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EXPORT OF TOURISM SERVICES AND ITS PLACE IN THE ECONOMY OF UZBEKISTAN

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Abstract

This article analyzes the development trends of tourism services exports in Uzbekistan and their role in the national economy based on statistical data. During the research, the flow of foreign tourists, the volume of tourism services exports, and their share in the structure of services exports were studied. The results of the analysis showed the importance of tourism services exports in increasing foreign exchange earnings, diversifying services exports, and strengthening economic stability. Based on the results obtained, scientific conclusions were developed on the further development of tourism services exports.

Keywords: Tourism services exports, foreign tourists, services exports, foreign exchange earnings, tourism infrastructure, economic stability.

Introduction

In the current context of globalization and the rapid development of the service economy, the export of tourism services is becoming one of the fastest growing and highly profitable sectors of the world economy. International experience shows that tourism is not only an important source of foreign exchange earnings, but also a strategic sector that provides employment expansion, accelerated regional development, and sustainable growth of the service sector. Especially for developing countries, the export of tourism services is of great importance in diversifying the economy and strengthening foreign economic relations.

In recent years, the development of the service sector, including the export of tourism services, has been identified as one of the priority areas in the economy of Uzbekistan. The state is implementing systematic measures aimed at modernizing the tourism



infrastructure, expanding transport and logistics capabilities, simplifying visa procedures, and improving the quality of service services. As a result of these reforms, the number of foreign tourists visiting Uzbekistan, the volume of tourism services, and foreign exchange earnings received through this sector are increasing significantly.

At the same time, the sharp decline in the tourism sector during the global pandemic and the subsequent recovery processes have made it even more urgent to study the place of tourism services exports in the economy on a deep statistical and analytical basis. In particular, determining the share of tourism services exports in GDP, their role in the structure of services exports, their impact on the balance of payments and their importance in ensuring employment are among the most important scientific and practical tasks.

This article analyzes the development trends of tourism services exports in Uzbekistan based on official statistical data, assesses its place and importance in the national economy, and develops scientific conclusions and proposals for further development of the sector. The results of the study will serve to improve strategies for developing tourism services exports, strengthen the service economy, and increase the country's competitiveness in the global economic space.

Analysis of literature on the topic

The issue of tourism services export and its role in economic development has been widely studied by foreign, CIS and domestic economists based on various theoretical and practical approaches. The analysis of these scientific views allows us to identify the theoretical foundations of the topic, generalize existing approaches and determine the scientific direction of research.

UNWTO experts interpret the export of tourism services as an independent and strategic form of international trade in services. They note that tourism exports are formed by the expenses of foreign tourists within the country and are the main positive source in the services section of the balance of payments. UNWTO studies substantiate that the main advantage of tourism services export is its rapid recovery, high multiplicative effect and stable source of foreign exchange earnings.

Stephen W. Smith and William C. Gartner, evaluating the export of tourism services as a form of “invisible export”, scientifically substantiate that its difference from industrial export is that it brings foreign exchange without exporting products outside



the country. In their opinion, it is this feature that makes tourism exports one of the most favorable foreign economic directions for developing countries.

Larry Dwyer and Peter Forsyth's research provides an in-depth analysis of the macroeconomic efficiency of tourism services exports. Scientists prove that the contribution of tourism exports to GDP is manifested not only through direct income, but also through indirect and induced effects. According to their conclusion, tourism exports have the potential to create more employment than other sectors of the service sector.

John Fletcher, proposing a cost model for assessing the export of tourism services, scientifically explains how the funds spent by foreign tourists are distributed in the economy. According to his research, tourism exports also serve as a factor in reducing regional income disparities in the economy.

V. Endovitsky evaluates the export of tourism services as one of the most profitable forms of service exports and considers it a means of diversifying foreign economic activity. According to the scientist, as tourism exports develop, the overall stability of services exports increases and external economic risks decrease.

I. Valdaytsev's research indicates that the main problems of tourism services exports are seasonality, transport and logistics constraints, and differences in service quality. He justifies the importance of institutional support from the state to increase the efficiency of tourism exports.

N. Karbovsky, studying the impact of tourism services exports on regional economies, emphasizes that the flow of foreign tourists makes it possible to form an export-oriented growth model for regions with underdeveloped regions.

R.Kh. Nematov in his research interprets tourism services exports as a means of diversifying the structure of Uzbekistan's service exports. He explains, based on statistical data, that foreign exchange earnings from tourism strengthen the country's external economic stability and have a positive impact on the balance of payments.

B.B. Boltaev analyzes the tourism sector from the perspective of regional economic development and emphasizes that the development of tourism services serves to expand the infrastructure, small business and service network in the regions. According to the scientist, the export of tourism services is an effective mechanism for reducing the disparity of regional incomes.

