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Methodological Model of Managing Diversification Policy in the Tourism Sector of Uzbekistan

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Abstract: This scientific article analyzes the theoretical and methodological foundations of managing the diversification of tourism types in Uzbekistan. The study highlights global trends in the tourism sector, the role and importance of tourism in the context of diversification of the national economy. It also scientifically substantiates the need to form tourism types based on the portfolio principle, identify regional specialization, adhere to the principles of sustainable development and use digital technologies. The results of the study will serve to improve tourism management practices, balance regional development and increase the international competitiveness of national tourism.

Keywords: Tourism, types of tourism, diversification, tourism management, strategic planning, cluster approach, sustainable development, tourism infrastructure, digital transformation, regional specialization.

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Introduction

The transition of the world economy to a post-industrial stage has dramatically increased the importance of the service sector, in particular the tourism industry. Today, tourism has become an important segment of international trade, making a significant contribution to global GDP and employment. A distinctive feature of tourism is that it operates in close connection with many sectors of the economy and creates a strong multiplier effect. For example, the money spent by a tourist is redistributed as circulating capital in the transport, hotel, catering, trade, culture and service sectors. Therefore, the issue of tourism development should be considered not only as a sectoral, but as an important component of a comprehensive economic policy.

In recent years, the global tourism market has undergone significant changes. Tourist demand is becoming more individualized, that is, there is a growing interest in specialized and experience-oriented types of tourism, rather than mass tourism. Areas such as ecological tourism, gastronomic tourism, medical and wellness tourism, extreme travel, pilgrimage tourism are developing rapidly. This process requires countries to diversify tourism products, that is, expand the spectrum of tourism types and services. Otherwise, a tourism model that relies on one or two main areas will become very susceptible to market risks.

In the context of modernization and structural diversification of the economy of Uzbekistan, tourism is recognized as a strategic sector. The country's rich historical and cultural heritage, monuments associated with the Silk Road civilization, unique natural

resources, national crafts and traditions create a solid foundation for the development of tourism. Samarkand, Bukhara, Khiva, Tashkent, the Fergana Valley and mountainous regions are attractive centers for international and domestic tourists. At the same time, the fact that tourism activities are mainly focused on the cultural and historical direction may hinder the full use of the industry's potential.

Diversification of tourism types serves not only to increase the flow of tourists, but also to ensure the balanced development of regions, create new jobs and increase the income of the population. For example, agrotourism stimulates small businesses and family entrepreneurship in rural areas. Ecotourism creates economic benefits for the protection of natural areas, ensuring their rational use. Pilgrimage tourism, on the other hand, promotes the development of service infrastructure, while preserving religious and spiritual heritage. In this sense, diversification is a means of ensuring social and cultural stability, along with economic efficiency.

However, diversification of tourism types should be carried out not spontaneously, but on the basis of well-thought-out management mechanisms. Diversification is a multifaceted process that is not limited to the introduction of a new tourism product, but also includes such stages as assessing resource potential, analyzing market conditions, determining investment policy, developing infrastructure, training personnel, and formulating a marketing strategy. In this regard, the use of systematic, strategic, and innovative approaches to managing this process is of great importance.

In particular, a scientifically based methodology plays an important role in determining regional specialization, comprehensively assessing the natural and cultural resources of each region, determining competitive advantages, and selecting priority types of tourism. In the process of diversifying tourism, it is also important to coordinate the interests of state administration bodies, the private sector, and the local population. Public-private partnership mechanisms, the use of digital technologies, and improving regional branding policies will help increase the effectiveness of diversification.

The relevance of the issue of diversification is also related to regional development policy. By expanding the types of tourism, it is possible to create new points of economic activity in mountainous, desert and rural areas. Ecotourism activates service networks in mountainous and natural areas, agrotourism in rural areas, and pilgrimage tourism around historical and religious centers. This serves to increase employment, reduce internal migration and expand sources of regional income.

Diversification of demand is also observed in the modern tourism market. Tourists prefer trips based on specific experiences. For example, interest in such areas as national culinary festivals, master classes in craft workshops, acquaintance with rural life, medical rehabilitation services or extreme sports is growing. If the country's tourism policy does not take into account these changes in demand, it may lose its competitive advantage. In this regard, diversification of tourism types is an important condition for maintaining and strengthening competitiveness.

