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Innovative Competitiveness in Tourism: New Technologies and their Role in Tourism Development

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Abstract: This article analyzes the role of innovative technologies in the tourism sector and their importance in enhancing competitiveness. Additionally, the article provides recommendations on the effective application of new technologies in tourism development.

Key words: Innovation, tourism, competitiveness, technologies and tourism, marketing, strategy.

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INTRODUCTION

Today, tourism has become one of the main sectors of economic growth worldwide. According to the World Bank, tourism accounts for more than 10% of the global economy and creates millions of jobs. At the same time, the unique characteristics of the tourism sector, increasing competition, and changing consumer demands are forcing the industry to adopt innovative approaches. Innovative technologies, especially digital transformation, artificial intelligence, IoT (Internet of Things), and blockchain, play a crucial role in improving the efficiency and competitiveness of the tourism sector.

In Uzbekistan, the tourism industry has been rapidly developing in recent years. In particular, the decrees and resolutions of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev in 2016 regarding tourism development have brought the industry to a new level. Specifically, the decree signed in 2019, "On comprehensive measures to accelerate the development of tourism in the Republic of Uzbekistan," is an important document aimed at rapidly developing the tourism sector and enhancing its competitiveness. Based on this decree, the tourism infrastructure has been modernized, and a foundation has been laid for introducing new technologies in the service sector. Furthermore, the government has developed several programs to implement digital technologies in tourism and improve their efficiency under the strategy "Creating Competitive Tourism: New Technologies and Innovations."

Innovations in tourism have not only improved the quality of services but also optimized customer service systems. Internet marketing, mobile applications, virtual and augmented reality

technologies have created opportunities to promote tourism and provide customers with enhanced experiences. Additionally, artificial intelligence and big data have significantly simplified processes such as travel planning, creating personalized services, and identifying customer needs.

Moreover, there are several international and national documents aimed at ensuring ecological sustainability, digital transformation, and the development of innovative technologies in tourism. For example, the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) aims to integrate new technologies in tourism with ecological and social sustainability.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This article examines the role of new technologies in enhancing innovative competitiveness in tourism, their importance in tourism development, and provides recommendations for their effective application. Additionally, by analyzing practical examples of innovations implemented in the tourism sector in our country, the article discusses current issues in enhancing competitiveness.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The role of innovative technologies in tourism and their impact on enhancing competitiveness have been widely discussed in scientific literature, with various aspects of applying new technologies in tourism development being analyzed.

First, the "value creation" model of competitiveness proposed by Porter in 1990 is important for understanding the significance of innovative technologies in tourism. Porter defines competitiveness primarily through an organization's strategic advantages, innovative approaches, and technological development. In tourism, new technologies improve service quality, reduce costs, and offer new value propositions to customers. According to Porter, technology and innovation not only enhance the internal efficiency of tourism companies but also provide them with a competitive advantage in the market.

Furthermore, Smith (2014) focused on the development of innovative technologies in tourism. He emphasized the role of innovations in meeting customer needs and how technologies can transform customer service systems, thereby enhancing the competitiveness of companies. According to Smith, the internet, mobile applications, and artificial intelligence enable tourism companies to establish direct communication with customers, improving service quality and customer satisfaction.

In recent years, Buhalis (2016) discussed the impact of digital transformation on tourism, highlighting how the introduction of new technologies and digitalization can provide tourism companies with a competitive edge. He particularly emphasized the effectiveness of mobile technologies and digital marketing in tourism services and travel planning. According to Buhalis, the development of digital platforms and e-commerce networks not only simplifies travel planning but also facilitates its execution. Automating and managing these processes through digital technologies creates convenience for customers and helps tourism companies capture new markets.

In 2021, Sigala and Durrani conducted a study analyzing the integration of new technologies in tourism and its impact on digital transformation and service diversification. They particularly highlighted the effective use of artificial intelligence, IoT (Internet of Things), and big data technologies in tourism, enabling the personalization of services for customers and thereby enhancing competitiveness. Sigala and Durrani found that applying these technologies not only improves service quality but also optimizes operational processes.

