



Article

# Overview of Employment Generation of Family-Run Businesses in Tourism in Uzbekistan

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**Abstract:** Family-owned businesses are considered a very important aspect in the development of Uzbekistan's tourism sector, contributing to mainly employment generation, economic growth. This article explores family-run tourism enterprises in Uzbekistan, highlighting their impact on the labor market and local societies employment rate. The research examines the influence of government policies, financial accessibility on the sustainability of these businesses. Using a combination of literature review and statistical analysis, the study identifies the key factors of the success and expansion of family-owned tourism businesses. The findings suggest that family-owned business can be very successful and main economic drive of the government of Uzbekistan, if those enterprises can overcome problems like, financial accessibility, the business skill and knowledge of family members and some interferes of family relationships inside the business. This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by touching underexplored sector of family-owned tourism enterprises in Uzbekistan.

**Keywords:** Family-Owned Business, Tourism Entrepreneurship, Employment Generation, Uzbekistan Economy, Business Sustainability, Government Policy, Tourism Development

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## 1. Introduction

Family-run tourism businesses in Uzbekistan play a crucial role in the country's economy, benefiting from state-controlled market reforms and privatization efforts that have raised their growth, yet remain an underexplored area for academic research [1]. As a country rich in cultural heritage, historical landmarks, and natural beauty, Uzbekistan has experienced a growing flow of domestic and international tourists. This increase in tourism activity has created numerous opportunities for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), many of which are family-owned businesses operating in hospitality, transportation, handicrafts, and other tourism-related sectors.

Family-run businesses are essential to the socio-economic sphere of Uzbekistan, particularly in rural and historically significant regions where large corporations have limited presence. These businesses provide employment opportunities for family members and local communities, enabling inclusive growth and economic sustainability. Additionally, they contribute to preserving cultural traditions and authentic tourism experiences, which are key factors in attracting visitors.

Despite their economic importance, family-run tourism businesses in Uzbekistan face a range of challenges, including limited access to financial resources, regulatory barriers, and difficulties in adopting modern business practices. The tourism sector was hit harder

than many others during the pandemic; however, this crisis also accelerated the digitalization of business processes worldwide. Many operations—such as booking flights and hotel accommodations—transitioned to online platforms [2].

The ability of family-owned businesses to create employment largely depends on their resilience and their capacity to adapt and innovate in response to changing market demands. This article examines the employment generation potential of family-run tourism businesses in Uzbekistan, highlighting their contribution to the labor market through statistical evidence.

### **Research Objectives**

This study aims to analyze the employment generation potential of family-run tourism businesses in Uzbekistan, examining their contribution to the labor market. The specific objectives are:

1. To assess the role of family-run tourism businesses in employment generation within Uzbekistan's tourism sector, particularly in historically and culturally significant regions.
2. To identify whether there is a relationship between the number of family members in the business and the number of employees in businesses. Significance of the Study

This research is significant as it provides a comprehensive understanding of the contribution of family-run businesses to Uzbekistan's tourism sector. The study is relevant for several reasons including economic development and employment growth: By highlighting the role of family-run tourism businesses in job creation, this study offers insights into how these enterprises contribute to economic stability and reduce unemployment.

### **Literature Review**

Family-run businesses in tourism have been widely studied by scholars due to their significant role in local economies, job creation, and cultural heritage preservation. This section reviews the existing literature on employment generation in family-run tourism businesses, focusing on global perspectives, the Central Asian context, and the specific case of Uzbekistan. Family-run businesses constitute a significant portion of the global tourism sector, particularly in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Studies suggest that such businesses are vital for employment generation, especially in rural and heritage-rich regions where large corporations have limited penetration [3], [4]. These enterprises often rely on family labor and local communities, thus contributing to socio-economic development and reducing rural unemployment [5].

Research highlights that family businesses offer flexibility in employment, often providing jobs to multiple generations within a household while fostering skill development in hospitality, handicrafts, and tourism-related services [6]. However, scholars also point out the limitations of family-run businesses in scaling operations, professionalizing management, and ensuring long-term sustainability [4].

