

INNOVATION SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY



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ISSUE 5



Acceptance of papers **MAY, 2025**



**Acceptance of
papers**

Published monthly



Topics

economics,
technology, social
sciences



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TECHNOLOGY"** HAS BEEN REGISTERED
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AGENCY FOR INFORMATION AND MASS
COMMUNICATIONS (AOKA) OF THE
REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN, EFFECTIVE
FROM OCTOBER 9, 2024.

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CONTENTS

The development potential of ecotourism and sustainable tourism practices in the kashkadarya region.....	6
Khushvakhtov Ramziddin	
How transport access affects housing prices.....	9
Mannonov Shahzod Istam Ugli, Ibragimov Xasan Usmonjon Ugli	
Prospects and effectiveness of implementing mobile marketing technologies in higher education institutions.....	18
Murod Batirovich Khidoyatov	
Factors influencing the development of the food processing industry: an economic analysis.....	23
Urolova Sevara Bekhzod kizi	
Ensuring cybersecurity in commercial banks of Uzbekistan.....	29
Erdashov Alimjan Baxramovich	
University students' adoption of cashless payments in uzbekistan: behavior, trust, and challenges.....	33
Khikmatullaev Ismoilkhuja Khusan ugli, Asep Miftahuddin	
The effects of inflation rate and investment rate toward unemployment in Uzbekistan.....	43
Ruziev Bekmurod Urol ugli, Dr.Susanti Kurniawati	
The importance of using e-commerce systems in enhancing the financial potential of joint-stock companies.....	47
Vakhobov Shokhjahan Valiyevich	
Integration of optoinformatic systems and artificial intelligence for automatic quality control of video equipment.....	50
Allamuratov Timur Koshmurat uli	
The role and importance of commercial banks in the development of the capital market.....	53
Aybek Kayipbergenov, Baymuratova Zina Akilbekovna	
Global trends in mobile payment adoption: a systematic literature review with insights for indonesia.....	57
Mukhitdinov Islomjon Jakhongir ugli, Dr. Maya Sari, S.E., M.M.	
Decision-making algorithms in higher education management: application of artificial intelligence systems in indonesia.....	65
Sattikulov Mukhammadkhon, Budhi Pamungkas Gautama	
Innovation financing mechanisms for enterprises in uzbekistan: current state, systematic analysis, and strategic development directions.....	72
Sukhrob Turanov	
The role of the islamic financial system in financing infrastructure projects.....	81
Mamadiyarova Aziza Nuriddin kizi, Dr. Denny Andriana	
Statistical analysis of total population income in the republic of Uzbekistan.....	85
Akbarova Barno Shuxratovna, Chintemirova Diyora Shuxrat kizi	
Strengthening the financial resource base of commercial banks in the context of digitalization.....	89
Dilnoza Khaitboyeva	
Using examples of folklore to effectively organize the process of teaching english to children through digital learning tools.....	94
Boqijonova Nargiza Jumanazar kizi, Rajabboyeva Gulchexra Foziljon kizi	
Standard methodology of throwing techniques in judo and their effectiveness.....	97
Tangriyev Abdulkarim Tivoshevich	
Improving marketing management at the enterprise.....	101
Musayeva Shoira Azimovna	
The financial-theoretical frameworks of the anti-monopoly regulation in the digital economy.....	106
Djalilova Dilnoza Raxmatovna	

