



FACTORS OF INCREASING THE COMPETITIVENESS AND QUALITY OF TOURISM SERVICES IN THE TOURISM SPHERE

Baxtiyar Ruzmetov¹, Indira Yusupova²

¹Doctor of Economic Sciences, Professor

²Student, Urgench State University, Urgench, Uzbekistan

ANNOTATION

The article identifies the factors for increasing the competitiveness and quality of tourist services and examines different approaches to ensure the competitiveness of tourist services

KEYWORDS: *tourism, competitiveness, high-quality service, quality, tourism services, innovation.*

INTRODUCTION

As a result of expanding integration processes and globalization of the world economy, tourism is becoming a strategic area. According to the World Tourism Organization (WTO), "in 2019, 330 million jobs, 10.3 percent of global GDP, 28.3 percent of exports of services fall on the share of tourism"¹.

The spread of the coronavirus pandemic in the world has had a profound negative impact both on all sectors of the economy and on the stable development of the tourism sector. In 2020, the number of foreign tourists decreased by 74 percent and the damage from the export of tourism services reached 1.3 trillion US dollars, which is 11 times more than the damage in 2009 due to the global economic crisis².

The growth rate of the tourism industry has slowed down due to the closure of international and domestic borders, as well as the self-isolation of people. Therefore, at present, many countries of the world pay special attention to the innovative development of the tourism sector.

Several scientific studies are being conducted in the world to solve problems related to the redirection of the global tourist flow, as well as the processes of providing quality services, and increasing competitiveness in the tourism sector are being studied. At the same time, the assessment of the quality degree of tourist services according to the requirements of consumers, the determination of the competitiveness index based on the integration of indicators, as well as the improvement of quality standards following the needs of tourists creates an urgent need for scientific research.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In building a new Uzbekistan, "the rapid development of the tourism industry, increasing its role and share in the economy, diversification, and improvement of the quality of tourist services ..." ³ is designed as a priority direction. Based on the tasks specified in the Message of the President of Uzbekistan to the Oliy Majlis, such as "...

¹ Travel and Tourism Economic impact 2019 World. <https://wtcc.org/Research/Economic-Impact>

² 24UNWTO, COVID-19 and Tourism 2020, A year in review, January 2021 https://webunwto.s3.eu-west.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2020-12/2020_Year_in_Review_0.pdf

³ Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated February 7, 2017 No. PD-4947 "On the Strategy of actions for the further development of the Republic of Uzbekistan". Collection of legislative documents of the Republic of Uzbekistan. 2017 No. 6



We will continue consistent reforms for the development of tourism in 2021 ..."⁴ improving the methods of providing high-quality services and increasing the competitiveness of tourist services is an urgent task.

In this regard, it is advisable to further expand research on the development of recommendations and proposals for the targeted and effective use of investment opportunities in tourism, improving the quality of service resources, developing ways to effectively use the mechanism of state support for the necessary conditions for the development of tourism, improving the methodological foundations of the creation of tourist information and logistics centers, stimulating methods of assessing the activities of tourism entities and to increase their competitiveness.

To implement these tasks, the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated December 2, 2016, No. PD-4861 "On measures to ensure the accelerated development of tourism in the Republic of Uzbekistan", No. PD -5611 "On additional measures to accelerate the development of tourism in the Republic of Uzbekistan" dated January 5, 2019, No. PD -6002 "On urgent measures of the tourism sector support to reduce the negative impact of the coronavirus pandemic" dated January 28, 2020, No. PD -6165 "On measures for the further development of domestic and pilgrim.

The main factors for increasing the competitiveness and quality of tourist services in the field of tourism have been identified by us:

- improvement of methodological bases for assessing the competitiveness and high quality of tourist services;
- study of international experience in the formation and development of a system of competitive and high-quality tourist services, development of proposals for their use in our country;
- study of the market for high-quality tourist services and methods of increasing their competitiveness;
- ensuring high quality and competitiveness in the field of tourism based on the formation of a cluster of tourist services;
- the use of innovative tourism services and high-quality standards to ensure competitiveness based on digital technologies and econometric models.

In the study, we identified the distinctive aspects of high-quality tourist services from ordinary tourist services, namely:

- tourist services are performed by experienced employees whose experience exceeds three years of work in the field of tourism;
- High-quality tourist services should include innovative technologies (online services, Internet tools, e-commerce applications, etc.);
- The ability to use innovative technologies to the tastes and needs of tourists (entertainment Quest, intellectual contests, thematic shows, etc.);
- The ability to assess the degree of satisfaction of tourists with the services provided, as well as its quality through questionnaires and targeted tests.