## **2. Materials and Methods**

This study employs a quantitative research approach to analyze the employment generation capacity of family-owned businesses in the tourism sector of Uzbekistan. The research is based on primary data collected through a structured survey distributed to family-owned business owners and managers. The study uses statistical techniques, including regression analysis, cross-tabulation, and chi-square tests, to assess relationships between business characteristics and employment trends.

The study follows a descriptive and inferential statistical approach to explore employment patterns, challenges, and factors influencing job creation in family-run tourism businesses. The survey was designed to capture key variables such as business

size, years of operation, number of employees, revenue trends, and external challenges affecting employment sustainability. The research focuses on family-owned businesses operating in Uzbekistan's tourism sector, including guesthouses, travel agencies, handicraft enterprises, and local restaurants. A purposive sampling technique was used to select businesses actively contributing to employment generation. The survey was administered through online and face-to-face methods, ensuring a diverse respondent base from urban and rural areas. A total of 103 valid responses were collected from business owners and managers across different regions of Uzbekistan mainly from Samarkand region.

### 3. Results

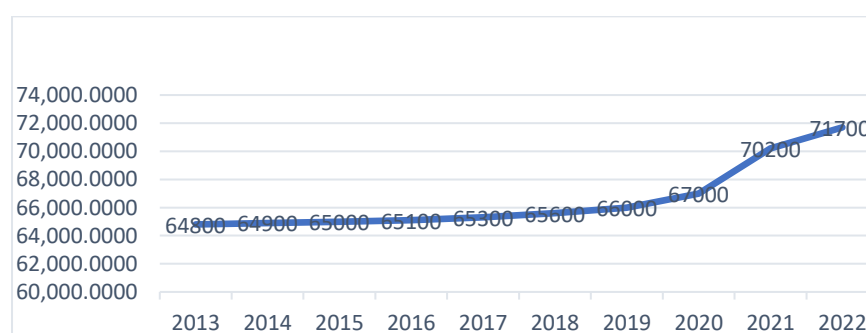
The collected data was analyzed using SPSS and other statistical tools to identify patterns and relationships in employment generation within family-run tourism businesses. The following methods were applied: Descriptive statistics, cross tabulation and statistical data review from secondary sources.

According to the statistics the number of people employed in Uzbekistan's tourism sector has been increasing consistently over the past decade. This growth can be attributed to the expansion of tourism infrastructure, government incentives to boost tourism, and the increasing number of foreign tourists visiting Uzbekistan. The statistics reveal a positive trend in employment, even as the sector faced challenges during the pandemic.

The below given chart illustrates employment trends in the tourism sector over a ten-year period. From 2013 to 2018, the number of people employed in tourism remained relatively stable, with a gradual increase from 64,900 thousand (64.9 million) in 2013 to 66,000 thousand (66 million) in 2018. This indicates a period of steady but slow growth without any significant surges.

In 2019, employment reached 56,000 thousand (56 million), showing a slight increase compared to previous years. However, in 2020, employment rose further to 57,000 thousand (57 million), marking a small yet notable increase. The trend changed significantly in 2021 when the number of employees surged to 70,200 thousand (70.2 million), followed by another increase in 2022, reaching 71,700 thousand (71.7 million). This sharp rise in employment suggests a strong post-pandemic recovery in the tourism industry, likely due to eased travel restrictions and increased tourism demand.

The overall pattern indicates that while the tourism industry experienced a period of stability in employment from 2013 to 2018, it saw significant growth from 2020 onwards. This could be attributed to the resurgence of global tourism after the COVID-19 pandemic, as businesses reopened and international travel resumed. However, one limitation of the chart is the incorrect use of commas in the numerical formatting, which may lead to confusion in interpreting the data. Additionally, more context is needed to fully understand the external factors influencing these employment trends, such as government policies, economic conditions, and shifts in tourism demand.