The relevance of the topic is also significant from the point of view of forming investment policy. Diversification of tourism types requires new projects and infrastructure facilities. This requires the development of public-private partnership mechanisms, attracting foreign investment and supporting small businesses. In the absence of a scientifically based methodology, investment resources can be allocated inefficiently. Therefore, it is an urgent task to clearly define priority areas in managing the diversification process.

This topic is also of particular importance from the point of view of ecological sustainability. Excessive concentration of tourist flows in limited areas can lead to the depletion of natural resources, an increase in waste volume, and damage to cultural heritage sites. By diversifying tourism types territorially and functionally, it is possible to redistribute tourist pressure, reduce the ecological load, and use resources rationally.

Digital transformation processes are also making diversification management a pressing issue. Online platforms, electronic booking systems, digital marketing and “smart tourism” technologies are expanding the possibilities for creating and promoting new tourism products. This creates the need to reconsider traditional approaches to tourism management and introduce innovative methodologies.

Based on the above economic, social, environmental and institutional factors, the issue of managing the diversification of tourism types in Uzbekistan is of complex and strategic importance. By organizing this process on a scientific basis, it is possible to ensure the stability of the sector, balance regional development and increase competitiveness in the international tourism market. In this regard, in-depth research on this topic and the development of its methodological foundations are one of the urgent scientific tasks of the present time.

Review of literature on the topic

The issue of managing the diversification of tourism types is covered in the scientific literature in two main directions: general management theories that explain diversification as a model of strategic growth and competitiveness; sectoral studies devoted to the development of tourism destinations, product creation and management tools. In the conditions of Uzbekistan, however, research is more focused on issues of territorial potential, infrastructure, clustering and support for domestic tourism, and there are relatively few works on the scope of a holistic methodology for managing diversification.

Ansoff's "product-market" expansion logic is related to it. It explains diversification as going beyond existing competencies and emphasizes its high-risk/high-opportunity nature. When applied to tourism, this approach provides an important methodological conclusion: opening a new type of tourism (e.g., medical or MICE) is not limited to adding infrastructure, but also requires "building" new institutional rules, standards, personnel, and service culture.[1] However, Ansoff's model is limited in that it does not fully capture the complexity of multi-stakeholder (state-business-population-ecology) governance at the destination level, which is more appropriate for enterprise-level decisions.

R. Butler's TALC (tourism area life cycle) concept suggests that destination development occurs in stages, with the risk of "stagnation" increasing at certain stages, while product renewal and diversification can be a mechanism for "revitalization". This approach is convenient for analyzing the seasonality of tourism in historical cities in Uzbekistan and the risk of "reliance on a single product".[2] However, TALC in most cases explains the general trend, and for practice, specific management instruments (indicators, portfolio selection, investment priorities, institutional coordination) need to be developed separately.

The following can be cited regarding the practical management of tourism products and diversification.

UN Tourism (formerly UNWTO) defines a tourism product as “a combination of tangible and intangible elements”, emphasizing that the product development chain includes resources, experience, service quality, marketing and organization. This is methodologically important: diversification is not a “new route”, but a redesign of the value proposition.[3] At the same time, UN Tourism documents often rely on universal recommendations; adaptation to local institutional barriers (land use regime, licensing, sanitary standards, tax incentives, legal forms of local community participation) is required.

Regarding political and management trends, the following can be cited.

OECD tourism policy reports highlight the diversification of tourism offer as a priority in the post-pandemic period to ensure sustainability, inclusiveness, resilience and the development of “off-season” segments. This view is also relevant in Uzbekistan: diversification should not only include the addition of new types, but also redistribute

tourist pressure across regions and seasons, and bring service standards to the same level.[4] However, since OECD materials are based mainly on the experience of member countries, taking into account factors such as transit geography, the pace of institutional transformation, and the stage of formation of the service market in rural areas, adaptation is required, not direct relocation.[5]

The general conclusion from foreign literature is that the success of diversification depends on: strategic portfolio selection; destination management and stakeholder coordination; product quality and brand positioning; and the integration of sustainability standards [12]-[14]. However, some of this work remains at the model level; for practice, a methodology is required that goes as far as a system of indicators and the division of powers between institutions across the country [15].

Scientific work in Uzbekistan is generally focused on regional tourism development, increasing investment activity, improving infrastructure, implementing the cluster concept, and supporting domestic tourism.

We will focus on the scientific research of local scientists on the cluster approach and investment activity.

