



MODERN PROBLEMS IN EDUCATION AND THEIR SCIENTIFIC
SOLUTIONS

THE IMPACT OF TOURISM CLUSTERS ON EMPLOYMENT
AND HOUSEHOLD INCOME IN UZBEKISTAN

Mamatkulova Nadira Makkamovna

*Associate Professor of Tashkent University of Architecture and Civil Engineering
(TUACE)*

e-mail: n.mamatkulova@taqu.uz

Maylonov Musulmon Davron ugli

Abstract. This thesis examines how tourism clusters can contribute to employment creation and household income growth in Uzbekistan. A tourism cluster connects accommodation providers, tour operators, transport companies, catering businesses, artisans, farmers, cultural institutions and public authorities within a common regional value chain.

Keywords: tourism clusters, employment, household income, multiplier effect, local value chain, regional development, Uzbekistan.

Аннотация. В тезисе рассматривается влияние туристических кластеров на создание рабочих мест и рост доходов домашних хозяйств в Узбекистане. Туристический кластер объединяет гостиницы, семейные гостевые дома, туроператоров, транспортные и предприятия общественного питания, ремесленников, фермеров, учреждения культуры и органы государственного управления в единую региональную цепочку создания стоимости.

Ключевые слова: туристические кластеры, занятость, доходы домашних хозяйств, мультипликативный эффект, местная цепочка создания стоимости, региональное развитие, Узбекистан.

Annotatsiya. Ushbu tezisda turizm klasterlarining O'zbekistonda yangi ish o'rinlarini yaratish va uy xo'jaliklari daromadlarini oshirishga ta'siri ko'rib chiqilgan. Turizm klasteri mehmonxonalar, oilaviy mehmon uylari, turoperatorlar, transport va umumiy ovqatlanish korxonalari, hunarmandlar, fermerlar, madaniyat muassasalari hamda davlat boshqaruvi organlarini yagona hududiy qiymat zanjiriga birlashtiradi.

Kalit so'zlar: turizm klasterlari, bandlik, uy xo'jaliklari daromatlari, multiplikativ ta'sir, mahalliy qiymat zanjiri, hududiy rivojlanish, O'zbekiston.

A tourism cluster is a geographically concentrated network of interconnected enterprises, institutions and supporting organizations that jointly produce a complete visitor experience. According to Porter, clusters increase productivity, encourage innovation and improve cooperation among firms while preserving competition. In tourism, this approach is particularly important because a tourism product is not supplied by a single enterprise. Its quality depends on accommodation, transport, food services, cultural attractions, entertainment, information services, safety and public infrastructure.





MODERN PROBLEMS IN EDUCATION AND THEIR SCIENTIFIC SOLUTIONS

Uzbekistan has favorable conditions for developing several specialized tourism clusters. Samarkand, Bukhara and Khorezm can form interconnected cultural-heritage and pilgrimage tourism clusters; the Tashkent region has potential for urban, mountain and recreational tourism; the Fergana Valley can combine handicrafts, gastronomy and cultural tourism; while Karakalpakstan can specialize in ecological and Aral Sea tourism. Cooperation within such clusters makes it possible to include local microenterprises and households in the tourism value chain.

The development of tourism clusters affects employment through three main channels. The direct channel includes jobs in hotels, guesthouses, travel agencies, restaurants, museums and passenger transport. The indirect channel covers employment among suppliers of food, furniture, textiles, agricultural products, construction, maintenance and digital services. The induced channel arises when tourism employees and entrepreneurs spend their earnings on locally produced goods and services.

Tourism clusters can raise household income through wages, entrepreneurial profits, rental income, and sales of agricultural products, handicraft production and transport services. Family guesthouses are especially important because they convert existing household assets—rooms, traditional homes, cooking skills and local knowledge—into sources of market income. Tourism also creates opportunities for women and young people who may face limited access to formal industrial employment.

In 2024, Uzbekistan recorded 7.957 million inbound tourist trips, which was 20.1% more than in 2023. Travel companies served almost 1.973 million people, an increase of 70.5%. Furthermore, the number of hotels and similar accommodation facilities reached 2,383, while 566 individual and other accommodation facilities operated across the country. These developments expanded demand for reception staff, guides, cooks, cleaners, drivers, translators, salespeople and cultural-service workers.