**Figure 1.** The number of people employed in the field of "Tourism" 2013-2022 (in thousands).

The following frequency analysis presents the distribution of surveyed **family-owned businesses** across different regions of Uzbekistan. The data provides insights into the regional concentration of these businesses within the tourism sector.

Statistics		Which region of Uzbekistan are you from?	What is the annual income of your employees
N	Valid	103	103
	Missing	0	0

The overwhelming majority of respondents (87 out of 103, or 84.5%) are from Samarkand, highlighting the region as a major hub for family-run tourism businesses which can be concluded in Samarkand most people in tourism are involved in family-run businesses. This dominance can be attributed to Samarkand's rich historical and cultural heritage, attracting both domestic and international tourists. The city's dependence on tourism-related businesses, such as guesthouses, handicraft workshops, and restaurants, may explain the high concentration of family enterprises. 8 respondents (7.8%) are from Tashkent, the capital city. While Tashkent is a major economic center, its tourism sector is less focused on family-run businesses compared to historical regions like Samarkand and Bukhara.

Larger corporate businesses may dominate the hospitality and tourism sector in Tashkent, reducing the prevalence of small, family-owned enterprises. Bukhara (3.9%) and Khorezm (1.9%) are significant tourist destinations, yet the number of surveyed businesses from these regions is low.

The results indicate that family-owned tourism businesses are predominantly concentrated in Samarkand, with lower representation from other historically significant regions like Bukhara and Khorezm. This finding aligns with Samarkand's status as a top tourist destination. However, to gain a more nationwide perspective, further studies should focus on increasing participation from other major tourism centers.

**Table 1.** The frequency analysis of a family-owned businesses according to the regions.

Which region of Uzbekistan are you from?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Bukhara	4	3,9	3,9	3,9
	Jizzakh	1	1,0	1,0	4,9
	Navoiy	1	1,0	1,0	5,8
	Samarkand	87	84,5	84,5	90,3
	Toshkent	8	7,8	7,8	98,1
	Khorezm	2	1,9	1,9	100,0
	Total	103	100,0	100,0	

**Table 2.** The frequency analysis of a family-owned businesses according to the regions.

What is the annual income of your employees					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	6-12 mln	36	35,0	35,0	35,0
	13-35 mln	28	27,2	27,2	62,1
	36-60 mln	24	23,3	23,3	85,4

61-120 mln	12	11,7	11,7	97,1
more than 120 mln	3	2,9	2,9	100,0
Total	103	100,0	100,0	

This frequency analysis provides insights into the income distribution of employees working in family-owned tourism businesses in Uzbekistan. The results highlight significant variations in wages, with most employees earning on the lower end of the scale.

Majority of Employees Earn Between 6-35 million UZS Annually (62.1%). The largest proportion of employees falls within the 6-12 million UZS income range (35.0%). Another 27.2% earn between 13-35 million UZS annually. This means that 62.1% of employees in family-run tourism businesses earn less than 35 million UZS per year, indicating that low wages are common in the sector.

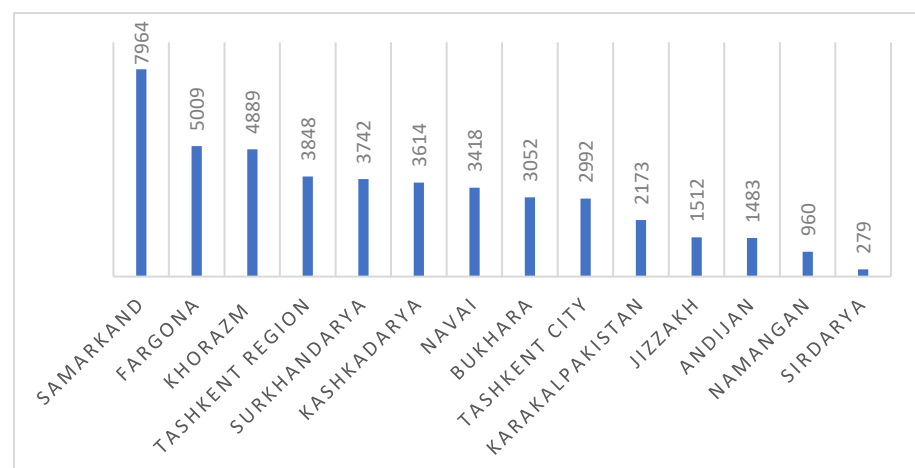
Mid-Income Group (36-60 million UZS) – 23.3%. A significant minority (23.3%) earn 36-60 million UZS annually, suggesting that some businesses pay moderately higher wages, possibly based on experience or specialized roles (e.g., managers or skilled workers).