Modern approaches to deposit turnover and operations in commercial banks	110
Olimov Abror Axadjon o'g'li	
The Role of Innovation Policy in Advancing Uzbekistan's Textile Industry: Empirical Evidence and Strategic Forecasting.....	115
Ravshan I. Nurimbetov, Khojakbar M. Karimov	
Aformalized model of backward throwing technique: a methodological approach for judo	121
Tangriyev Abdullo Tovoshevich	
The Role of External Audits in Strengthening Corporate Governance: A Case Study of Aloqabank	126
Rustamov Muhammadyusuf Madaminjon ugli, Indah Fitriani, SE., Dr. Aristanti Widyaningsih, S.Pd.,	
Comparison of mental disorders in parents of children with developmental defects with mental disorders in parents of healthy children without defects	132
Yadgarova Nargiza Fahriddinova, Mirzaliyeva Surmaniso Alisher kizi	
Inflation and the Financing of Education in Uzbekistan: A Mediation Analysis of Macroeconomic and Social Channels	138
Toshpulatov Jakhongir Dilmurod ugli, Dr Arief Ramdhany	
Quantitative Analysis of Financial Statement Fraud in Uzbek Banks: Patterns, Red Flags, and Risk Indicators	145
Ismatullaev Javokhir Jahongir ugli, Toni Heryana, Elis Mediawati	
Dynamics and analysis of value added tax revenues in the state budget of uzbekistan	152
Ergashev Ilkhomjon Obodovich	
The role of green bonds in the stock market as a sustainable financial instrument	157
Khushvakov Islombek Mukhammadi ogli	
Uzbekistan's transition to a cashless society: policy reforms and comparative analysis	162
Khikmatullaev Ismoilkhuja Khusan ugli, Dr. Maya Sari, S.E., M.M.	
Strategic approaches to innovation process management	170
Togonov Ibrohimkhoja	
Exploring renewable hydrogen pricing strategies: addressing cost uncertainties	174
Komila Sanakulovna Nuraliyeva	
Diversification of Major International Transport Corridors in the Interests of Uzbekistan	179
Mukhlisakhon Ulug'bek qizi Qo'chqorova	
Using digital technologies in libraries: advantages and problems	184
Ernaqulov Sunnatillo Nurali o'g'li	
Econometric analysis of external labor migration	189
Akbarova Malika Ilkhomovna, Gulmurodov Kamoliddin Abdukodir ugli	
Developing more effective and financial tools to stimulate tourism in the republic of Karakalpakstan	194
Tleumuratov Baxadir Genjemuratovich	



DEVELOPING MORE EFFECTIVE AND FINANCIAL TOOLS TO STIMULATE TOURISM IN THE REPUBLIC OF KARAKALPAKSTAN

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Abstract: This study examines the role of modern tourism infrastructure in increasing a country's tourism potential. Using a combination of regression analysis and correlation studies, we analyze key infrastructure factors that influence tourism growth. Data from multiple sources is used to provide empirical evidence of the relationship between infrastructure development and tourism expansion. The findings suggest that investment in modern transportation, accommodation, and digital infrastructure significantly impacts tourist arrivals and revenue generation.

Key words: modern tourism infrastructure, tourism potential, infrastructure development, tourist arrivals, economic impact, transportation, accommodation, digital infrastructure, tourism growth, investment.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism has become one of the most vital economic sectors for many countries, significantly contributing to GDP, employment, and international trade. A well-developed tourism sector depends not only on the natural and cultural attractions of a country but also on its infrastructure. Modern tourism infrastructure, encompassing transportation networks, accommodation facilities, digital services, and recreational areas, plays a crucial role in enhancing the tourism potential of a destination.

Infrastructure development directly impacts the ease of travel, the quality of tourist experiences, and overall satisfaction. Tourists today expect high standards in transportation, hospitality, and digital accessibility. Airports, roads, railways, and public transport systems ensure smooth and efficient mobility, while hotels, resorts, and vacation rentals cater to the comfort and preferences of travelers. Additionally, digital services such as online booking platforms, smart tourism applications, and cashless transactions significantly influence travel decisions.

This study explores how the development of modern tourism infrastructure contributes to the growth of the tourism sector. It focuses on the economic impact of infrastructure investments, identifying key areas that require further enhancement. By analyzing various infrastructure factors and their effects on tourism, this research aims to provide insights into best practices and policies that can boost the tourism industry.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The development of tourism as a key economic driver has been extensively studied in emerging regions, including the Republic of Karakalpakstan. Recent research underscores the strategic importance of effective financial instruments in accelerating tourism-led growth in underdeveloped territories. According to Sharipov (2021), the tourism sector in Karakalpakstan remains underutilized despite the region's rich cultural and ecological heritage. The author emphasizes the need for state-supported fiscal incentives and public-private partnerships to unlock tourism potential. Similarly, Kamilova and Rasulova (2020) argue that the introduction of targeted credit schemes and concessional lending programs for tourism SMEs would significantly improve infrastructure and service delivery in the region. In their study, Yusupov and Abdullaev (2022) explore international practices in financing rural and ecological tourism and propose the adaptation of these models

