

DEVELOPMENT TRENDS OF YOUTH TOURISM IN UZBEKISTAN: PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

Samiyev Siroj Saitovich

PhD, Teacher at the Department of Tourism,
The Silk Road International University
of Tourism and Cultural Heritage

Umurzoqova Shakhnoza Shukhrat kizi

Master's student,
The Silk Road International University
of Tourism and Cultural Heritage

Abstract

This article examines the current state and key development drivers of youth tourism in Uzbekistan. Particular attention is given to the evolving preferences of young travelers, the growing impact of digital platforms such as Airbnb, and the rising popularity of adventure tourism. The study is supported by the results of a survey conducted among 128 respondents, providing a basis for practical recommendations aimed at enhancing the youth tourism sector.

Keywords: Youth tourism, adventure tourism, digital platforms, tourism, tourism innovators.

Annotatsiya

Ushbu maqolada O'zbekistonda yoshlar turizmining hozirgi holati va rivojlanish omillari tahlil qilingan. Tadqiqot davomida yosh sayyohlarning o'zgarib borayotgan ehtiyojlari, Airbnb kabi raqamli platformalarning ta'siri hamda sarguzasht turizmining ortib borayotgan ommaviyligiga alohida e'tibor qaratilgan. 128 nafar respondent ishtirokida o'tkazilgan so'rovnom natijalari asosida yoshlar turizmini rivojlantirish bo'yicha amaliy tavsiyalar ishlab chiqilgan.

Kalit so'zlar: Yoshlar turizmi, sarguzasht turizmi, raqamli platformalar, turizm, sayyohlik innovatsiyalari.

Аннотация

В статье рассматривается текущее состояние и ключевые факторы развития молодёжного туризма в Узбекистане. Особое внимание уделяется меняющимся предпочтениям молодых туристов, растущему влиянию цифровых платформ, таких как Airbnb, и популярности приключенческого туризма. На основе опроса, проведённого среди 128 респондентов, представлены практические рекомендации по дальнейшему развитию молодёжного туризма.

Ключевые слова: молодёжный туризм, приключенческий туризм, цифровые платформы, туризм, инновации туризма.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, tourism in Uzbekistan has experienced rapid growth, with youth tourism emerging as one of the most dynamic and fast-growing segments. Globally, youth tourism is recognized as a key contributor to socio-economic development (UNWTO, 2022). This article seeks to identify the main factors influencing the

development of youth tourism in Uzbekistan, analyze current challenges, and explore future opportunities. The findings are expected to hold both scientific and practical value in establishing a stable and innovative youth tourism framework.

According to recent statistics from the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC, 2022), youth travelers account for more than 270 million international trips annually. This segment is characterized by a growing demand for cultural immersion, adventure experiences, and sustainable travel options. Uzbekistan, with its rich Silk Road heritage, diverse natural landscapes, and increasing digital connectivity, possesses considerable untapped potential to attract both domestic and international youth tourists.

Furthermore, the global post-COVID-19 recovery has shifted travel preferences among young people. A strong inclination toward eco-conscious travel, digital nomadism, and personalized experiences has emerged, and Uzbekistan is beginning to respond through new initiatives such as the Digital Nomad Visa, the promotion of youth hostels, and the development of regional ecotourism clusters.

In addition, the government has recognized youth tourism as a tool for enhancing youth engagement, entrepreneurship, and regional economic development. Through collaborations with international organizations such as UNDP and UNESCO, several pilot projects have been launched to support local youth-led tourism startups and promote cross-border cultural exchanges.

Building on these promising developments, Uzbekistan is well-positioned to further elevate its global presence by enhancing international branding, advancing dynamic digital marketing strategies, and expanding transport infrastructure in rural areas. Proactively addressing these aspects through innovative measures will enable youth tourism to flourish as a powerful engine of inclusive growth and a bridge for cultural diplomacy.

1. Theoretical Foundations of Youth Tourism

Youth tourism refers to travel activities carried out primarily by individuals aged 15 to 30. It is characterized by low-cost, independent, and experience-based travel. Typical forms include adventure, educational, volunteer, and environmental tourism (Kazakov, 2021). Globally, youth tourism comprises more than 20% of the total tourism market and continues to grow annually (WTTC, 2022).

Youth tourism plays a crucial role in personal development and socialization. It is not only an economic activity but also intersects with education, culture, and health (Sharipova, 2023). According to UNWTO (2022), young travelers often stay longer and visit more destinations. This demographic increasingly relies on modern technologies and digital platforms to plan their trips, leading to growing demand for mobile and internet-based services.

2. The State of Youth Tourism in Uzbekistan

In Uzbekistan, youth tourism has recently received significant public attention. Programs like the Youth Travel Program have increased participation among students, young professionals, and teachers (Ministry of Tourism, 2023). However, challenges remain in marketing, infrastructure, and international youth exchanges.