Higher-Income Employees (61+ Million UZS) – 14.6%. Only 11.7% of employees earn 61-120 million UZS annually. Just 2.9% of employees make more than 120 million UZS, indicating that high salaries are rare in family-run businesses. These higher wages might be given to senior staff, experienced guides, or specialized professionals within the tourism sector.

The data suggests that most employees in family-owned tourism businesses earn relatively low wages, with only a small percentage receiving higher salaries. This reflects the financial limitations of small family-run businesses, which may struggle to provide competitive salaries compared to larger corporations in the hospitality and tourism industry. The low wage levels could also contribute to high employee turnover, as workers may seek better-paying opportunities elsewhere.

The majority (62.1%) of employees in family-owned tourism businesses in Uzbekistan earn less than 35 million UZS per year, indicating that low wages dominate the sector. Only a small fraction of employees earns above 60 million UZS, highlighting the financial constraints of small businesses. To enhance employee satisfaction and retention, policy interventions, business support programs, and financial incentives may be needed to improve wages in the family-run tourism sector.

In order to check official statistical information about Uzbekistan regions and the number of family-owned businesses in those regions, the following secondary statistical data comes up.



**Figure 2.** The number of family-owned businesses according to regions.

The above given chart demonstrates the distribution of family-run enterprises across different regions. Samarkand has the highest number of family-owned businesses, with 7,964, significantly surpassing other regions. Following Samarkand, Fergana ranks second with 5,009 businesses, and Khorezm comes third with 4,889.

The Tashkent region and Surkhandarya also have a notable presence of family-owned businesses, with 4,848 and 3,742, respectively. Kashkadarya (3,618) and Navoi (3,518) follow closely, maintaining a moderate number of family-run enterprises. The regions with relatively lower numbers include Bukhara (3,292), Tashkent City (2,373), and Karakalpakstan (2,173).

At the lower end of the chart, Jizzakh (1,512), Andijan (1,483), and Namangan (900) have fewer family businesses compared to other regions. Sirdarya ranks the lowest, with only 279 family-owned businesses recorded.

The overall trend suggests that Samarkand, Fergana, and Khorezm are leading regions for family-run businesses, possibly due to historical trade significance, strong entrepreneurial culture, or regional economic policies that favor family businesses. On the other hand, Sirdarya and Namangan have considerably fewer such enterprises, which may be influenced by factors like population size, economic conditions, or local business environments.