Sh.A. Mustafayev, in his scientific research, sheds light on the issue of export orientation of tourism services in Uzbekistan, analyzing this process in connection



with state policy, institutional environment and marketing strategies. He notes that the formation of a national tourism brand is of great importance for the sustainable development of tourism services exports.

D.A. Tashpulatov, analyzing the interrelationship between domestic and foreign tourism, substantiates in his research that the development of domestic tourism creates a solid foundation for the export of tourism services. He emphasizes that it is difficult to sustainably increase the volume of exports without the development of tourism infrastructure and services.

Research Methodology

The study analyzed the role of tourism services exports in the economy of Uzbekistan based on official statistical data. The analysis used statistical, comparative and structural analysis methods to assess the relationship between tourism services exports, foreign tourist flows and foreign exchange earnings. Also, scientific conclusions were formed using economic-logical analysis, induction and deduction methods.

Analysis and Results

In recent years, the export of tourism services in Uzbekistan has become one of the most rapidly developing areas of the national economy. The state's measures aimed at developing tourism infrastructure, liberalizing visa procedures, expanding transport and logistics capabilities, and improving the quality of services have created the basis for a stable growth in the volume of tourism services exports. Analysis of statistical data clearly demonstrates the positive dynamics of this process.

The sharp fluctuations in the flow of foreign tourism in Uzbekistan in recent years and the subsequent stable recovery process are clearly visible. In 2019, 6.7 million foreign tourists visited the country, which indicates that the export of tourism services had high potential in the pre-pandemic period. It was during this period that tourism emerged as an important source of foreign exchange earnings.

In 2020, under the influence of the global COVID-19 pandemic, the number of foreign tourists sharply decreased to 1.5 million people, and the rate of change was -77.6 percent. This decrease indicates the high dependence of the export of tourism services on external factors, as well as the sensitivity of this sector to global crises. As a result, foreign exchange earnings from tourism also decreased sharply.

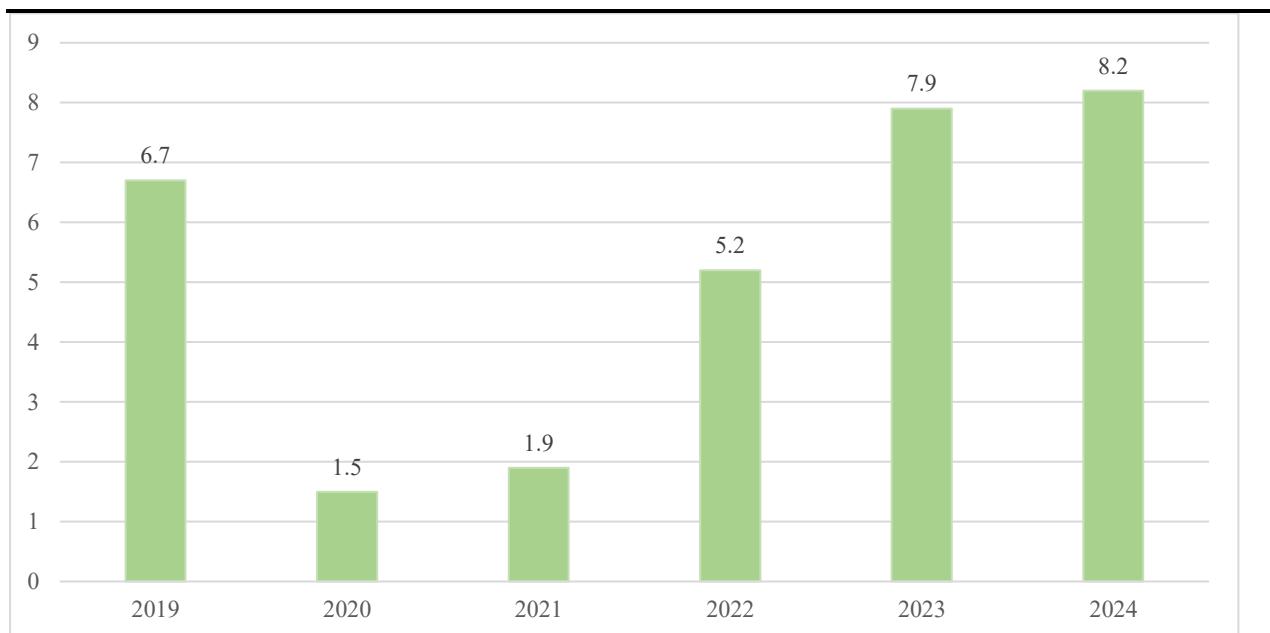


Figure 1. Dynamics of the number of foreign tourists visiting Uzbekistan, (million people)

The fact that the number of foreign tourists reached 1.9 million people in 2021 indicates the beginning of the recovery process. The gradual opening of borders based on sanitary requirements and measures to support domestic and regional tourism played an important role in this. However, tourism exports during this period have not yet reached pre-pandemic levels.

