



The Place And Role Of The Tourism Industry In The Economy Of The Middle East Countries

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ABSTRACT

This article is devoted to the analysis of the current state and development trends of the tourism industry in the Muslim countries of the Middle East. The place, role and priority importance of this industry in national economies are revealed. In the article, economic indicators reflecting the state of international tourism are given in table form. Data on the development of tourism in the Muslim countries of the Middle East are compared with the indicators of the leading countries of the industry in the world. Also, the importance of tourism development in Uzbekistan and its forecasts for the near future are outlined.

Keywords:

World Travel and Tourism Council, share of tourism in GDP, eco-tourism, medical tourism, cognitive tourism, congress tourism, religious tourism (pilgrimage, ziyarat), hunting tourism, educational tourism, shopping tourism, village tourism.

Introduction. Today, tourism has become a daily reality for hundreds of millions of people on our planet. Given the significant contribution of this industry to national economies, it is recognized as an economic phenomenon of our time. As the Hague Declaration on Tourism states: "Tourism, as a result of the internationalization of all spheres of life of nations, has become the main means of establishing personal, cultural, political and economic ties that are considered important in the life of people and modern communities."

The tourism industry has been one of the fastest growing sectors of the world economy in recent years. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), since the beginning of our century, the annual growth rate of the number of foreign tourists worldwide has been on average more than 5 percent, while income from tourism, that is, foreign exchange earnings, has been growing

on average by more than 14 percent. The growing importance of tourism in the world is explained, first of all, by the increase in its share in national income and, consequently, its priority in national economies.

The development of tourism in our republic, attracting investments to the sector, creating new jobs, increasing human resources, and ultimately, turning tourism into one of the locomotive sectors of the economy are among the most urgent tasks today. "In our country, tourism is often limited to our ancient cities, historical and cultural monuments. However, there is great potential for the development of tourism in the unique nature of our country, national reserves, and mountainous regions. In particular, the development of medical tourism, pilgrimage tourism, and ecotourism will give a great impetus not only to the development of the economy, but also to the development of social sectors." In addition, other attractive

types of tourism, such as cognitive tourism, congress tourism, hunting tourism, educational tourism, shopping, and rural tourism, are rapidly gaining popularity in the international arena.

Objectives and tasks: The Middle East countries consist of Arab countries located in North Africa, the Arabian Peninsula and the Persian Gulf, as well as non-Arab countries such as Turkey, Iran and Israel. Most of them are extremely attractive not only economically, but also from a tourism point of view. This article takes as its object of study some countries with relatively high tourism indicators, in particular, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain and Tunisia. From a tourism point of view, almost all of the countries of this region are distinguished by their location on the sea coast and their rich historical and cultural monuments. The aim and task of this study is to reveal the place and role of the tourism industry in the national economies of these countries.

Materials and methods: In writing a scientific article, first of all, the Presidential Decrees and Resolutions on the development of tourism in our country and the relevance of the rapid development of the tourism industry, in particular, pilgrimage tourism, for the national economy play a fundamental role. In the process of scientific analysis, relevant information was obtained from the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), scientific works of foreign and republican scientists, as well as Internet resources. During the study, methods of identifying trends in economic processes and monographic research based on theoretical methodological, systematization principles, comparative analysis, systematization of statistical data were used.

Discussion

The development of the tourism industry and the increase in income from its services is an important factor in solving social and economic problems in these countries. In particular, the formation and improvement of the tourism industry, the creation of new jobs, the restoration of historical and cultural monuments, and increased attention to preserving ecological balance are among them.

Turkey is a country that has long attracted the attention of tourists with its rich history, high culture and beautiful nature. Blue sea shores, green forests, snowy mountains, hospitable people and unique Turkish cuisine are among the characteristics that characterize this country. Currently, new innovative programs are being implemented within the framework of the “New Look at the Turkish Tourism Sector” project, which aims to further promote all the tourist opportunities of the country. At the same time, Turkey currently ranks 4th in Europe in terms of medical institutions, their level and quality of treatment. In particular, plastic surgery, ophthalmology, dentistry and others are developed. Many clients from countries such as Great Britain, France, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, as well as Egypt, Libya and Syria visit the country for treatment. Among the countries of the Middle East, Turkey is leading in terms of the number of tourists visiting the country and their income. According to the data for 2023 presented in Table 1 below, Turkey is the world's third largest tourist destination, followed by France (88 million), Spain (82 million), It is in 6th place (50 million) after the USA (70 million), China (50 million), Italy (62 million). The income of these countries from international tourism amounted to 72 billion, 73 billion, 210 billion, 33 billion, 50 billion and 44 billion US dollars, respectively. Considering that international tourism accounts for 12 percent of the world's GDP, we can be sure that the tourism industry is a priority sector in the Turkish economy, with a share of 11.8 percent.