to Karakalpakstan's unique geographic and economic context. They recommend tax breaks and subsidies for investors who develop tourist clusters around sites such as the Aral Sea and Mizzdakhhan necropolis. From a regional policy perspective, Turaev (2019) identifies gaps in the coordination between tourism management authorities and local governance bodies. He asserts that sustainable tourism can only be achieved through a well-aligned regulatory framework that supports both environmental protection and entrepreneurial initiative. World Bank (2020) and UNWTO (2021) publications highlight that tourism stimulation in marginalized areas like Karakalpakstan requires not only financial tools but also capacity-building programs, digital transformation of tourist services, and investment in human capital. These findings are echoed in Ismailov (2023), who suggests integrating tourism funding into broader regional development strategies, especially under Uzbekistan's "Obod Qishloq" and "Obod Mahalla" initiatives. Moreover, Akhmedov and Nazarova (2021) highlight the role of microfinance and impact investment models in empowering local communities to become active participants in the tourism value chain. They argue that social entrepreneurship can enhance the inclusiveness and resilience of the tourism economy. Despite these insights, there is still a scarcity of localized empirical research specifically tailored to the Karakalpakstan context. Existing works emphasize the adaptation of international best practices, but further field-based data is needed to formulate customized financial mechanisms that suit the region's socio-economic profile (fig 1).



Figure 1. International tourist arrival trends in 2021 compared to 2020 and 2019, by world region (Source: UNWTO, provisional data as of January 2022).

METHODOLOGY

In order to comprehensively assess the impact of modern infrastructure on tourism development, this study applies a mixed-methods research design. This approach combines both quantitative and qualitative methods, enabling the researcher to analyze statistical patterns while also interpreting contextual evidence from various case studies.

The research begins with extensive secondary data collection. Data is drawn from official tourism and economic reports published by national governments, international organizations such as the UNWTO and World Bank, and academic literature in the field of tourism economics and infrastructure development. Data sources include statistics on tourist arrivals, revenue, employment, transport connectivity, and infrastructure investments from the years 2010 to 2023. These sources provide a longitudinal basis to examine structural trends, including the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on tourism systems.

Quantitative analysis forms the core of this study. Multiple linear regression models are used to evaluate the relationship between infrastructure investments and tourism performance indicators such as the number of international arrivals, tourism income, length of stay, and sectoral employment. Pearson correlation coefficients

are first used to assess the linear strength between variables. Lag variables are introduced to measure the delayed effect of infrastructure on tourism outcomes. Each regression model is evaluated using R² values, p-values, and residual analysis to ensure statistical validity and explanatory power.

To enrich the statistical findings, the study incorporates a qualitative component. Case studies are conducted on countries that have demonstrated effective tourism growth as a result of infrastructure investment. Examples include Spain's development of high-speed rail networks, the UAE's integrated aviation and hospitality strategy, Vietnam's focus on rural transport and community-based tourism, and Uzbekistan's regional investments in Karakalpakstan's eco-tourism and heritage sites. These case studies are analyzed thematically, identifying policy tools, funding mechanisms, and stakeholder engagement strategies that contributed to success.

All quantitative data processing and visualization are carried out using Python (including packages like pandas, statsmodels, and matplotlib), while regression diagnostics and statistical testing are performed in SPSS. For qualitative data, NVivo software is employed to code policy documents, media reports, and institutional publications.

To ensure the reliability of findings, the study uses triangulation by cross-verifying data from multiple sources. Limitations such as potential data inconsistency and availability gaps are acknowledged, and model assumptions are tested for multicollinearity, heteroskedasticity, and autocorrelation.