Since 2022, a rapid recovery has been observed in the tourism sector, with the number of foreign tourists reaching 5.2 million people and the growth rate being 173.7 percent. This confirms the effectiveness of visa liberalization, the restoration of transport links and investments in tourism infrastructure in Uzbekistan.

The fact that the number of foreign tourists reached 7.9 million in 2023 indicates that the export of tourism services has almost returned to pre-pandemic levels. During this period, it can be observed that the export of tourism services has improved not only in quantitative terms, but also in qualitative indicators. In particular, the average expenditure per tourist has increased.

The number of foreign tourists in 2024 amounted to 8.2 million people, which means that the growth rate has slowed down somewhat, but has entered a stage of stability. This indicates that the export of tourism services is entering a long-term sustainable

development trend and highlights the need to develop the sector through services with high added value.

The diagram clearly shows the sharp increase in the volume of tourism services exports in Uzbekistan in 2023 and 2024. In particular, while in 2023 the volume of tourism services exports amounted to 2.143 billion US dollars, in 2024 this figure increased to 3.489 billion US dollars. This indicates an increase in the volume of tourism services exports by 1.346 billion US dollars or almost 63% over the year.

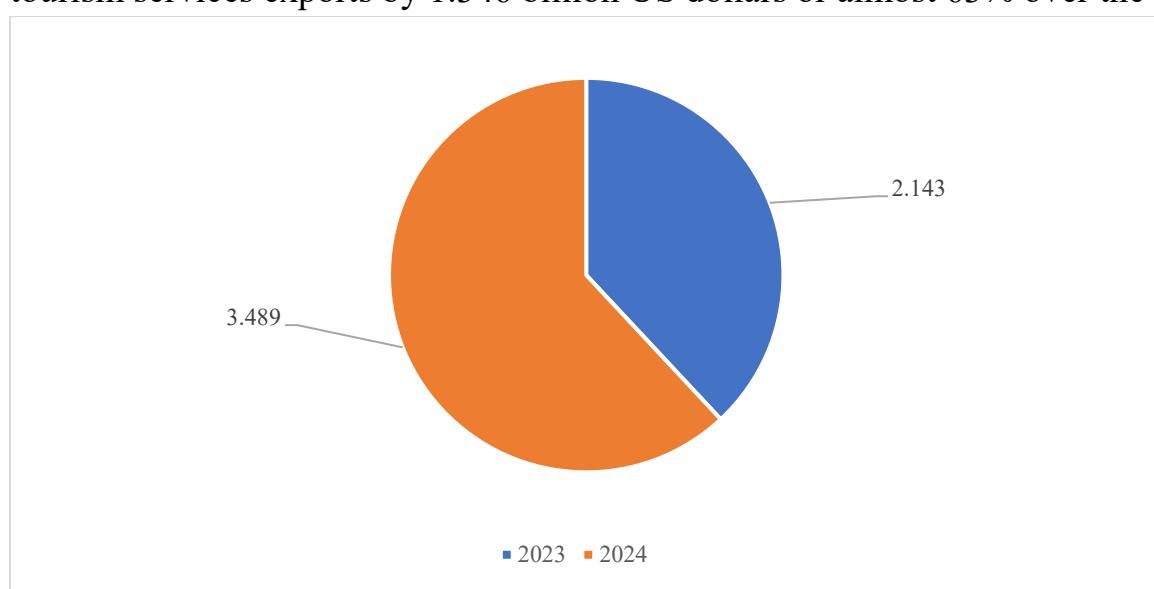


Figure 2. Exports of tourism services, (billion US dollars)

This growth indicates the increasing importance of tourism services exports in the economy of Uzbekistan. The significantly larger share in the diagram for 2024 indicates that tourism services exports have passed the post-pandemic recovery stage and entered a stage of stable and rapid development. This is explained by the increase in the flow of foreign tourists, an increase in average spending per tourist, and an expansion of the share of tourism services with high added value. The diagram also clearly demonstrates the role of tourism services exports in the formation of foreign exchange earnings. The high indicators achieved in 2024 confirm the effectiveness of state policy in the tourism sector, including measures aimed at liberalizing visa procedures, improving transport and logistics infrastructure, and improving the quality of service services.



Table 1 Share of tourism services in Uzbekistan's service exports in 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 data in Table 1 clearly show that tourism services occupied one of the leading places in the structure of services exports in Uzbekistan in 2024. In particular, the share of tourism (travel) services in total services exports amounted to 40.0 percent, forming the second largest export direction after transport services. This indicates that the strategic importance of tourism services exports in the national economy is increasingly increasing.

The table shows that although transport services are leading with a share of 46.4 percent, tourism services exports are very close to it in terms of their share. This indicates that tourism has had high growth rates in the short term within 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 in the high share.

Although the share of telecommunications and information and communication services at 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 service 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 service exports. 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 service exports, 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) is of great importance.



Conclusion

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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