Domestic youth interest is rising, aided by presidential initiatives such as “Youth Tourism Week” and “Student Tourist” programs. These projects have facilitated educational and cultural trips to Samarkand, Bukhara, and Khiva (Bobojonov, 2022). Higher education institutions are also supporting travel startups and innovative projects, such as the Tourism Leaders initiative at the Tashkent University of Tourism.

Regionally, destinations like Fergana, Kashkadarya, Surkhandarya, and Karakalpakstan offer emerging opportunities for adventure and eco-tourism (Kadyrov, 2020).

3. Inquiry Methodology and Results

An online survey was conducted among 18–30-year-old respondents, mainly students and young professionals. Key findings include:

- 75% travel at least once a year.
- 62% prefer adventure tourism.
- 55% use platforms like Airbnb and Booking.com.

Important travel factors: price (64%), safety (58%), and adventure (47%). Many plan their trips independently, often influenced by blogs and Instagram pages. Notably, 70% of respondents described travel as a “new experiential tool” (Statays.com, 2023).

Survey questions covered areas such as:

- Travel frequency
- Most visited destinations
- Key factors in destination choice
- Use of online platforms and social media

4. Case Study: Adventure Tourism and Airbnb Services

Adventure tourism includes physical activities, exploration of natural environments, and cultural exchanges — making it popular among Uzbek youth (Tourism Economics Journal, 2022). Destinations such as Chatkal, Gissar, Zarafshan, the Aral Sea, and the Ferghana Valley are well-suited for such tourism.

Youth activities include cycling, mountain hiking, camping, rafting, and quad-biking in areas like Beldersoy, Karatanta, Nuratau, and Zaamin (Kazakov, 2021). Airbnb is also gaining popularity among youth tourists. It offers affordable, culturally immersive experiences, especially in Bukhara, Khiva, and Tashkent (Airbnb, 2023).

These services enable deeper cultural engagement and promote budget-friendly travel for both local and international youth.

5. Problems and Prospects

The development of youth tourism in Uzbekistan faces a variety of structural and systemic challenges that limit its full potential, despite a growing interest among young travelers and the government's supportive policies. The research identified several key barriers:

Financial constraints remain one of the most critical obstacles. A large portion of the youth population, especially students and early-career professionals, lacks sufficient disposable income to travel frequently. While some state-subsidized

programs exist, they are limited in scale and coverage, often not reaching youth in rural or marginalized areas.

Limited information dissemination and marketing strategies further exacerbate the problem. Tourism promotion in Uzbekistan still largely focuses on general or historical tourism, with minimal targeted content specifically designed for youth. Many youth travelers rely on social media, influencers, and peer-to-peer recommendations, yet there is a lack of coordinated digital campaigns to engage them directly (Sharipova, 2023).

Digital infrastructure, especially in rural and mountainous regions where adventure and eco-tourism are most viable, remains underdeveloped. Weak internet access and outdated booking systems limit the use of modern platforms such as mobile travel apps, virtual tours, and digital itineraries, which are especially important for tech-savvy youth travelers.

Enhancing tourism-related infrastructure and expanding public transportation networks can make many promising destinations even more accessible and attractive. For instance, improving road conditions, adding clear signage, and developing affordable, quality accommodations in remote areas rich in natural and cultural assets can significantly boost interest among both domestic and international youth travelers. Furthermore, investing in the professional development of local guides and tourism service providers—such as training in foreign languages, digital tools, and youth-focused communication—will strengthen service quality. Aligning budget-friendly hospitality offerings with global standards will also create a more appealing environment for younger tourists seeking memorable and high-quality experiences.

Cultural and environmental awareness among local youth is relatively low, especially outside urban centers. Tourism education is not systematically integrated into school or university curricula, which results in a lack of understanding of the value of tourism, sustainability, and heritage preservation (Tourism Journal, 2023).

Despite these challenges, there are considerable prospects and untapped potential for youth tourism development in Uzbekistan. Several strategic opportunities have emerged: creating specialized tourism packages tailored to the preferences of youth — including adventure travel, volunteer experiences, festival tourism, and digital detox camps — can significantly increase engagement. These packages can be offered at discounted rates in partnership with universities and youth organizations.

Developing digital platforms that aggregate youth travel options, integrate AI-powered itinerary planning, and facilitate peer reviews can attract younger demographics accustomed to self-planning and mobile-first experiences.

Expanding territories for adventure and eco-tourism, particularly in regions such as Surkhandarya, Ferghana Valley, and Karakalpakstan, would diversify the tourism map and generate local employment. Infrastructure investment in these areas would benefit not only tourism but also regional development.

Promoting tourism education among youth is essential. Introducing elective courses on travel planning, sustainable tourism, and cultural heritage into high school

and university curricula could foster long-term awareness and professional engagement.

Encouraging international exchanges, student travel forums, and youth volunteering programs would strengthen intercultural ties and global exposure. Government-backed scholarships for tourism internships abroad could also cultivate future industry leaders.

Applying digital marketing strategies, including influencer partnerships, immersive VR experiences, and interactive mobile apps, can modernize Uzbekistan's tourism image and make it more relatable to Gen Z and millennial travelers (UNWTO, 2022).