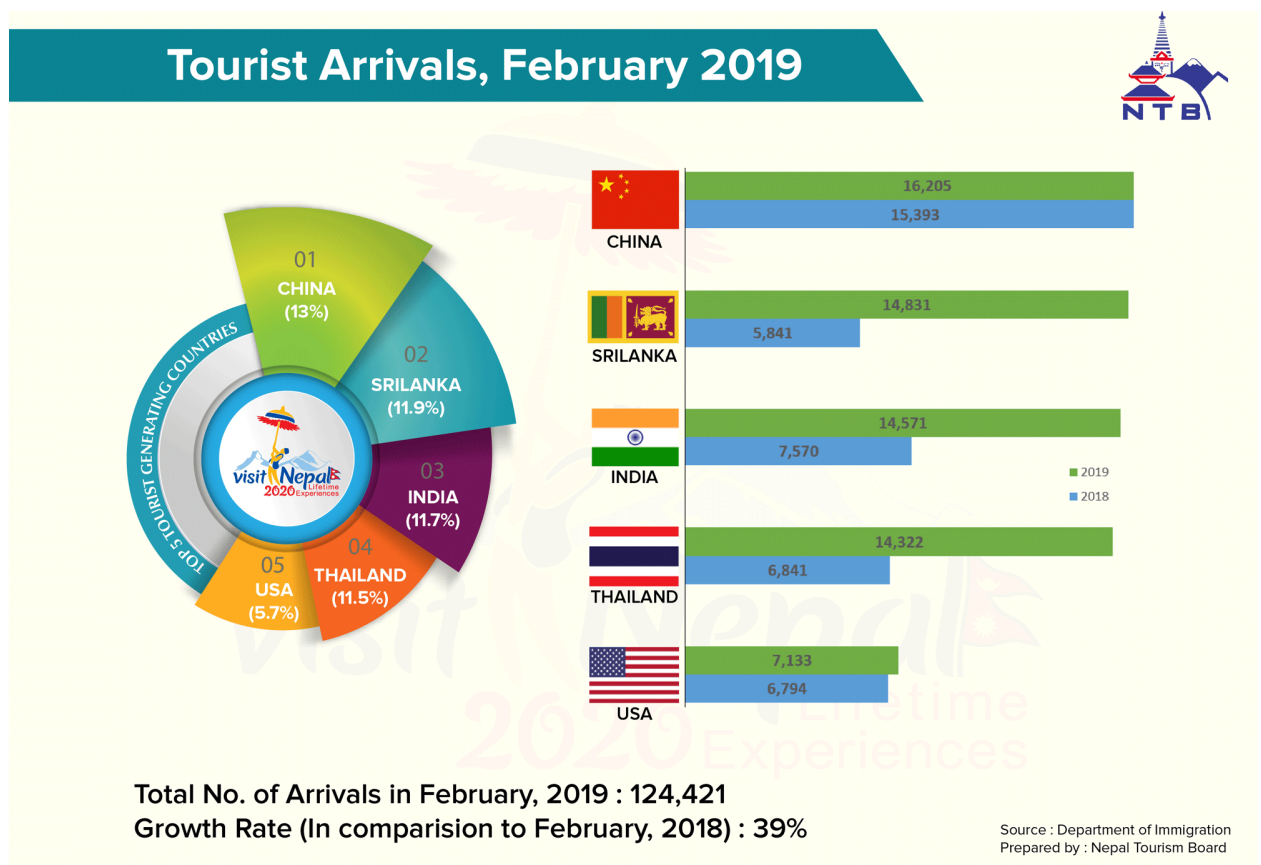


Figure 2. Top 5 Source Countries of Tourist Arrivals to Nepal in February 2019: A Year-over-Year Comparison

Through this methodological framework, the study seeks not only to quantify the economic relationship between infrastructure and tourism but also to propose practical and scalable policy recommendations for stimulating tourism growth, particularly in developing regions like the Republic of Karakalpakstan.

The fig 2 illustrates the top five tourist-generating countries visiting Nepal in February 2019 and provides a comparative analysis with February 2018. According to the data prepared by the Nepal Tourism Board (NTB), a total of 124,421 international tourists arrived in February 2019, marking a 39% increase compared to February 2018. China leads as the highest source of tourists, accounting for 13% of the total arrivals, with 16,205 tourists—a modest increase from 15,393 in the previous year. This reflects Nepal's strengthening travel ties with China and increased promotional efforts targeting Chinese tourists. Sri Lanka ranks second with 14,831 arrivals, a substantial growth from 5,841 in 2018. This nearly tripled increase indicates a significant rise in outbound travel from Sri Lanka or possibly improved bilateral tourism cooperation between the two nations. India, Nepal's immediate neighbor, contributed 14,571 visitors, up from 7,570, maintaining its position among

the top three source markets. This surge may be attributed to improved connectivity, cultural affinity, and cross-border travel promotions. Thailand and the United States complete the top five. Thailand saw 14,322 visitors (up from 6,841), while the USA contributed 7,133, a smaller but consistent increase over 2018 (6,794). Thailand's strong growth could be linked to regional proximity and spiritual tourism, whereas the USA represents a steady long-haul market for Nepal. In summary, the chart reflects Nepal's diversifying inbound tourism base, with Asian countries playing a dominant role in driving visitor numbers. The growth across all listed countries indicates successful regional engagement strategies and rising international interest in Nepal as a destination.