In his scientific research, BDOLLanazarov analyzes the issue of enhancing investment activity through a cluster approach in the field of tourist services, focusing on cooperation and synergy between cluster participants. The strength of this work is that it views tourism diversification as an intersection of sectors, not a “separate product”. The critical point is that the institutional design of “who is responsible for what”, KPIs/indicators for assessing cluster effectiveness, and management models for cluster formation have been poorly developed.[6] In practice, there is a lot of cluster rhetoric, but if the management architecture (DMO, PPP contracts, service standards, data exchange) is not sufficiently formalized, the cluster concept may not yield results.

Sh.R. Jumaniyazova and other local authors have used comparative and comprehensive assessment methods to examine the development of tourism infrastructure in regions. These works are useful in understanding the “supply” basis of diversification. However, a critical point is that infrastructure development is often set as a goal, while it is seen as a means to diversification.[7] Infrastructure projects that do not take into account the segmentation of tourist demand, the design of the value proposition, pricing, and marketing channels may be ineffective.

In the study on the need to diversify tourism products in the Samarkand region, an attempt was made to identify new niche segments (special interest) through the opinions of tour operators. The significance of this work is to directly measure the views of market participants and explain niche tourism. However, it has methodological limitations: interview results are an important signal for decision-making, but for managing diversification, they need to be reinforced with mixed methods, statistical data, and regional comparative analysis that calculate the optimal choice of a “portfolio” (resource-demand-risk-stability).[8]

There are studies that consider diversification as a priority for mitigating seasonality in the Uzbek tourism market. They correctly show the negative impact of seasonality on hotel occupancy and staff stability.[9] However, most studies do not sufficiently delve into the “toolbox” that can be put into practice (e.g., modeling the calendar of events, seasonal distribution of the product portfolio, dynamic pricing, subsidy mechanisms to stimulate domestic tourism).

Studies proposing a conceptual model for service diversification at cultural heritage sites in the Bukhara region focus on the value chain, reducing the diversification issue to the “site level.” However, such conceptual studies require linking it to regulatory standards, service quality indices, visitor experience metrics, and the competencies of management entities for their implementation.[10]

The existence of decisions and program measures aimed at diversifying domestic tourism services indicates the priority of diversification in state policy. The goals and directions for tourism development are also noted in the framework of the “Uzbekistan-2030” strategy.[11] However, the critical point is that while the goals are set in the regulatory documents, the “fine details” of the implementation mechanism (indicators, data monitoring, product portfolio by region, responsibility matrix) still need to be supplemented with scientifically based methodology.

Foreign literature justifies diversification as an important condition for strategic and sustainable management, while domestic literature collects practical evidence from the perspective of territorial resources, infrastructure, and clustering. However, a coherent methodological “framework” that unites them is not sufficiently formed:

- manage diversification as a portfolio, not a “list of species”;
- formalization of selection criteria (demand–resource–infrastructure–investment–risk–ecology);
- Define the roles and responsibilities of institutions such as DMO/cluster/PPP;
- establishing performance measurement indicators and monitoring data.

Therefore, it is advisable that further research on the issue of managing the diversification of tourism types in Uzbekistan be directed towards proposing a system of indicators, decision-making algorithms, and institutional coordination mechanisms in a single package, adapting theoretical models to the local institutional environment.

Research Methodology

The methodological approaches used to manage the diversification of tourism types in Uzbekistan include systematic analysis, historicism and logic, induction and deduction, analysis and synthesis, comparative and selective research, monographic analysis and grouping.

Analysis and Results

Today, the world economy is developing in conditions of high uncertainty and rapid change. The tourism sector is one of the sectors most susceptible to these changes. Factors such as pandemics, geopolitical conflicts, increased transport costs, and climate change are directly affecting international tourist flows. In this context, tourism diversification, i.e. expanding tourism types and market segments, appears as a strategic mechanism for spreading risks and ensuring industry stability.

Tourism in Uzbekistan is identified as one of the priority areas for diversifying the national economy. The country is striving to balance the composition of its gross domestic product by developing the services sector, especially tourism, along with industry and agriculture. However, in practice, the flow of tourism is concentrated mainly in historical and cultural centers. This can exacerbate the imbalance in economic activity between regions. For example, while the tourism infrastructure is mainly formed in large cities, the tourism potential in rural and remote areas is not fully utilized.