Table 1
Key indicators for international tourism (2023)

№	Мамлакат	Туристлар сони, млн киши	Даромад, млрд \$	ЯИМ, млрд \$
1.	Франция	88,0	72,0	
2.	Испания	82,0	73,0	
3.	АҚШ	70,0	210,0	
4.	Хитой	50,0	33,0	
5.	Италия	62,0	50,0	
6.	Туркия	50,0	44,0	
7.	Саудия Арабистони	22,0	24,0	
8.	БАА	17,0	35,0	
9.	Баҳрайн	12,0	9,0	

8,5

2,5

RESULTS

Source: World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) data.

Saudi Arabia has been paying special attention to the processes of diversifying its economy in recent years. First, in order to reduce its dependence on oil, the country is prioritizing the development of alternative sectors of the economy, in particular, tourism. In addition, Saudi Arabia is developing pilgrimage tourism, i.e., not limited to Hajj and Umrah pilgrimages, but also modern entertainment forms of tourism. In 2023, the number of pilgrims and tourists visiting the country amounted to 22 million. people, tourism revenue amounted to 24 billion. dollars, and its share in GDP amounted to 7 percent.

Minister of Tourism Ahmed Hatib recognized September 27, 2019 - Good Friday - as a historic day for Saudi Arabia. Because from that day, tourist visas began to be issued to citizens of 49 countries. The opening of the country to tourists is part of the economic reform program of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, according to which the official Riyadh plans to increase the number of foreigners visiting Saudi Arabia to 100 million people per year by 2030. It is planned to create about a million new jobs in the country due to the growth of the tourism sector.

In 2023, international tourism brought the economy of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) \$ 35 billion in revenue, which is 11.6 percent of GDP. The number of tourists visiting the UAE this year was 17 million. people. Shopping, cognitive, that is, informative and other entertainment types of tourism are relatively more developed in this country.

Another rich Arab state located in the Persian Gulf, Bahrain, is expected to receive 12 million tourists in 2023, and the country will receive 9 billion of these. dollars in revenue, which amounted to 11.5% of GDP. In Tunisia, a total of 8.5 million tourists visited in 2023, with revenues of 2.5 billion dollars and its share in GDP was 8.5%.

The analysis of trends in the development of the tourism industry in the Middle East countries shows that, in general, international tourism has developed relatively rapidly across the region. There are significant differences between the countries of the region in terms of the main indicators of this sector, namely the number of tourists visiting the country and the amount of income from it, but there is a close relationship between them in terms of the share of income from tourism in GDP. In particular, the fact that this indicator is above 10 percent on average indicates that tourism has a significant place and role in the economies of these countries.

In our country, the New Uzbekistan Development Strategy for 2022-2026 sets a goal to increase the number of domestic tourists to 12 million and the number of foreign tourists visiting the republic to 9 million within the framework of the "Travel around Uzbekistan" program. Using the innovative activity factor in the regional development of tourism as a catalyst for development will be an important step in achieving this result.

CONCLUSION

Our analysis, aimed at revealing the current state of the tourism industry of the Near Eastern Muslim countries and its place and role in national economies in comparison with the advanced countries of the world, allows us to draw the following conclusions:

Firstly, in most Middle Eastern countries (with the exception of politically unstable countries), the tourism industry is developing in line with the development trends in this area in the world.

Secondly, the tourism industry is a priority area of the national economy in most countries of the region and makes a significant contribution to GDP.

Thirdly, the implementation of measures such as comprehensive support for international tourism by governments, systematic improvement of infrastructure, and wider attraction of investments will have a positive impact on the development of the sector.

Fourthly, it is advisable for Uzbekistan to make effective use of the experience of advanced countries in the development of the tourism industry.

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