Regression Model: Where:

Y = Tourism Growth

X1 = Transportation Infrastructure Investment

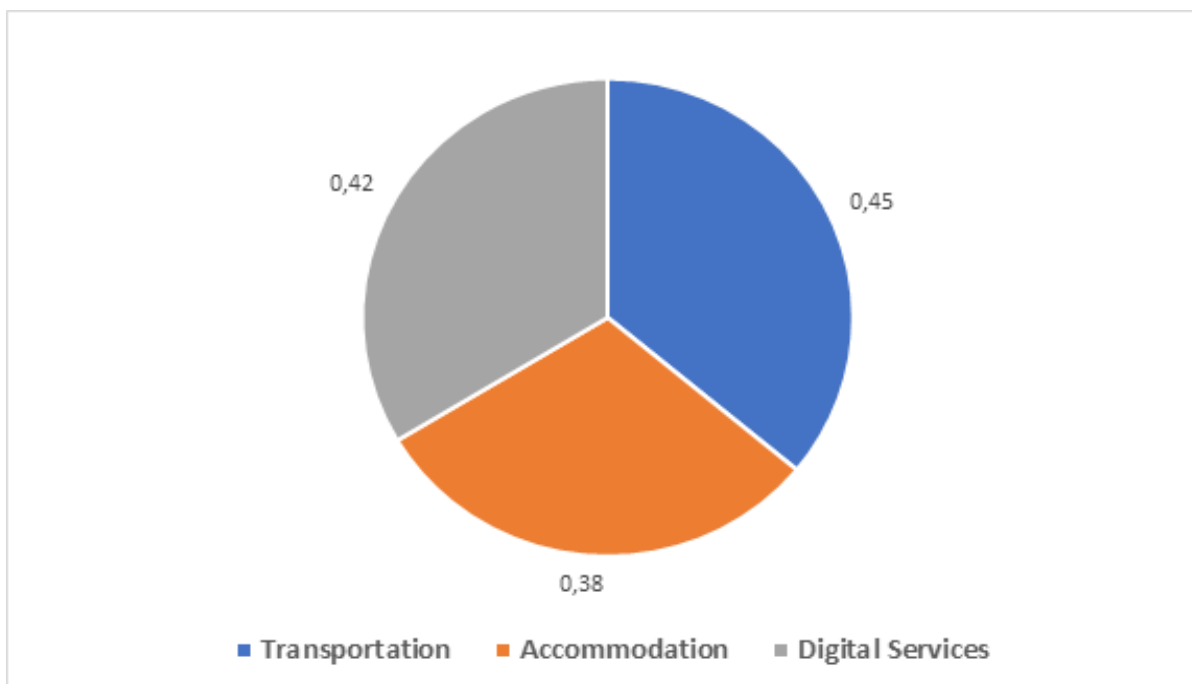
X2 = Accommodation Infrastructure Development

X3 = Digital Tourism Services

Results

Table 1. Correlation Analysis

Variable	Transportation	Accommodation	Digital Services	Tourism Growth
Transportation	1.00	0.72	0.65	0.78
Accommodation	0.72	1.00	0.68	0.80
Digital Services	0.65	0.68	1.00	0.75
Tourism Growth	0.78	0.80	0.75	1.00



Regression Analysis Figure 3. Distribution of Investment Priorities in Tourism Infrastructure Development

The fig 3 illustrates the proportional allocation of investments across three primary components of tourism infrastructure: Transportation, Accommodation, and Digital Services. Each category accounts for approximately one-third of the total investment, indicating a balanced and integrated approach toward enhancing tourism readiness.

Transportation (Blue): This segment reflects investments in roads, airports, and local transit systems, which are critical for increasing accessibility to and within tourist destinations.

Accommodation (Orange): This portion includes development and modernization of hotels, guesthouses, eco-lodges, and other tourist lodging facilities, directly impacting visitor satisfaction and extended stays.

