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## Brand Formation as a Factor in the Development of Domestic and Inbound Tourism in Uzbekistan

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**Abstract:** The article analyzes such a concept as a "brand" and the possibility of its use in shaping the image of a particular destination. Tourism develops the territory's infrastructure and includes it in the global cultural space, regardless of the territorial location of the object. Uzbekistan has all the necessary prerequisites for domestic and inbound tourism and is developing in this direction today. The article discusses creating a national brand of Uzbekistan as a tourist destination without public funds and with the involvement of the competencies and creative potential of the best specialists. A tourist brand is a symbol of recognizable images and associations born from the word "Uzbekistan." This is a semantic and visual shell for the whole complex of actions that will form an idea of our country in the eyes of tourists. Professional participants developed more than 20 brand concepts within the framework of open workshops. In addition, the author analyzes the knowledge of foreign tourists about our country and the preferences of Uzbekistan tourists in their country. Effective Branding of tourist destinations is a prerequisite for their competitiveness and attractiveness for travelers. The article contains an analysis of the attractiveness of the territory of the Tambov region as an object of tourism based on existing regional brands.

The author believes that the correct approach to using the territory brand forms an attractive image of Uzbekistan for potential customers, creates favorable conditions for life and business activity, and ensures the effective use of natural, material, technical, financial, labor, organizational, social and other resources.

**Key words:** brand, tourism, territory brand, tourist brand, destination.

Introduction. The role of tourism in the life of society cannot be overestimated. It contributes to satisfying fundamental human needs for recreation, broadening one's horizons and spiritual

enrichment, and acts as an employment multiplier and a growth driver for small and medium-sized businesses. Tours contribute to developing ties between peoples, strengthening trust and mutual understanding and interpenetration of cultures, which is very important in a rapidly globalizing world [1].

The accelerated development of the tourism sector and its increasing role in the economy is considered one of the essential tasks in the Action Strategy for the further development of the Republic of Uzbekistan. In recent years, tourism has become one of the “growth points” of the national economy, which, being a driver for the development of other related industries, stimulates income growth, having a high multiplicative effect: \$ 1 of direct income from tourism gives at least \$ 5-7 in associated sectors of the economy[1]. It should be noted that tourism services and related catering services (accommodation and catering in the interpretation of NCEA) have a significant impact on the growth of market services and GDP as a whole. Thus, calculations show that the growth of GDP and the increase in incomes of the population are more influenced by the development of the service sector (an increase in GDP and revenues of the people by 67.2% and 60.3%, respectively, which are provided by expanding the volume of market services)[2].

In recent years, a wide range of legal documents on the development of tourism has been adopted, an institutional system for managing the development of tourism has been formed and structural divisions of the tourism department have been created in all regions of the country to use the vast tourism potential of the areas effectively. New organizations contribute to the development of the tourism industry: the Certification Center for Tourism Services, the Institute for Tourism Development, the National PR Center and others.

It should be noted that the adoption of Resolution No. PP-4095, dated January 5, 2019, No. "On measures for the accelerated development of the tourism industry" served as intensive tourism development, creating and promoting a national product to world markets based on creating favorable economic incentives and organizational and legal conditions. Yes, as of March 15, 2021. A 30-day and 60-day visa-free regime has been established for 90 countries (in addition to the bilateral visa-free control for the CIS[3]). Subsequently, UP No. 5611 of 01/05/2019. From February 1, 2019, a visa-free regime was introduced for 45 countries for 30 days, according to UP No. 5691 of 03/18/2019. For citizens of the UAE for 30 days, according to UP No. 5781 dated 08/13/2019. for 20 countries for 30 days.

Registration of an electronic tourist visa in a simplified manner through the portal “e-visa.gov.uz” was launched through the system for issuing electronic entry visas for 57 countries from July 15, 2018[4]. Foreign citizens of these countries can obtain an electronic visa for 30 days without contacting consular offices in two working days[5].

In addition, a particular platform, the "Silk Road Project"[6], has been created to promote the Silk Road countries' tourism potential and regional tourism products and routes.

Given the complex structure of the provision of tourism services, great importance is attached to the coordination and strategic management of the processes taking place in it. At the same time, in the system of forming the value chains of the tourism cluster, the supporting business processes have a significant impact on its functioning:

Methods of production and sale of tourism and related goods and products; provision of services or performance of works that provide the primary process; processes for providing additional and associated services to tourists.

Main parts. In the early 2000s, the term "brand" was used relatively narrowly, exclusively concerning trademarks. It was not applied to any objects of cultural or natural heritage; they were characterized by the term "sights." And on

At the present stage of the development of society, the concept of "brand of the territory" is used quite often.

As long as the cultural heritage was considered an attraction, one could join it and make a pilgrimage; they admired it, admired it, told about it, we are proud of it but did not derive material benefits.

As soon as the same objects of cultural heritage became brands without changing their physical and spiritual essence, they could profit from them [6]. Forming a territory brand makes a particular destination more interesting for tourists.

A brand is always based on the emotional response of target audiences [5]. In addition, a strong brand expresses the cultural context of the country, region, and social groups. According to the researcher K. Rapay, the brand reproduces "the character of culture and thus supports cultural diversity in the world" [7, p. 165].

