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Economic Approaches to the Experiences "Tourism is Priority" and "Education is Priority" in the Organization of Educational Tourism

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Abstract: This article analyzes the integration of tourism and education from an economic point of view based on the concept of educational tourism (edu-tourism). Based on a comparative analysis of the "Tourism as a Priority" and "Education as a Priority" strategies encountered in world practice, economic mechanisms for the development of educational tourism in Uzbekistan are proposed. The influence of these two models on macroeconomic and microeconomic indicators is also highlighted.

Keywords: educational tourism, economic approach, international practice, tourism priorities, educational export, investment flow.

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Introduction

In the modern global economy, education and tourism are among the fastest-growing sectors. Educational tourism (edu-tourism), formed on the basis of their integration, will bring mutually beneficial economic results. From this point of view, the study of the economic aspects of the existing approaches to the organization of educational tourism, that is, the models "Tourism as a priority" and "Education as a priority," is relevant. As of 2022, more than 6.4 million students were studying outside their home country. In 2000, this figure was only 2 million - more than a threefold increase over the past 20 years. Countries with the largest student enrollment:

USA -950 thousand students;

Great Britain -600 thousand;

Australia - 420 thousand;

Canada - 400 thousand;

Germany - 370 thousand;

The US earns an average of 44 billion US dollars annually from education exports. This is one of the country's largest service export sectors. In Australia, international students contribute ~30 billion AUD annually to the economy by using accommodation, food, transport, and cultural services. Impact of international students on the economy in the UK: ~28.8 billion pounds sterling

(2022). Global educational tourism market volume in 2023: ~120 billion US dollars. By 2030, this figure is projected to reach ~180 billion dollars. Malaysia, Turkey, Hungary, Poland, Uzbekistan - the price-quality ratio in these countries is competitive. Between 2022 and 2024, the number of foreign students in Hungary increased by 27%, thanks to government grants and tourism opportunities. This stimulates the transition from digital education to real educational tourism.

Educational tourism is the use of tourist services by foreign or local students, traveling to another country (or territory) for scientific, cultural, or professional purposes, along with education. Educational tourism provides the following economic benefits:

- increases foreign exchange earnings (contracts paid by foreign students);
- provides employment (from guides to university staff);
- promotes the export of net services;
- attracts external investments (investment in educational infrastructure).

C. Ritchie and B. Carr (2003) define educational tourism as the formation of travel motivation through the inclusion of international students in the educational process. In their opinion, educational tourism began as a "secondary reason for travel" and later formed as an independent industry. According to UNWTO (2019), educational tourism is one of the fastest-growing tourism segments in terms of annual growth rates over the past decade.

Regarding the "tourism priority" model, G. Richards (2011) states: some countries (for example, Thailand, Turkey) have encouraged educational tourism by introducing short-term training programs using tourism potential. Cultural experience, historical sites, and excursions play a key role in this model.

The "education-priority" model is reflected in the experience of such countries as Australia, Canada, Malaysia, and Singapore. Here, the export of high-quality higher education has become an important part of the state's economy. For example, in Australia, international students bring more than 30 billion Australian dollars annually to the economy (Australian Trade and Investment Commission, 2022). In recent years, educational tourism (edutourism) has become an important sector of global service exports. According to UNESCO and OECD:

In 2022, more than 6.6 million international students worldwide studied abroad, which is 3 times more than in 2000. Countries such as Australia, the United Kingdom, the USA, Canada, and Germany earn billions of dollars annually from educational tourism:

Table 1 Revenues of states from international educational tourism [1]

Country	Number of International Students in 2022	Economic Benefit (in USD billions)
USA	950,000	$38 billion
Australia	600,000	$30 billion
Canada	500,000	$24 billion
United Kingdom	680,000	$31 billion

Mainly includes short-term courses, language learning programs, and cultural exchange initiatives.

The number of foreign tourists visiting Thailand for educational purposes in 2022 exceeded 100,000, bringing the country $430 million in revenue.

[1] UNESCO (2023), OECD Education at a Glance (2023)

Education-priority model (for example, Canada, Australia):

- The export of higher education services accounts for 10-15% of the total service exports.
- The Canadian government estimates that each international student brings an average of 40,000 Canadian dollars in economic benefits to the country (StatCan, 2022).

There are notable positive developments in the growth of educational tourism in Uzbekistan:

- In 2023, the number of foreign students studying in higher educational institutions of Uzbekistan reached 10,500. This is 6 times more than in 2018.
- The majority of students come from Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Russia, and Afghanistan.
- Visitors are primarily interested in the following fields: medicine, engineering, economics, tourism, and international relations.

Table 2 Growth in the number of students visiting the Republic of Uzbekistan for educational tourism purposes [2]

Year	Number of International Students	Average Annual Tuition (USD)	Estimated Annual Economic Impact (USD)
2018	1,700	$1,500	$2.5 million
2020	4,800	$1,800	$8.6 million
2023	10,500	$2,200	$23 million

International experience demonstrates that through educational tourism, countries not only generate substantial economic revenue but also strengthen their educational brands.

Uzbekistan is currently moving towards an "education-priority" model; however, considering its tourism potential, it is possible to implement a "hybrid model" (i.e., a synergy of education and tourism).

According to statistics, the growth rate of this sector in Uzbekistan is high, but the level of international income is still relatively low. This necessitates a review of the economic approach.

Economic approaches involve assessing educational tourism based on the following criteria:

- Cost-benefit analysis;
- Return on Investment (ROI);
- Multiplicative effect: the impact of income from a single foreign student on other sectors.

Uzbekistan can develop a hybrid approach that combines both models based on its rich historical and cultural heritage and developing education system. Recommendations:

- Develop short-term educational course tour packages in collaboration with international universities;
- Increase the influx of foreign students by simplifying visa procedures;
- Introduce and promote the "Study in Uzbekistan" brand;

Establish an educational tourism zone (for example, in Bukhara or Samarkand). The "Tourism as a Priority" and "Education as a Priority" experiments have their own advantages in terms of

[2] O‘zbekiston Respublikasi Oliy ta’lim, fan va innovatsiyalar vazirligi (2023), ma’lumotlari

economic efficiency. In the context of Uzbekistan, their combination is important as a strategic approach to the development of educational

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