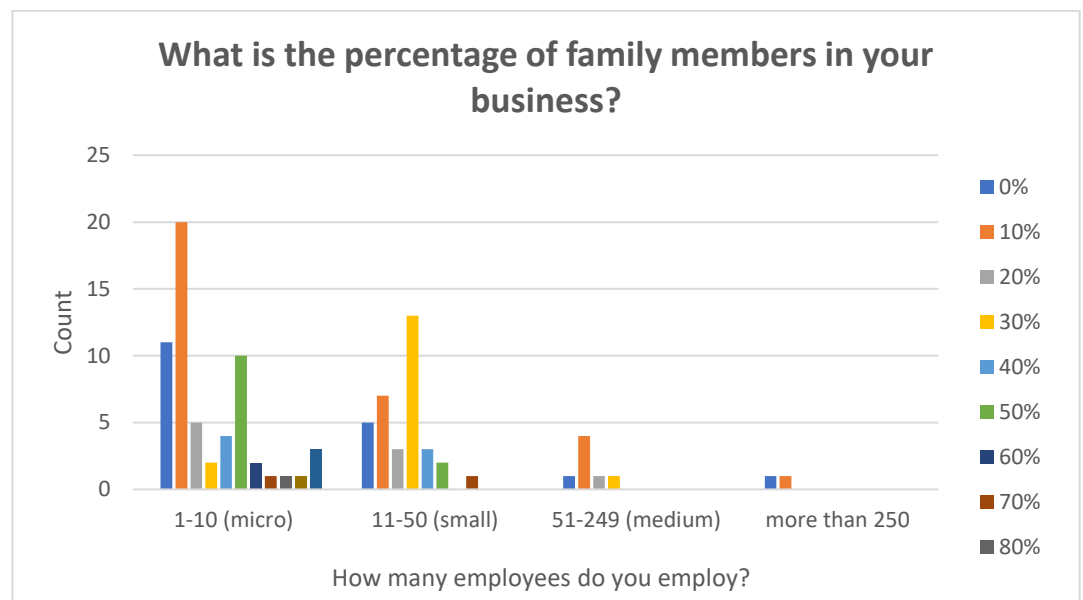
**Table 3.** The statistical analysis of a family-owned businesses according to the number of employees and the percentage of family members in the business.

Case Processing Summary						
	Cases				Total	
	Valid	Missing	Valid	Missing	N	Percent
How many employees do you employ? * What is the percentage of family members in your business?	103	100,0%	0	0,0%	103	100,0%

How many employees do you employ? * What is the percentage of family members in your business? Crosstabulation													
Count		What is the percentage of family members in your business?											Total
		0%	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100%	
			%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
<b>How many employees do you employ?</b>	1-10 (micro)	11	20	5	2	4	10	2	1	1	1	3	60
	11-50 (small)	5	7	3	13	3	2	0	1	0	0	0	34
	51-249 (medium)	1	4	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
	more than 250	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Total		18	32	9	16	7	12	2	2	1	1	3	103

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Si sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	31,793 <sup>a</sup>	30	,377
Likelihood Ratio	35,503	30	,225
Linear-by-Linear Associat	3,833	1	,050
N of Valid Cases 103			
a. 36 cells (81,8%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum e is ,02.			





**Figure 3.** Family Involvement in Businesses by Firm Size: Percentage of Family Members in Different Employee Categories.

The crosstabulation table presents the distribution of the percentage of family members involved in businesses across different company sizes.

Micro businesses (1-10 employees) have the highest representation (60 cases). A significant portion (20 cases) reported 10% of family involvement, while 10 businesses reported 50% family involvement. The distribution shows that micro-businesses generally involve family members to a considerable extent. Small businesses (11-50 employees) (34 cases) have a more balanced distribution, with the highest number (13 cases) reporting 30% family involvement. Medium businesses (51-249 employees) (7 cases) show minimal family involvement, with most cases concentrated in the 0-20% range. Large businesses (more than 250 employees) (2 cases) show almost no significant family involvement.

#### Chi-Square Test Analysis

The Pearson Chi-Square value is 31.793 with a p-value of 0.377, meaning there is no statistically significant association between business size and the percentage of family members employed. The Likelihood Ratio value is 35.503 with a p-value of 0.225, supporting the conclusion that business size and family involvement are not significantly related. However, the Linear-by-Linear Association test ( $p = 0.050$ ) is right on the margin of statistical significance, indicating a slight trend where smaller businesses tend to have a higher percentage of family involvement compared to larger ones.

If we can conclude the analysis the following key insights can be concluded. Micro and small businesses tend to have higher family involvement, particularly at 10%-50% levels.

Medium and large businesses show minimal family involvement, with most responses falling within the 0-20% range.

Statistical tests indicate no strong or significant relationship between business size and the percentage of family members employed, though there is a slight trend suggesting higher family involvement in smaller businesses.

The high number of expected counts below 5 (81.8%) suggests that the sample size might not be large enough for an ideal chi-square analysis, making the results less reliable.