In our opinion, innovative service in tourism is a modern service that includes scientific developments, technologies, and new ideas introduced into the tourism sector to meet the needs and preferences of tourists.

High-quality tourist service is a qualified service that meets the physical and aesthetic needs of tourists, is safe, does not harm the environment, does not deteriorate qualitatively at all stages of service, and occurs in a high-quality infrastructure through the involvement of innovative technologies.

High-quality tourist services play an important role in ensuring the competitiveness of the tourism sector.

We have defined the competitiveness of services in tourism as a concept assessed by the relative indicators of the quality of services provided, the qualifications of personnel, profit, and share in the market of tourist services competitive tourist services:

⁴ Message of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan to the Oliy Majlis. December 29, 2020 yil / "Xalq so'zi" newspaper. 2020 December 30.



- competitiveness as an economic category is a relativistic concept (a methodological principle consisting in the absolutization of relativity and conditionality of the content of cognition) about a specific market or service;
- competitiveness has a dynamic character, it changes under the influence of fundamental factors over time;
- competitiveness depends on the development phase of tourist services;
- high dependence of competitiveness indicators on changes in the tourist market, which in turn requires regular research and monitoring;
- the interconnectedness of competitiveness with the demand and composition of tourist services, as well as with the characteristics of consumers.

In tourism, ensuring the competitiveness of high-quality tourist services directly depends on innovation processes. The introduction of innovative ideas, products, and technologies makes it possible to intensively develop tourism, increase competition, create a new effective system and increase the productivity of tourist services.

We studied different approaches to ensure the competitiveness of tourist services, including the competitiveness model of the American scientist A.Pun,⁵ the "diamond model" by M. Porter⁶, the integration model of the competitiveness of tourist destinations by L.Dwyer, and C.Kim⁷, and also, the competitiveness model of Zh. Crouch and B. Ritchie⁸, including 36 factors.

Many studies have assessed the quality of services in tourism and its impact on competitiveness. For example, M.A.Titu⁹ and others have determined the quality of services in hotels through surveys, revealing its positive impact on the competitiveness of services using the logit model. And M.V.Kobyak¹⁰ in his works showed by examples that the standardization of services allows for improving the quality, and also ensures the competitiveness of services.

In modern tourism, "SMART" technologies have become an integral part of tour packages. For example, many travel companies actively use virtual assistants, online booking, virtual payment services, etc., without which it is impossible to imagine high-quality travel services. Based on this, we offer a system of indicators that assess the degree of high-quality tourist service:

- Total number of luxury class tourists arriving;
- The number of luxury-class tourists who used one service;
- The average price of high-quality tourist services;
- The level of demand for high-quality tourist services;
- Average price per room in 3-4-5 star hotels;
- The average price for one dish to one tourist in restaurants;
- The average price of transport on-call per tourist;
- The average price of additional services per tourist;
- The degree of digitalization of the relevant services;
- Number of 3-4-5 star hotels;
- Number of additional services;
- Number of restaurants;
- The number of transport services on call.

⁵ The post of President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Oli Miles. December 29, 2020 / "Xalq so'zi" newspaper. 2020 December 30.

⁶ Porter M. Competition. — M.: Williams, 2000. pp. 174-191.

⁷ Dwyer L., Kim Ch. Destination Competitiveness: Determinants and Indicators. Current Issues in Tourism Vol. 6, 2003.

⁸ Crouch, J. & Ritchie, B. The competitive destination- a sustainable tourism perspective. Cambridge: CabiPublishing, 2003.

⁹ Titu M.A., Raulea A.S., Titu S.. Measuring Service Quality in Tourism Industry. Procedia –Social and Behavioral Sciences. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2016.05.118>.

¹⁰ Kobyak M.V.. The quality of tourist services as a strategic basis for tourism development. The economy of the region. № 1. 2011.

We have investigated groups of factors affecting competitive and high-quality services, such as organizational, natural, technological, economic and financial, socio-spiritual, and psychological, and conducted a SWOT analysis of the development of the market of high-quality tourist services in the country (Fig-1.).