Another important direction is sustainable tourism and ecological innovations. In 2019, Jones and Comfort conducted a study emphasizing the importance of innovative technologies in developing

sustainable tourism. They argued that the effective implementation of eco-friendly technologies, such as renewable energy sources and waste reduction, enhances the competitiveness of tourism companies. Technological innovations enable resource conservation, energy efficiency, and environmental protection, which are crucial steps toward sustainable tourism.

Additionally, Gössling's (2012) research highlights the strategic importance of applying new technologies in sustainable tourism. He argued that new technologies can reduce environmental impact, create eco-friendly transportation systems, and conserve natural resources, making tourism more sustainable. Gössling particularly emphasized the importance of developing ecological innovations for tourism companies to gain a competitive advantage in the market.

Recently, Susskind (2015) conducted a study analyzing the role of artificial intelligence (AI) and automation in improving customer experiences in tourism. They highlighted that AI enables tourism companies to maintain constant communication with customers, offer personalized services, and predict customer needs. According to Susskind, AI and data analytics technologies allow tourism companies to provide tailored services that meet each customer's needs, thereby enhancing satisfaction.

The literature review on the role of innovative technologies in tourism and their impact on competitiveness shows that new technologies not only improve the efficiency of tourism companies but also create new competitive advantages. Digital transformation, ecological innovations, artificial intelligence, and other new technologies can enhance the competitiveness and sustainable development of the tourism sector. At the same time, developing effective strategies and practical approaches to implementing innovations is crucial for the success of tourism companies.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The article uses scientific abstraction, analysis and synthesis, induction and deduction methods. This research analyzes the role and importance of innovative technologies in enhancing competitiveness in the tourism sector. The research data is primarily derived from official sources, government decrees on tourism development, national and international organization reports, as well as scientific articles and books.

Using scientific analysis methods, the article compares foreign experiences, particularly the achievements and practices of advanced countries in implementing new technologies in tourism. The experiences of countries that have successfully applied innovations in tourism are summarized. Additionally, based on the results of government decisions, decrees, and strategic programs aimed at tourism development in Uzbekistan, the achievements and challenges in our country are discussed.

Using inductive and deductive approaches, the article identifies general trends in applying innovative technologies in tourism and provides recommendations for their implementation and enhancing competitiveness in Uzbekistan's tourism sector. The analysis evaluates the effectiveness of implementing innovations in tourism based on statistical data, scientific literature, and real-world experiences.

Furthermore, the methods used in the article explore the possibilities of improving customer experiences, personalizing services, and enhancing competitiveness through the application of new technologies in tourism. Thus, through scientific and practical approaches, the article examines effective ways to implement innovations in tourism.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

This research analyzes the role of innovative technologies in the tourism sector and their importance in enhancing competitiveness. The tourism sector is a rapidly changing and highly

competitive industry globally, and the introduction of new technologies offers opportunities to enhance competitiveness and improve economic efficiency. Currently, developed countries have achieved significant success in applying innovative technologies in tourism, and this experience can serve as a model for Uzbekistan.

Looking at the global tourism industry, the active development of new technologies (e.g., digital platforms, artificial intelligence, blockchain, virtual reality) has created new opportunities in the sector. New technologies improve customer experiences, personalize services, and streamline operations across all areas of tourism. Major companies, such as Expedia, Airbnb, and Booking.com, widely use innovative technologies to provide services online, establish effective communication with customers, and analyze data.

Developed countries, particularly the USA, the European Union, and Asian countries, have made significant achievements in implementing innovations in tourism. For example, countries like Singapore and Malaysia have used digital technologies, including artificial intelligence and big data analytics, to develop tourism services. In Singapore, virtual assistants, data analytics, and predictive technologies are used to provide personalized services to tourists. In Malaysia, the digitization of tourism and the implementation of smart technologies have enhanced the country's competitiveness and offered more tailored services to tourists.

Additionally, countries like South Korea and Japan have successfully integrated their innovative technologies into the tourism sector. Japan has modernized its tourism infrastructure using advanced technologies, such as robot technologies and digital maps, to guide tourists and provide automated services in hotels. In South Korea, data analytics and technology-based approaches have significantly contributed to attracting tourists and improving service quality.

