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THE ROLE OF TOURISM VILLAGES IN PRESERVING LOCAL CULTURE AND CREATING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES IN UZBEKISTAN

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Abstract. This paper examines the potential for preserving local culture and increasing household incomes in rural Uzbekistan through the development of "tourism villages." It proposes an approach to evaluate the relationship between the income of rural residents and factors such as infrastructure quality, service-related skills, family-run guesthouses, and digital marketing. Indicators and sampling principles are defined for potential observational studies in the rural areas of the Samarkand and Bukhara regions. The work is theoretical and methodological in nature; it does not present empirical regression results.

Keywords: rural tourism, tourism villages, cultural heritage, family-run guesthouses, regional income, econometric assessment, sustainable development.

The economic development and diversification of rural areas are linked to the engagement of the population in alternative forms of employment, the pursuit of artisanal initiatives, and the utilization of new service-oriented opportunities. Rural tourism facilitates the remote promotion of local services, the direct sale of national products and souvenirs, and the attraction of both domestic and international tourists.

However, the mere granting of "tourist zone" status does not automatically guarantee stable income growth for the local population. The challenge lies in transforming existing cultural-historical resources and infrastructure into high-quality services that meet market demand and ensure a steady flow of tourists.

Research indicates that the preservation of traditional culture and customs in rural tourism is a key factor in enhancing the appeal of services [1]. These theoretical and practical sources suggest that, when developing rural tourism, it is essential to evaluate not only economic benefits but also the preservation of cultural identity and the potential for bringing services to the market. This thesis proposes an empirical examination of the relationship between infrastructure and service quality in tourism-oriented villages and the income levels of the local population.

In studies focused on the effective utilization of tourism potential in rural areas, the development of the service sector is explained through the interplay between local entrepreneurship, traditions of hospitality, and infrastructure indicators [2].

Based on this approach, the provision of guest house accommodations and guide services by rural residents can be viewed as an activity that expands the regional service market. In this context, it is important to account for the specific location and infrastructure conditions of each area or household, rather than assuming that all rural locations and households possess identical capabilities.

The objective of this research is to develop a methodological framework for assessing the factors that determine the potential for generating income from rural tourism. This involves the comparative analysis of existing literature, the decomposition of economic and cultural processes into specific factors, and the substantiation of an econometric model structure.

The proposed approach could subsequently be tested using primary data collected from tourism-oriented villages in the Samarkand and Bukhara regions.

It is necessary to precisely define the scope of "income derived from tourism activities" within the context of this research. It is proposed that this include net income generated from family-run guesthouses, the sale of traditional cuisine and souvenirs, as well as the provision of guide and transport services. Expenses—such as food costs, utility bills, platform commissions, and other direct expenditures—must be deducted from total revenue. Failure to do so would conflate gross revenue with net income, leading to an inaccurate assessment of the results.

Official statistics indicate an increase in the number of accommodation facilities and tourism-related establishments across the republic [3]. This study proposes analyzing these indicators at the level of individual rural households, with a specific focus on tracking the costs associated with hosting tourists, providing meals, and offering supplementary services. When estimating revenue, the seasonality of tourist visits, preparation time, and promotional expenses must also be taken into account.

These indicators help determine the practical economic impact of the "tourism village" model.

For the empirical phase, it is recommended to select respondents from rural districts using stratified sampling based on geographic location (proximity to

historical centers), gender, and ownership status of a guesthouse. Surveying only active guesthouse owners or craftspeople would not be representative of the general rural population; therefore, households that do not derive income from tourism activities must also be included in the sample. The sample size should be determined based on the expected participation rate and the desired level of estimation precision. Personal data must be collected with consent and subsequently anonymized.

To mitigate the effects of seasonal income fluctuations, it is suggested that data be collected regarding the most recent tourism season (or the preceding six months). The primary outcome indicators are whether an individual earns income from tourism activities and the average monthly net income derived from such activities. The level of infrastructure and skills is measured through factors such as road access, internet quality, foreign language proficiency, and adherence to hospitality and hygiene standards.

It is advisable to structure the assessment in two parts. In the first part, a Logit model is used to estimate the probability of earning income from rural tourism. In the second part, a regression model is constructed for the logarithm of income for households generating positive earnings. Variables such as the infrastructure score, guesthouse capacity, foreign language proficiency, distance to the main city center, work experience, and gender are included in both parts. This approach makes it possible to distinguish between the opportunity to enter the tourism business and the level of income derived from it.

When interpreting the results of a model, average marginal effects should be presented. The income model, meanwhile, describes relationships within the specific group engaged in tourism, rather than the income of the entire rural population. When combining the results from both parts, an adjustment is applied to convert the logarithmic values back into the original monetary units. Standard errors are calculated in a manner appropriate to the sampling design, and the model is checked for strong correlations among the independent variables.

The identification of a positive relationship between infrastructure or skills and income does not necessarily imply that these factors caused an increase in income of that specific magnitude. Higher-income households may simply have more capital available to invest in renovating guesthouses and improving the quality of their facilities. Therefore, results derived from cross-sectional data should be interpreted as statistical associations accounting for control variables rather than as causal effects.

To evaluate the impact of practical programs or training courses, it is beneficial to track the same respondents both before and after the intervention (using panel data). This approach helps to isolate the specific outcomes of tourism training from broader shifts in the overall volume of tourism in the region. Based on the proposed methodology, regional support can be tailored to the specific type of barrier encountered.

For instance, practical training in services and sanitation is recommended when there is a lack of skills; infrastructure support—such as road access, telecommunications, and credit—is advised when technical constraints exist; and

integration into online booking platforms, combined with mentorship, is suggested when market access proves difficult.

In conclusion, the development of rural tourism requires the interconnection of infrastructure, cultural heritage, and service provision capabilities. The two-part assessment approach proposed in this thesis allows for the distinct analysis of factors that determine both access to tourism-related income and the scale of that income. Future research should focus on testing this methodology using real-world regional data and subsequently refining regional tourism programs based on the findings.

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O‘ZBEKISTON TURIZM SALOHIYATI: IMKONIYATLAR VA RIVOJLANISH ISTIQBOLLARI

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Annotatsiya. Ushbu maqolada O‘zbekiston Respublikasining turizm salohiyati, sohadagi mavjud resurslar va ularning iqtisodiyotdagi o‘rni ilmiy-tahliliy jihatdan o‘rganilgan. Tadqiqot davomida mamlakatning madaniy-tarixiy, ziyorat, ekologik va gastronomik turizm imkoniyatlari, viza rejimini liberallashtirish hamda infratuzilmani modernizatsiya qilish bo‘yicha amalga oshirilayotgan islohotlar tahlil qilingan. Shuningdek, 2025–2026-yillardagi statistik ko‘rsatkichlar asosida sohadagi tizimli muammolar aniqlanib, «O‘zbekiston — 2030» strategiyasi doirasida turizmni barqaror rivojlantirish bo‘yicha amaliy takliflar ishlab chiqilgan.