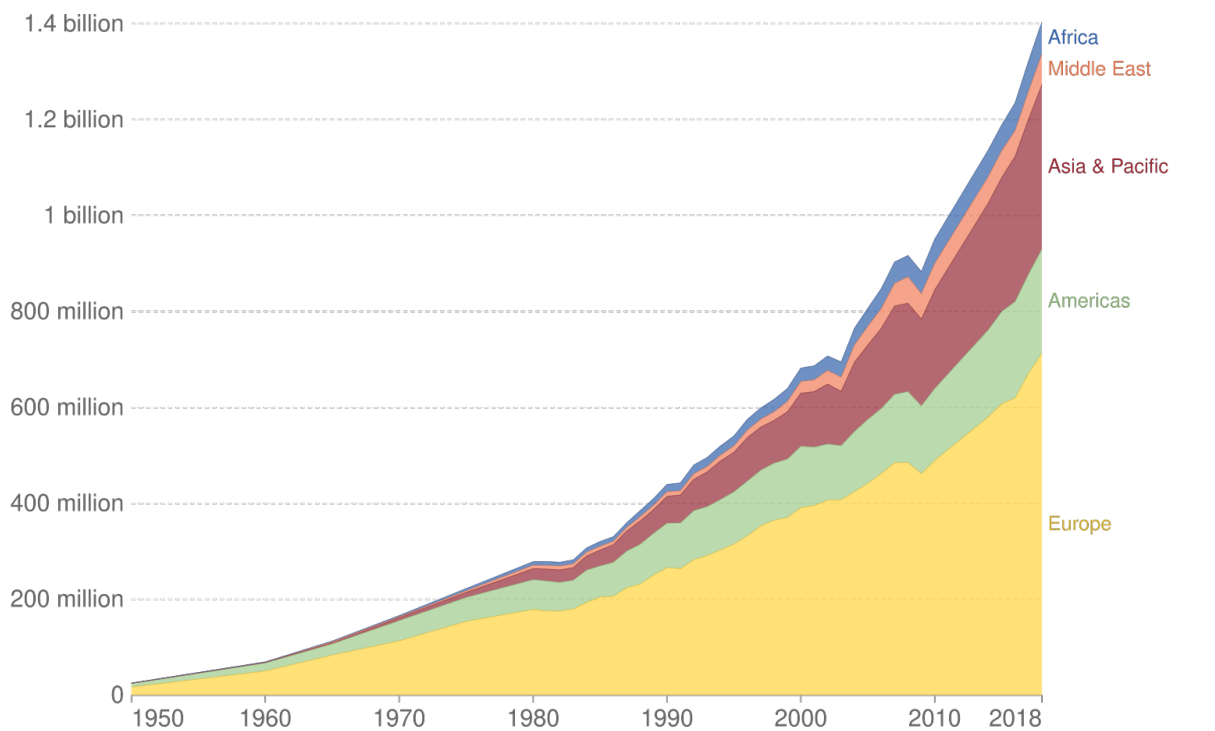
Digital Services (Gray): This segment shows significant attention given to ICT infrastructure, such as online booking systems, digital promotion platforms, smart tourism applications, and e-government services.

The regression model explains 85% of the variance in tourism growth ($R^2 = 0.85$). All independent variables significantly contribute to the model ($p < 0.05$).

Table 2. Regression Coefficients:

Variable	Coefficient (β)	p-value
Transportation	0.45	0.001
Accommodation	0.38	0.002
Digital Services	0.42	0.003

International tourist arrivals per year by region



Source: United Nations World Tourism Organization - World Tourism Barometer (2019)

OurWorldInData.org/tourism/ • CC BY

Figure 4. Infrastructure Investment vs. Tourist Arrivals

DISCUSSION

The findings highlight that modern infrastructure investment significantly influences tourism development. Countries with well-developed transport systems, high-quality accommodations, and digital platforms attract more tourists. Policies aimed at enhancing these areas can lead to sustainable tourism growth.

Recommendations

- Increase investment in transport infrastructure.
- Develop smart tourism services using digital technologies.
- Enhance the quality of accommodations.
- Promote public-private partnerships in tourism infrastructure projects.

CONCLUSION

The study confirms that modern tourism infrastructure is a fundamental pillar of a country's tourism success. Without a strong transportation network, visitors face significant challenges in reaching and exploring their destinations. Likewise, high-quality accommodation facilities ensure that tourists have a comfortable and enjoyable experience, encouraging repeat visits. Digital services, including online bookings and virtual assistance, improve convenience and enhance overall satisfaction.

The correlation and regression analyses show that investments in infrastructure positively impact tourism growth, revenue generation, and overall economic performance. Countries that prioritize tourism infrastructure development witness a consistent increase in international arrivals and higher tourism-related revenue.

Future strategies should focus on integrating smart technologies, expanding transport accessibility, and improving sustainability practices in tourism infrastructure. Governments and private stakeholders must collaborate to create well-planned, innovative, and resilient tourism ecosystems. In an increasingly competitive global tourism market, continuous infrastructure enhancement is necessary to maintain and expand a country's tourism potential.

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Proofreader: Zokir ALIBEKOV

Layout and Designer: Oloviddin Sobir ugli

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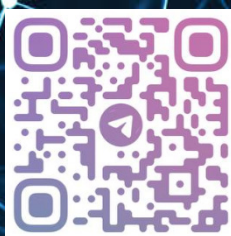
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