<p style="text-align: center;">Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - state support for the development of tourist infrastructure; - development of related areas of tourism; - a large number of historical and cultural heritage; - ensuring security for people's lives; - priority of the international policy of openness in the country. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - lack of qualified staff in the field; - lack of improved quality standards for small tourist entities; - lack of a unified regional operating system for tourism entities; - lack of a specific strategy and methodology to mitigate the negative impact of seasonality on tourism
<p style="text-align: center;">Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the state pays special attention to increasing high-quality tourist services; - convenient geographical location for the development of international tourism; - the state to support the development of domestic and foreign tourism; - stable income growth of the population; - the possibility of rapid development through the introduction of digital technologies. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the tourist infrastructure is developed to varying degrees in different regions; - most of the population has no experience of traveling; - insufficient popularity of the country in the international tourist market; - insufficient information about the country and attractions on the Internet.

Figure-1. SWOT analysis of the development of the market of high-quality tourist services in the region

With the help of this method, it becomes possible to plan the further development of the market of high-quality tourist services by classifying the factors affecting the development of this market into strengths, opportunities, weaknesses, and threats.

The number of tourists arriving in one of the most important tourist centers of Uzbekistan in the Khorezm region increased 4 times from 2015 to 2019, which is evidence of the accelerated pace of tourist service development.

The number of foreign tourists has increased by 8.6 times, and the number of local tourists by 4 times. Also, the revenues of important components of the tourist infrastructure, namely hotels, travel agencies, and transport services, have doubled. Revenues in 3-4-5 star hotels, where services are of relatively high quality, increased by 4.5 times, which indicates a great prospect for the development of high-quality tourist services in the Khorezm region.

We have proposed improved standards of high-quality service for small tourist entities that intend to use innovative tourist services.

We have identified the possibilities of ensuring competitiveness and high quality based on the creation of a cluster of tourist services (Fig-2).

In general, the most important thing is that the proposed standards for the staff of tourist entities would contribute to improving the attractiveness of accommodation facilities and would make it possible to provide high-quality tourist services.



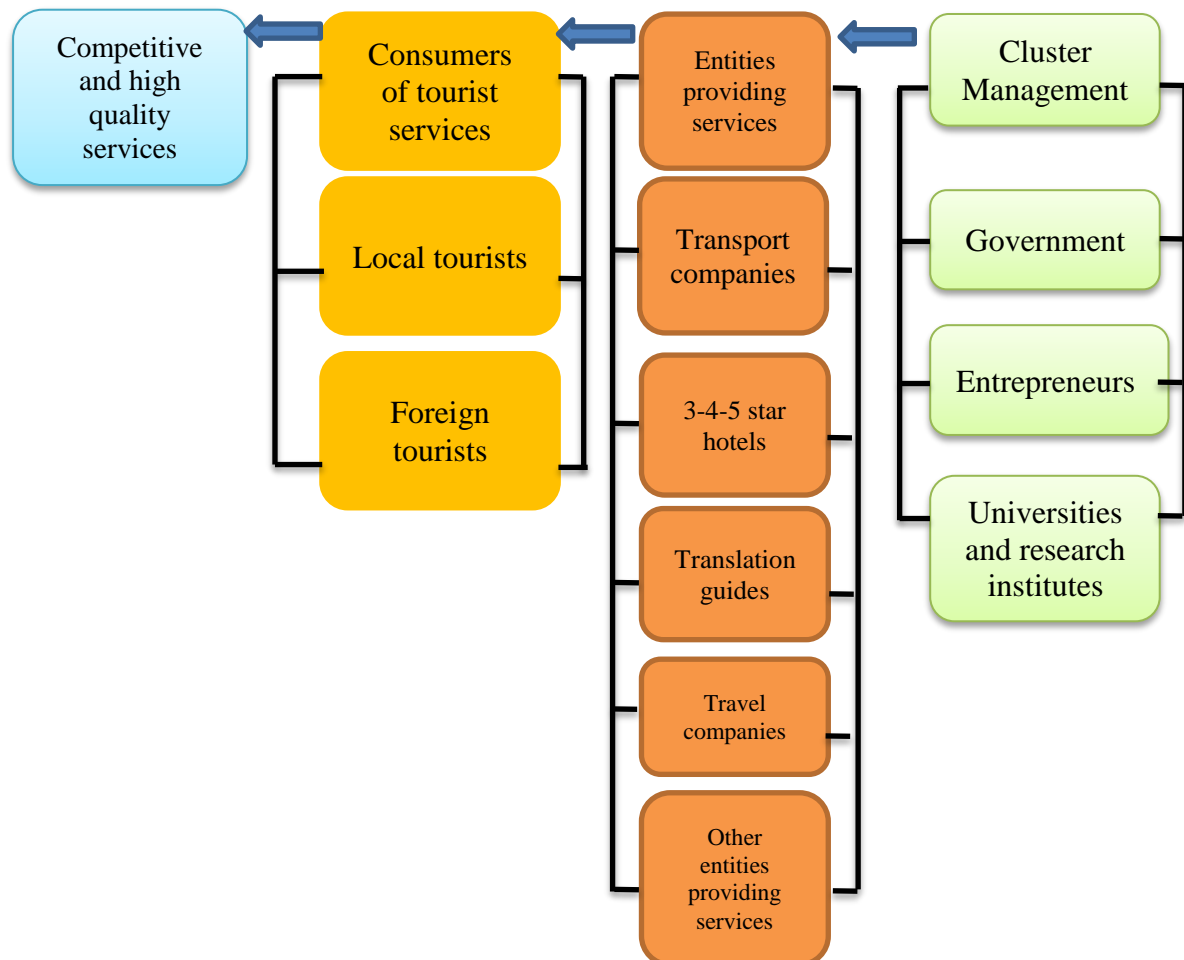
Service evaluation measures	High-quality service standards
Service speed	reception time - 3-5 minutes; duration of tourist accommodation - 5-7 minutes; duration of tourist escort 5-7 minutes; the duration of order fulfillment is 3-10 minutes.
Service culture	the first to start a conversation with a tourist at a distance of 2 meters; when addressing a tourist, first call him/her by rank (if any); smile if the tourist is within a radius of 8-10 meters, apologizing for various inconveniences.
Staff appearance	men wear a clean ironed uniform; women wear the same ironed uniform with a closed collar; depending on their official duties, wear the same uniform.
Staff hygiene requirements	men must not let down their beards or wear jewelry, and must keep their hair clean; hairstyles for women should be in the prescribed manner, not falling below the collar or gathered from behind, keep nails clean, do not wear excessive jewelry; staff performing special services must comply with special hygiene rules, for example, catering staff must wear special hats; staff in the context of an epidemic or pandemic must comply with all health requirements (wear gloves, masks, disinfect premises, etc.).
Matching the number of employees to the service level	Norms of the number of staff corresponding to the level of service in hotels, including: 5 stars - at least 22 employees for every 10 rooms; 4 stars - at least 14 employees for every 10 rooms; 3 stars - at least 10 employees for 10 rooms.