#### 4. Discussion

The analysis of employment generation within family-run tourism businesses in Uzbekistan reveals important trends and implications for the sector's development. The collected data was analyzed by using SPSS as a statistical tool provided a comprehensive understanding of employment patterns, particularly in the context of the tourism industry's growth over the past decade and its role to create jobs in the society. The data indicates the growth of employment numbers, related to several factors, including the expansion of tourism infrastructure, government incentives, and an increasing flow of foreign tourists. This is proved with existing literature, which highlights the positive impact of supportive government policies on the growth of the tourism sector and its contribution to job creation in Uzbekistan as family-owned businesses.

The regional analysis of family-owned tourism businesses in Uzbekistan shows that Samarkand as a significant hub, with 84.5% of respondents operating in this area. The city's rich historical and cultural heritage likely attracts both domestic and international tourists, leading to a high concentration of family-run enterprises. This finding reinforces the notion that family businesses are vital contributors to local economies, particularly in regions with historical significance.

The income distribution analysis reveals significant wage disparities among employees in family-run tourism businesses. The fact that 62.1% of employees earn less than 35 million UZS annually indicates a prevalent issue of low wages within the sector. This finding is consistent with previous studies that have noted the financial limitations faced by small businesses, which often struggle to compete with larger corporations in terms of salary offerings. The implications of low wages are critical, as they may lead to high employee turnover and difficulties in attracting skilled workers. To address these challenges, stakeholders must consider implementing policy regulations, such as business support programs and financial incentives, to help family-owned businesses improve employee wages and retention which financial side of family-owned businesses is considered the most painful point as mostly they have difficulties to have financial sources and support by governments.

Furthermore, the chi-square analysis of family involvement in businesses across different sizes provides insightful conclusions regarding the structure of family-run enterprises. The trend indicating that micro and small businesses tend to have higher family involvement aligns with the traditional understanding of family businesses, where familial ties often play a crucial role in operations and management. On the other hand, the minimal family involvement in medium and large enterprises suggests a shift towards more formalized business structures, which may weaken the familial aspect inherent in smaller operations. However, the lack of statistically significant relationships in the chi-square tests indicates that further research is necessary to explore these dynamics more thoroughly.

In summary, the findings of this study reduce the critical role of family-run tourism businesses in Uzbekistan's employment landscape and economic recovery post-pandemic. The concentration of such businesses in historically rich regions like Samarkand emphasizes the need for tailored support to enhance their competitiveness. Addressing wage disparities and understanding the dynamics of family involvement in varying business sizes will be essential for fostering a robust tourism sector that benefits both employees and business owners. Future research should focus on expanding the sample size to improve the reliability of statistical analyses and exploring the broader socio-economic factors influencing family-owned tourism businesses in Uzbekistan.

#### 5. Conclusion

Family-run businesses are important for Uzbekistan's tourism industry, playing a contributing role in employment generation, local economic development, and the



preservation of cultural heritage. The findings of this study highlight that these enterprises are particularly concentrated in historically significant regions such as Samarkand, where they contribute to the growth of the tourism sector and provide job opportunities for local communities and local people are engaged mostly in family businesses. The flexibility of family-owned tourism businesses, particularly in the post-pandemic recovery phase, underlines their importance in the country's socio-economic landscape.

Despite their contributions, family-run tourism businesses face significant challenges, including financial constraints, regulatory burdens, and low wages, which can impact employee retention and business sustainability. The study's analysis of employment trends indicates that while the sector has experienced a rapid growth in tourism sphere, however, wage disparities remain as an issue still. Addressing these challenges through policy involvements, financial support programs, and capacity-building initiatives will be critical in ensuring the long-term success of these enterprises.

Moreover, the findings reveal that smaller family businesses tend to have higher family involvement, whereas medium and large enterprises transition toward more formal structures with lower family participation in the business. This suggests that as businesses expand, they may face difficulties in maintaining their familial character while also striving for professionalization and scalability. Future research should further investigate these dynamics, particularly with a larger dataset, to better understand the long-term sustainability of family-run businesses in Uzbekistan's tourism sector as this sector has not been researched scientifically yet among scholars.

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