figure 1. Dynamics of Foreign Tourist Arrivals to Uzbekistan (million persons).

The figure clearly demonstrates the sharp fluctuations in foreign tourist inflows to Uzbekistan in recent years, followed by a period of stable recovery. In 2019, the country received 6.7 million foreign tourists, indicating the high potential of tourism service

exports in the pre-pandemic period. During this time, tourism had already become an important source of foreign exchange earnings.

In 2020, under the impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic, the number of foreign tourists sharply declined to 1.5 million, with a growth rate of –77.6 percent. This decline demonstrated the high dependence of tourism service exports on external factors, as well as the sector's sensitivity to global crises. As a result, foreign exchange revenues generated through tourism also decreased significantly [10].

In 2021, the increase in foreign tourist arrivals to 1.9 million indicated the beginning of the recovery process. The gradual reopening of borders under sanitary requirements, along with measures to support domestic and regional tourism, played an important role. However, during this period tourism exports had not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels.

Starting from 2022, rapid recovery in the tourism sector was observed, with foreign tourist arrivals reaching 5.2 million, representing a growth rate of 173.7 percent. This confirms the effectiveness of visa liberalization policies, the restoration of transport connectivity, and investments directed toward tourism infrastructure in Uzbekistan [11].

In 2023, the number of foreign tourists reached 7.9 million, indicating that tourism service exports had almost returned to pre-pandemic levels. During this period, improvements were observed not only in quantitative indicators, but also in qualitative aspects. In particular, the average expenditure per tourist increased.

In 2024, foreign tourist arrivals amounted to 8.2 million. Although the growth rate slowed relatively, this indicates a transition to a stage of stability. It also suggests that tourism service exports are entering a long-term sustainable development phase and highlights the necessity of promoting the sector through higher value-added services.

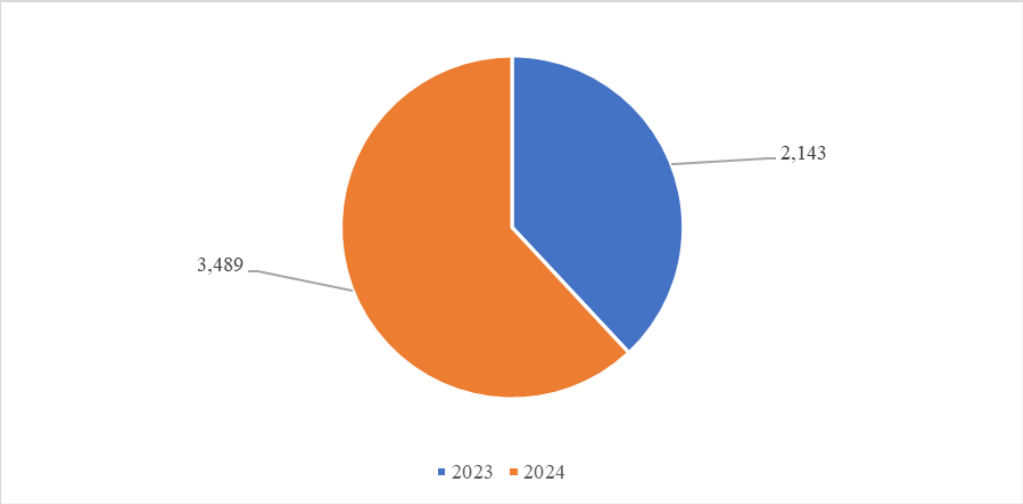

Figure 2. Tourism Service Exports (billion USD).

The chart clearly reflects the sharp growth in the volume of tourism service exports in Uzbekistan during 2023 and 2024. In particular, tourism service exports amounted to USD 2.143 billion in 2023, while in 2024 this indicator increased to USD 3.489 billion. This means that within one year, the volume of tourism service exports grew by USD 1.346 billion, or approximately 63 percent [12].

This growth indicates the increasing importance of tourism service exports in the economy of Uzbekistan. The significantly larger share shown for 2024 suggests that tourism service exports have moved beyond the post-pandemic recovery stage and entered a phase of stable and rapid development. This can be explained by the growth in foreign tourist arrivals, the rise in average expenditure per tourist, and the expanding share of high-value-added tourism services [13].

The chart also clearly demonstrates the role of tourism service exports in generating foreign exchange earnings. The high results achieved in 2024 confirm the effectiveness of government policies implemented in the tourism sector, including visa liberalization, improvements in transport and logistics infrastructure, and measures aimed at enhancing service quality[14].

The data presented in Table 1 clearly show that tourism services occupied one of the leading positions in the structure of service exports of Uzbekistan in 2024. In particular, the share of tourism (travel) services in total service exports accounted for 40.0 percent, making it the second largest export category after transport services. This demonstrates the growing strategic importance of tourism service exports in the national economy [15].

Table 1. Share of Tourism Services in the Structure of Service Exports in Uzbekistan, 2024.

Types of services	Share, %
Transport services	46,4
Tourism (travel) services	**40,0**
Telecommunications and ICT services	6,7
Financial and insurance services	3,1
Other services	3,8
Total	**100,0**

The table shows that, although transport services are leading with a share of 46.4 percent, tourism services are very close to it in terms of their share of exports. This indicates that tourism has had high growth rates in the short term in the structure of services exports and plays an important role in the formation of foreign exchange earnings. In particular, the increase in the flow of foreign tourists and the increase in the average expenditure per tourist served as the main factor for this high share [16].

Although the share of telecommunications and information and communication services of 6.7 percent indicates the development of modern services, their much lower share compared to tourism services confirms that tourism is the main driver of services exports at the current stage. The relatively low share of financial and insurance services and other services indicates the need to expand high-value-added areas in the structure of services exports [17].

In general, the analysis of Table 1 shows that in 2024, the export of tourism services has become one of the main directions of Uzbekistan's service exports. This situation justifies the existence of broad opportunities for diversifying the export of services, sustainably increasing foreign exchange earnings and strengthening the external economic stability of the national economy through the development of tourism. At the same time, in order to further increase the share of tourism services exports in the future, the development of high-value-added tourism types (cultural, medical, business and ecological tourism) will be of great importance [18].

4. Conclusions

The conducted analysis shows that in recent years, the export of tourism services in Uzbekistan has become one of the most rapidly developing and strategically important areas of the national economy. The sharp decline in the flow of foreign tourists in 2019-2024 and the subsequent stages of stable recovery confirm that the tourism sector is sensitive to external shocks, but has the potential for rapid recovery. In particular, the rapid growth in the number of foreign tourists and the volume of tourism services exports since

2022 demonstrates the effectiveness of the state's measures aimed at visa liberalization, infrastructure reforms and improving the quality of services.

According to the results of the analysis, in 2024, the export of tourism services amounted to 3.489 billion US dollars, forming one of the leading areas in the structure of services exports with a share of 40.0%. This situation indicates that tourism has further strengthened its role in ensuring foreign exchange earnings, diversifying service exports and strengthening the external economic stability of the national economy. At the same time, the high growth rates of tourism services exports are explained by the increase in the average expenditure per tourist and the expansion of the share of tourism services with high added value.

In general, the results of the study substantiate that the development of tourism services exports is an important factor in ensuring the sustainable growth of the Uzbek economy. In the future, it is advisable to develop high-value-added tourism types in this direction, reduce seasonality and further improve the quality of services, thereby increasing the economic efficiency of tourism services exports.

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