If the state takes the formation of a brand seriously and considers these areas a priority, this indicates that this country has reached a high level of development [6].

Priority directions in the management of the tourism system:

Development of the tourism industry and related infrastructure of 3-star and 4-star hotels with a modern level of comfort and an average price category;

overcoming the administrative and economic barriers of the monopoly structure of the passenger transportation market; their consequences in the form of high rates for accommodation and air travel;

training in tourism for emergencies such as a pandemic, retraining of tour operators;

improvement of service in tourist centers and expansion of a small range of event events in the republic that can satisfy the dynamic and demanding demand of the modern consumer.

The presence of modern materials and the infrastructural base play the leading role in ensuring the tourism industry's competitiveness. When consuming a complex service, each tourist needs roads, transport hubs, engineering networks, and other infrastructure facilities to access the goals of tourist interest and consume the corresponding services. In addition, it is necessary to provide comfortable living conditions in the destination (engineering networks, communications, public transport, financial institutions, information portals and others). All these processes implemented in tourism, taking into account industry specifics, are reproduced in other areas of the service sector.

An important role is played by legal security and the presence of other incentives that encourage tourists to make a trip, which forms the tourist attractiveness of the destination and ensures the effective use of cultural heritage sites.

Historical and educational, gastronomic, health, MICE, mountain, agro, eco, archaeological, Muslim and Buddhist pilgrimages - all these types of tourism can be found in Uzbekistan.

Medical tourism in Uzbekistan has developed in sanatorium-resort institutions, taking into account the availability of natural resources to improve health.

As part of MICE tourism in the regions, a unified register has been created and the "Meetings & Events Catalogue" has been developed. To coordinate MICE events, a Congress and Exhibition Center was built in the State Committee for Tourism Development structure and potential objects were studied.

More attention is also planned to be paid to ziyorat (pilgrimage) tourism. In recent years, various social and cultural entertainment events have been organized to attract tourists, taking into account the specifics of each region:

Pilgrimage (Ziyorat) tourism forum (Bukhara region);

Bakhshi Art Festival, Archaeological Forum (Surkhandarya region);

game of heroes (Khorezm region);

Rally "Muynak";  
Music festival "Element" (Republic of Karakalpakstan);  
Tourism fair of the CIS. (Samarkand region);  
Geotourism Forum;  
Pomegranate Festival (Kashkadarya region);  
Electronic Music Festival;  
gastronomic festival;  
"World Influencers Congress" (Tashkent).

As a result, the number of tourists and hotels has increased significantly, the tourism business has been actively developed, and new types of tourism have appeared.

Over three years, the number of tourists has grown five times: from 1.3 million foreign tourists in 2016 to 6.7 million in 2019. Due to the pandemic, 1.5 million foreign tourists managed to visit the country in 2020; at the same time, the export of tourism services amounted to \$261 million, and tourism became one of the most affected industries.

It should be noted that the pandemic has seriously affected the tourism industry and related industries. The income of more than a hundred thousand people has sharply decreased, including guides, artisans, architectural monuments and resort institutions, catering facilities, transport workers and others.

Domestic travel was organized for 1.8 million people in 2020, which is expected to rise sharply to 7.5 million in 2021.

In total, 1.7 million foreign tourists were expected in 2021. As expected, thanks to this, the export of tourism services will reach 370 million dollars.

Supporting the tourism and related industries that have been hardest hit and continue to be negatively impacted by the coronavirus pandemic, saving jobs, maintaining incomes, and accelerating the tourism industry's recovery are priorities in 2021 and beyond.

As part of the study, in August and September 2022, EY interviewed more than 1,500 travelers from five countries: the UK, Germany, China, Japan and South Korea. All respondents have traveled outside their country of residence for tourism at least once in the past two years and have an annual income of over \$20,000.

Analyses and syntheses. According to the study [3] results, Uzbekistan ranks fifth among the most exciting travel destinations for British tourists - 18% of respondents plan to visit the country in the near future. There is a growing interest in traveling to Uzbekistan among respondents from China. Despite the high tourist competition from the countries of Southeast Asia, every tenth participant in the survey thinks about such a trip. Tourists from Germany showed similar results - every tenth expressed a desire to visit Uzbekistan in the near future. Respondents from Japan and South Korea are much less interested in traveling to Uzbekistan.

The main difficulty faced by respondents from all countries while traveling in Uzbekistan was the presence of a language barrier, which was reported by 49% of respondents. A third of travelers (29%) experienced problems during the visa process, the most common factor reported by respondents from the UK, Japan and China.

Cultural differences made it difficult for 40% of Chinese and 31% of British tourists to travel. A quarter of the respondents noted their concern about security issues when traveling to Uzbekistan: most often, guests from Japan spoke about this (33%). The attitude of German tourists to traveling to Uzbekistan is indicative: almost half (45%) of the respondents saw no obstacles to visiting the country. Only one in three speaks about the difficulties that arose because of the language barrier, and one in four fears their safety. Generally, these figures are relatively low compared to respondents' answers from other countries.