The export of travel services reached USD 3.519 billion in 2024 and represented 48.8% of Uzbekistan's total service exports. When this revenue is retained within a regional cluster, it can generate a multiplier effect. For example, a hotel purchasing fruit, vegetables, textiles, furniture and repair services from local supplier's transfers part of tourism expenditure to farming, manufacturing and household enterprises. Local workers subsequently spend their wages in shops, education, healthcare and other services, creating induced income beyond the tourism industry itself.

However, tourism growth does not automatically guarantee an equal increase in household welfare. Research shows that tourism can benefit all income groups while distributing a larger share of gains to owners of capital and skilled workers. Income leakages occur when hotels import food and equipment, employ workers from outside the region or transfer profits to external owners. Seasonal employment, informal work, low wages and limited social protection can also reduce the social impact of tourism.

Uzbekistan's average total income per capita reached UZS 24.1 million in 2024, with nominal growth of 16.1% and real growth of 5.9%. The simultaneous increase in tourism





MODERN PROBLEMS IN EDUCATION AND THEIR SCIENTIFIC SOLUTIONS

employment, visitor flows and real household income is consistent with tourism contributing to wider economic activity. Nevertheless, these national trends do not by themselves prove that tourism clusters caused the observed income growth. A reliable causal assessment would require district-level household surveys, tourism expenditure data and comparisons between cluster and non-cluster territories.

The contribution of tourism clusters to employment and household income can be strengthened through several measures.

First, tourism enterprises should be encouraged to purchase agricultural products, food, textiles, souvenirs and maintenance services from local producers. Regional digital supplier registers could connect hotels and restaurants with farmers, artisans and small enterprises.

Second, vocational training should be coordinated with the actual needs of each cluster. Educational institutions, hotels and tour operators should jointly develop short courses in foreign languages, hospitality, digital marketing, guiding, food safety and customer service. Training should particularly target women, young people and residents of rural areas.

Third, financial and advisory support should be provided to family guesthouses, craft workshops and community-based tourism enterprises. Simplified registration, microcredit and digital payment systems would help informal activities become sustainable formal businesses.

Fourth, regions should develop year-round tourism products. Festivals, gastronomy routes, pilgrimage programs, conferences, wellness tourism and winter recreation can reduce seasonal income fluctuations and improve job stability.

Fifth, cluster performance should be evaluated through social as well as financial indicators. These should include the number of formal jobs, median wages, employment by gender and age, the share of local procurement, the proportion of tourism income retained in the region, the number of participating households and changes in household real income and poverty.

Tourism clusters have considerable potential to increase employment and household income in Uzbekistan by linking tourism demand with local enterprises, labor and household assets. The growth of tourism-industry employment to 249,764 people, the rise of inbound trips to 7.957 million and travel-service exports of USD 3.519 billion demonstrate the expanding economic scale of the sector.

The main advantage of the cluster approach is that it distributes tourism expenditure across a broader regional value chain rather than concentrating revenue in hotels and tour operators. Its social effectiveness, however, depends on local ownership, workforce skills, formal and decent employment, reduced seasonality and strong connections with farmers, artisans and small businesses. Therefore, tourism policy should evaluate success not only by visitor numbers and export earnings, but also by the quality of jobs created and the proportion of tourism revenue that reaches local households.





References

1. Mitchell, J., & Ashley, C. (2010). *Tourism and Poverty Reduction: Pathways to Prosperity*. London: Earthscan. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781849774635>.
2. World Tourism Organization & International Labour Organization. (2014). *Measuring Employment in the Tourism Industries: Guide with Best Practices*. Madrid: UNWTO. <https://doi.org/10.18111/9789284416158>.
3. World Tourism Organization. (2023). *Tourism Doing Business: Investing in Uzbekistan*. Madrid: UNWTO.
4. National Statistics Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan. (2025). Employment in Tourism Industries: Number of Employees in Legal Entities.
5. National Statistics Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan. (2025). *Development of Tourism and Recreation in the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2024*. Statistical press release.
6. National Statistics Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan. (2025). *Foreign Trade Turnover of the Republic of Uzbekistan, January–December 2024*. Statistical press release.
7. National Statistics Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan. (2025). *Total Income of the Population in the Republic of Uzbekistan, January–December 2024*. Statistical press release.