Table 1. Number of foreign tourists in Uzbekistan in 2020-2025 (million people).

Years	Foreign tourists (million people)
2020	1.9
2021	5.2
2022	5.3
2023	6.6
2024	8.2
2025	11.7

- **Source: Information from the Tourism Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan**

According to the data presented in the table, in 2020, the flow of international tourists decreased sharply as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. In the following years (2021–2025), continuous growth is expected. In 2023, 6.6 million tourists visited the country, in 2024 - 8.2 million, and in 2025 - a record 11.7 million tourists. This growth is attributed to the liberalization of the country's visa regime, the expansion of the international airline network, and active marketing.

Table 2. Export volume of tourism services (2021-2024, billion US dollars).

Years	Foreign tourists (million people)
2021	0.296
2023	3,456
2024	3,521

• **Source: Information from the Tourism Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan**

According to the data presented in the table, in 2021, the volume of tourism services exports was very low (≈ 0.3 billion \$). In 2023, it increased to \$3.4 billion, showing a high growth rate. This indicator was maintained in 2024, as the private sector and the number of international services increased. These figures indicate that the country's tourism market has significantly increased its international economic impact.

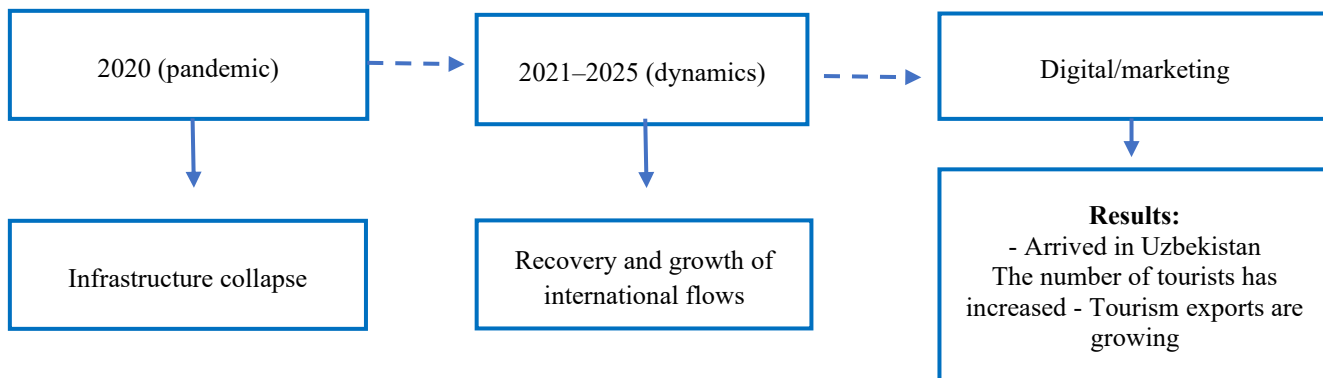


Figure 1. Tourism dynamics and the system of impulses for diversification.

If we look at the data presented in the figure, it shows that after a sharp decline in tourism in 2020 due to the pandemic, a sharp recovery and growth process will begin in 2021-2025 as a result of the state's strategic measures (visa liberalization, infrastructure investments, marketing). This is very important for diversification - opportunities in the field of tourism products and destinations have expanded.

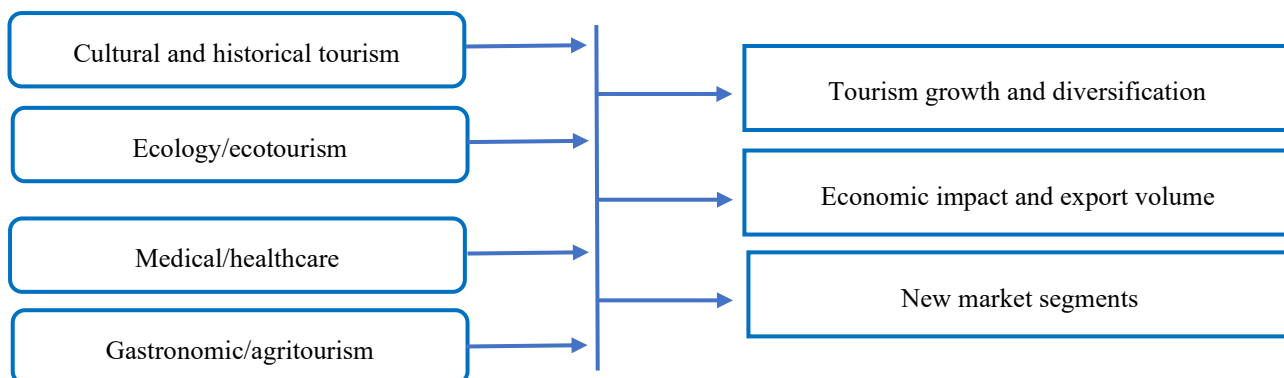


Figure 2. Sectoral directions that ensure tourism growth.