Figure -2. Standards of high-quality service in small tourist regions of the republic (for employees)¹¹

A regional cluster of tourist services was proposed in the following form (Fig. 3.).

¹¹ Development of authors based on international standards.

Figure - 3. The structure of the Khorezm regional cluster of tourist services¹².



The cluster will give the following opportunities to provide competitive and high-quality tourist services:

- to get a large income from a unique operating system where tourist entities, organizations, and other enterprises are located on the same geographical territory;
- to provide high-quality tourist services using elements of digital technologies;
- to form prices of services that satisfy tourists, ensure competitiveness, reduce transactions, transport, and other costs, at the same time, allowing to receive additional income;
- to introduce scientific achievements in the process of providing tourist services.

CONCLUSIONS

The implementation of research results and developed proposals in practice will give impetus to improving the quality of services in tourism in the region and ensure the competitiveness of the tourism sector as a whole.

LIST OF REFERENCES

1. Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated February 7, 2017, No. PD-4947 "On the Strategy of actions for the further development of the Republic of Uzbekistan". Collection of legislative documents of the Republic of Uzbekistan. 2017 No. 6.

¹² Development of authors based on international standards.



2. *Message of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan to the Oliy Majlis. December 29, 2020 yil / The Halk Suzi newspaper. 2020 December 30.*
3. *Message of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan to the Oliy Majlis. December 29, 2020 yil / The Halk Suzi newspaper. 2020 December 30.*
4. *Porter M. Competition. — M.: Williams, 2000. pp. 174-191.*
5. *Dwyer L., Kim Ch. Destination Competitiveness: Determinants and Indicators. Current Issues in Tourism Vol. 6, 2003.*
6. *Crouch, J. & Ritchie, B. The competitive destination- a sustainable tourism perspective. Cambridge: CabiPublishing, 2003.*
7. *Titu M.A., Raulea A.S., Titu S.. Measuring Service Quality in Tourism Industry. Procedia –Social and Behavioral Sciences. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2016.05.118>.*
8. *Kobyak M.V. The quality of tourist services as a strategic basis for tourism development. The economy of the region. № 1. 2011.*