Hosting annual Youth Tourism Forums would provide a platform for idea-sharing, policy discussion, and showcasing innovative projects. This initiative can bring together stakeholders from government, academia, business, and youth networks.

Launching cultural immersion tours for international students offers dual benefits: enhancing the visibility of Uzbekistan's soft power and encouraging deeper engagement with the country's traditions, hospitality, and language (Kadyrov, 2020).

By addressing these challenges with proactive strategies and youth-inclusive policies, Uzbekistan can transform youth tourism into a driving force of sustainable development, innovation, and international cultural exchange.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Youth tourism is emerging as a vital component of Uzbekistan's tourism industry. It holds not only economic, but also cultural and social importance. Findings from this research underscore that adventure tourism and digital services are key development drivers.

Proper state policy and private sector engagement can significantly expand youth tourism and transform Uzbekistan into a youth-friendly tourism destination. Youth tourism enhances internal and external tourism potential, supports economic growth, strengthens international relationships, promotes national identity, and empowers youth. Recommendations from this article may guide the improvement of tourism policies and help shape youth as active, culturally aware participants in global tourism.

REFERENCES

1. Airbnb. (2023). Official reports and insights. <https://www.airbnb.com>
2. Bobojonov, A. (2022). Ways to Develop Domestic Tourism in Uzbekistan. Tashkent: Tourism Publishing.
3. Kadyrov, B. (2020). Youth and Cultural Exchange. Samarkand: Samarkand University Press.
4. Kazakov, M. (2021). Youth and Adventure Tourism in the CIS. Moscow: Tourism Press.
5. Ministry of Tourism and Cultural Heritage of the Republic of Uzbekistan. (2023). Educational Materials on Youth Tourism. Tashkent.
6. Sharipova, G. (2023). Digital Tourism in Central Asia. Tashkent: Innovation Tourism Press.

7. Statays.com. (2023). Youth Travel Trends Report. <https://www.statays.com>
8. Tourism Economics Journal. (2022). Youth Tourism in Central Asia, 28(1), 55–70.
9. Tourism: Scientific-Methodical Journal. (2023). Youth Engagement in Local Tourism, (2), 34–40.
10. UNWTO. (2022). Youth Tourism and Its Socio-Economic Impact. Madrid: UNWTO Publications.
11. WTTC. (2022). Global Youth Travel Report. London: World Travel & Tourism Council.
12. Google Scholar. (2023). Analytical Sources on Youth Tourism. <https://scholar.google.com>



Marketing

ilmiy, amaliy va ommabop jurnali

Muharrir: Xakimov Ziyodulla Axmadovich
Ingliz tili muharriri: Tursunov Boburjon Ortiqmirzayevich
Rus tili muharriri: Kaxramonov Xurshidjon Shuxrat o'g'li
Musahhah: Karimova Shirin Zoxid qizi
Sahifalovchi va dizaynerlar: Sadikov Shoxrux Shuxratovich
Abidjonov Nodirbek Odijon o'g'li

2025-yil, iyun, 6-son

© Materiallar ko'chirib bosilganda "Marketing" ilmiy, amaliy va ommabop jurnali manba sifatida ko'rsatilishi shart. Jurnalda bosilgan material va reklamalardagi dalillarning aniqligiga mualliflar mas'ul. Tahririyat fikri har vaqt ham mualliflar fikriga mos kelavermasligi mumkin. Tahririyatga yuborilgan materiallar qaytarilmaydi.

Mazkur jurnalda maqolalar chop etish uchun quyidagi havolalarga murojaat qilish mumkin. Ilmiy maqola, ommabop maqola, reklama, hikoya va boshqa ilmiy-ijodiy materiallar yuborishingiz mumkin.

Materiallar va reklamalar pullik asosda chop etiladi.

Elektron pochta: info@marketingjournal.uz
Bot: [@marketinjournalbot](https://t.me/@marketinjournalbot)
Tel.: +998977838464, +998939266610

Jurnalning rasmiy sayti: <https://marketingjournal.uz>

Marketing jurnali O'zbekiston Respublikasi Oliy ta'lim, fan va innovatsiyalar vazirligi huzuridagi **Oliy attestatsiya komissiyasi rayosatining 2024-yil 04-oktabrdagi 332/5 sonli qarori** bilan milliy ilmiy nashrlar ro'yxatiga kiritilgan



"Marketing" ilmiy, amaliy va ommabop jurnali 2024-yil 15-martdan O'zbekiston Respublikasi Prezidenti Administratsiyasi huzuridagi Axborot va ommaviy kommunikatsiyalar agentligi tomonidan **C-5669517** reyestr raqami tartibi bo'yicha ro'yxatdan o'tkazilgan. **Litsenziya raqami: №240874**



"Marketing" ilmiy, amaliy va ommabop jurnalining xalqaro darajasi: **9710. ГОСТ 7.56-2002** " Seriyali nashrlarning xalqaro standart raqamlanishi" davlatlataro standartlari talablari. **Berilgan ISSN tartib raqami: 3060-4621**