According to the information presented in the figure, today's tourist needs are important for us: not limited to historical sites, but according to the trend, segments such as healthy tourism, ecotourism and gastronomic tourism are also growing. Including these areas in diversification will serve the balanced development of Uzbek tourism.

According to data from January-October 2024, the number of foreign citizens who came to Uzbekistan for tourist purposes amounted to about 6.5 million people (17.2% more than in 2023). These figures, along with labor migration, also indicate an increase in regional rankings and destinations.

Based on this data, it is clear that the country's diversification in the tourism sector is yielding high results, increasing competitiveness in the international market, and increasing opportunities to attract new tourist segments.

The steady growth of the dynamics of the tourism market in Uzbekistan during 2020-2025 demonstrates a pleasant positive trend. The number of foreign tourists increased year by year, reaching a record level in 2025 (~11.7 million), which confirms the effectiveness of the country's tourism diversification strategy. The increase in the volume of exports of tourism services is strengthening its economic impact.

This information serves as a key indicator for a diversification management strategy in tourism development. The development of additional indicators in areas such as talent development, infrastructure, market segments, seasonal marketing and innovation will also be fruitful.

Conclusion

The issue of managing the diversification of tourism types in Uzbekistan is of strategic importance in terms of deepening economic reforms, increasing the share of the service sector, and balancing regional development. The theoretical analysis conducted during the research and the dynamics of 2020-2024 show that the country's tourism sector has entered a stage of recovery and rapid growth. The steady increase in the number of foreign tourists, the increase in the volume of exports of tourism services, and the expansion of infrastructure confirm the high potential of the sector.

At the same time, the sustainability of this growth depends on the purposeful and scientifically based diversification of tourism types. Analysis has shown that diversification is not limited to the opening of new tourism destinations. It is a complex management process, encompassing the following interrelated components:

- assessing resource potential;
- segmentation of market demand;
- coordination of investment and infrastructure;
- improvement of institutional mechanisms;
- increasing human resources capacity;
- implementing digital and marketing strategies.

Based on the results of the research, the following scientific and practical conclusions were formulated:

First, tourism diversification should be based on a portfolio approach. That is, each region should develop specialized types of tourism based on its natural, cultural, and economic characteristics. This will serve to balance economic activity between regions and strengthen internal competition.

Second, a systematic and integrated approach to managing the diversification process is essential. Tourism should not be seen as a separate sector, but as an economic ecosystem linked to transport, agriculture, culture, trade and services. This will increase the multiplier effect.

Third, the principles of sustainable development should be at the heart of diversification policies. Long-term economic efficiency will be ensured by redistributing tourist flows across regions, reducing environmental burdens, protecting cultural heritage, and taking into account the interests of local populations.

Fourth, digital transformation is crucial in managing diversification. Digital monitoring of tourism statistics, expansion of online booking platforms, and identification of market segments through data analytics will increase the accuracy of management decisions.

Fifth, public-private partnership mechanisms and cluster models can be an effective institutional framework for implementing diversification. New tourism products will be formed by strengthening cooperation between tourism entities, encouraging small businesses, and improving the investment climate.

At the same time, some problems were identified during the research. These include the inadequacy of a single system of indicators for tourism types, the incomplete formation of a territorial database, and the imperfection of the methodology for assessing the effectiveness of diversification. This situation requires further in-depth scientific research.

As a general conclusion, it can be noted that managing the diversification of tourism types in Uzbekistan is an important condition for the sustainable and competitive development of the national economy. In the future, by providing the diversification process with scientifically based indicators, strategic planning methods and institutional coordination mechanisms, it is possible to achieve a qualitatively new level of the industry.

In this way, diversification of tourism types is not only a means of economic growth, but also a comprehensive mechanism for strengthening regional development, social stability, and national branding.

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