Thus, the experiences of these countries can serve as an important paradigm for Uzbekistan. Uzbekistan has the potential to improve service quality, attract customers based on their individual needs, and enhance competitiveness by implementing digital technologies, artificial intelligence, and advanced solutions like blockchain in the tourism sector. In Uzbekistan, especially through digital tourism platforms and mobile applications, the efficiency of serving tourists can be improved, communication with customers can be enhanced through artificial intelligence, and tourism security can be strengthened.

The Uzbek government has recently paid special attention to tourism development and implemented several innovative initiatives and programs. In particular, in 2020, the President of Uzbekistan approved the "Tourism Development Strategy of the Republic of Uzbekistan," which emphasizes the introduction of new technologies. The President's 2021 decree, "On additional measures to develop tourism and introduce new technologies," outlines specific directions for creating innovative services for tourists, developing digital services, and digitizing tourism infrastructure.

Furthermore, the need to involve the private sector in modernizing tourism infrastructure and developing cooperation in implementing innovative technologies has been emphasized. Initiatives such as the establishment of the "Uzbekistan Tourism Development Fund" aim to improve the investment climate in the tourism sector and support innovations, contributing to the modernization of the country's tourism infrastructure.

At the same time, several practical measures are being implemented to enhance the country's tourism competitiveness through innovative technologies. For example, initiatives to create "smart" hotels and digital tourism service platforms in Uzbekistan, including remote services, virtual tourism services, and mobile applications, have achieved significant results in tourism development.

Moreover, the application of innovative technologies in tourism not only improves service quality but also creates new opportunities. For example, blockchain technology can enhance the services of hotels and travel companies, ensure transparent transactions, and improve security. Blockchain technology enables secure and reliable transactions for travel tickets and tour packages, creating opportunities for exchanging real and trustworthy information.

Additionally, artificial intelligence can be used to create personalized services for tourists. AI-based recommendation systems can provide tourists with accurate and tailored suggestions for travel and services. The application of AI allows services to be customized to customer preferences, quickly respond to their needs, and improve travel experiences.

Virtual reality technologies can offer tourists virtual tours of destinations before they travel, addressing their interests and concerns. This is particularly useful for tourists with medical or ecological concerns. For example, virtual reality can allow tourists to explore architectural landmarks and visualize future trips.

Thus, the introduction of innovative technologies in tourism not only improves service quality but also makes the sector more competitive and efficient. For Uzbekistan, the successful experiences of foreign countries, particularly in applying new technologies and implementing digital transformation in tourism, offer numerous opportunities. By applying innovative technologies, Uzbekistan can enhance the competitiveness of its tourism industry, attract tourists, and elevate the country's economy to a new level.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

This research analyzed the importance of introducing innovative technologies in the tourism sector to enhance competitiveness and the opportunities in Uzbekistan. New technologies, such as artificial intelligence, blockchain, and virtual reality, improve the efficiency of the tourism industry, enhance service quality, and offer personalized services to tourists. By implementing innovations, new experiences can be offered to tourists, while adding value to the national economy.

In conclusion, the application of innovative technologies in tourism can enhance Uzbekistan's global competitiveness, improve the country's tourism brand, and play a significant role in attracting tourists. Special attention should be paid to improving staff qualifications, particularly by creating educational programs in tourism management and digital technologies, and involving specialists in specialized training and seminars.

1. Attracting investments and supporting innovations. It is necessary to increase investments in innovative technologies and strengthen cooperation between the private sector and the government to support them. Additional tax incentives and grants can be provided by the government to encourage investments in the tourism sector.

2. Accelerating the digitization of tourism infrastructure. It is essential to expand opportunities for offering services through digital platforms and mobile applications in the tourism sector and implement "smart" systems for hotels and travel agencies. Additionally, initiatives to create "smart" hotels and digital tourism service platforms should be further expanded.

3. Implementing artificial intelligence and blockchain technologies. Blockchain technology can be used in the tourism industry to secure transactions and establish transparent communication with tourists. Artificial intelligence can be used to develop personalized recommendation systems for tourists and tailor services to individual needs.

In conclusion, Uzbekistan has significant opportunities to enhance competitiveness, improve service quality, and increase economic efficiency by introducing innovative technologies in the

tourism sector. Special attention should be paid to staff training, attracting investments, and modernizing digital infrastructure in this process.

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