At the same time, 20% of respondents intend to plan a trip on their own, and more than half (54%) would prefer to use the services of a travel agency to book an individual or group tour to Uzbekistan.

Among travelers planning an independent trip to Uzbekistan, the Booking.com service is the most popular - 56%.

TripAdvisor.com came in second with 40%, while Airbnb.com and Trivago.com shared third place with 38% each.

Travelers' knowledge of Uzbekistan differs significantly from country to country. Thus, most survey participants in China follow the news about Uzbekistan (86%) and love Uzbek culture (88%). In European countries, this figure is about 50%, while the interest of respondents from Japan and South Korea is much less. Thus, only every tenth tourist from South Korea and every third from Japan follows Uzbekistan news. Respondents from these countries also need to demonstrate an insufficient knowledge of Uzbek history and literature.

In addition to traditionally favorite leisure activities (urban tourism, beach holidays, and shopping), survey participants planning trips to Uzbekistan want to attend sports competitions, get acquainted with local culture, and take a cruise on their upcoming trips. Ecotourism and health trips attract 30% and 26% of respondents from China. 46% of British tourists plan to combine tourist trips with business visits [3].

According to a study by Price Waterhouse Coopers [8], 40% of European tourists make decisions based on information available on the global network. According to expert estimates, 83% of the traveling population of Uzbekistan aged 18 to 45 use the Internet when organizing a tour. Instagram and Youtube are a kind of "encyclopedia" for them, where you can quickly and comfortably find all the necessary information in the most accessible form [1].

In the summer of 2017, Uzbekistan's demand for tours and independent travel increased [1]. Thus, the number of tourists who booked tours in Uzbekistan for July and August 2017 increased by 24% compared to the same period in 2016, according to the yellow pages.uz search engine [9].

Valleys of Uzbekistan are traditionally the leaders among the most popular Uzbek destinations, which account for about 80% of all booked tours. Tashkent, Samarkand, Bukhara, Navoi, Xorazm, Surxondaryo, Jizzakh, Fergana, Namangan, and Karakalpakstan also entered the top ten most popular tourist regions this summer [1].

A competitive brand is a powerful brand, the strength of which depends on many factors, such as brand loyalty, brand awareness, the ability to influence the consumer, associative capacity, the service provider's reputation, and the image of the tourist service provider [11]. Over the past few years, Uzbekistan has seen a pronounced upward trend in tourist flows. Moreover, if earlier the choice of the consumer in favor of traveling around our country was mainly due to economic factors, now we can say that the broadest range of tourist products in our country is offered for lovers of various types of tourism, including, which is very important, provided absolute safety of travel in our country. The Uzbekistan tourism brand development project made it possible to solve the problem of creating a national brand of Uzbekistan as a tourist destination without the use of public funds and with the involvement of the competencies and creative potential of the best specialists from more than three dozen leading branding companies with world names.

The targets for the development of the tourism sector of the Republic of Uzbekistan in 2021-2022 are aimed at transforming tourism and achieving its targets (in 2021-2022, Fig. 1) based on the diversification and improvement of the quality of tourism services and tourism infrastructure, attracting foreign investment, conducting effective advertising of tourism products (brand) and successful promotion of the tourism potential of the republic.

Mechanisms for the implementation of these tasks to increase the competitiveness of the industry in the international market of tourism services:

stimulating the promotion of the tourism industry of Uzbekistan;  
advancing the development of information technologies in the field of tourism;  
further development of transport infrastructure;  
diversification of the tourism product;  
improving the quality of training in the field of tourism;  
improvement of the regulatory framework.

As an assessment of the consumption of complex tourist services, it is proposed to use the degree of consumer satisfaction with the level of services provided. This assessment, through feedback, determines the direction of managerial influences on all processes of the current model of tourism development.

The tourist brand of Uzbekistan has been formed since the advent of the Great Silk Road. There are world-famous cities in Uzbekistan (Tashkent, Samarkand, Bukhara, Khiva, Shakhrisabz, Termez), 8.2 thousand cultural heritage sites and some of them are included in the List of World Heritage Sites. UNESCO heritage.

A significant role in ensuring the development of the tourism industry is played by regularly holding major MICE events. One of the most important annual events was the Tashkent International Fair, "Tourism on the Silk Road," where professionals meet within the framework of the Hosted Buyers program. A forum is held on topical tourism development issues in Central Asia and the world. This allows you to conclude business contracts and develop international cooperation.

Conclusion. Thus, the intensive development of tourism in Uzbekistan, including based on the creation of infrastructure that meets international standards, the creation of regional structures, the strengthening of ties with foreign partners and respect for the historical and cultural heritage, ensured the attraction of tourism and the growth of its share in the national product.

Creating a regional brand based on the potential of tourism resources helps to make it known to the world and preserve the memory of tourists. The brand is a general advertisement that gives complete information about the region, so we want to create an ideal brand for the territory of Uzbekistan, as a country with all our tourism resources, as a loving, beautiful, ecologically rich country with an ancient history. We recommended the methodology. After all, such brands help to maintain our country's position in the global tourism market.

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