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A CUSTOMER-ORIENTED INTEGRATIVE METHODOLOGICAL MODEL FOR IMPROVING THE EFFICIENCY OF TOURIST SERVICES IN THE TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

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Abstract: This article investigates the methodological and practical foundations for improving the efficiency of tourist services in the tourism and hospitality industry through a customer-oriented integrative model. In modern tourism, service efficiency cannot be evaluated only by financial indicators, tourist arrivals, hotel occupancy or the number of rendered services. The contemporary tourist market requires a broader and more flexible approach that combines service quality, customer satisfaction, digital accessibility, employee competence, emotional experience, destination infrastructure, sustainability and post-service feedback. The purpose of the article is to develop a conceptual methodological model that helps tourism and hospitality enterprises assess and improve service efficiency by integrating economic, social, technological and customer-experience-based indicators. The research is based on comparative analysis, systematic approach, synthesis of theoretical views, and model-building methods. The proposed model consists of six interrelated components: customer needs identification, service quality management, digital service transformation, staff competence development, integrated performance evaluation, and feedback-based continuous improvement. The results show that the efficiency of tourist services increases when tourism enterprises move from a product-oriented approach to a customer-oriented and experience-based management system. The article concludes that the proposed integrative model may be used by hotels, travel agencies, tour operators, restaurants, transport providers and destination management organizations to improve competitiveness, service reliability and customer loyalty.

Keywords: tourism industry, hospitality, tourist services, service efficiency, customer orientation, integrative model, service quality, digital transformation, customer satisfaction.

Аннотация: В данной статье исследуются методологические и практические основы повышения эффективности туристических услуг в индустрии туризма и гостеприимства на основе клиентоориентированной интегративной модели. В современных условиях эффективность обслуживания не может оцениваться только по финансовым показателям, количеству туристов, уровню загрузки гостиниц или объёму оказанных услуг. Современный туристический рынок требует более широкого и гибкого подхода, объединяющего качество обслуживания, удовлетворённость клиентов, цифровую доступность, компетентность персонала, эмоциональный опыт, инфраструктуру дестинации, устойчивое развитие и обратную связь после получения услуги. Цель статьи заключается в разработке концептуальной методологической модели, позволяющей предприятиям туризма и гостеприимства оценивать и повышать эффективность услуг посредством интеграции экономических, социальных, технологических показателей и индикаторов клиентского опыта. Исследование основано на сравнительном анализе, системном подходе, синтезе теоретических взглядов и методах моделирования. Предлагаемая модель включает шесть взаимосвязанных компонентов: выявление потребностей клиентов, управление качеством услуг, цифровую трансформацию сервисов, развитие компетенций персонала, интегрированную оценку эффективности и непрерывное совершенствование на основе обратной связи. Результаты исследования показывают, что эффективность туристических услуг возрастает при переходе предприятий от продуктивно-ориентированного подхода к клиентоориентированной системе управления, основанной на потребительском опыте. В заключение отмечается, что предложенная интегративная модель может использоваться гостиницами, туристическими агентствами, туроператорами, ресторанами, транспортными компаниями и организациями по управлению туристическими дестинациями для повышения конкурентоспособности, надёжности услуг и лояльности клиентов.

Ключевые слова: индустрия туризма, гостеприимство, туристические услуги, эффективность услуг, клиентоориентированность, интегративная модель, качество обслуживания, цифровая трансформация, удовлетворённость клиентов.

INTRODUCTION

The tourism and hospitality industry is one of the most dynamic sectors of the modern service economy. It combines accommodation, transportation, catering, entertainment, tour operation, guiding, cultural heritage interpretation, digital booking platforms, destination management and many other interconnected services. In this complex system, the efficiency of tourist services has become a strategic issue for both enterprises and destinations. A hotel, travel agency or tour operator may offer a wide range of services, but if these services do not create value for the customer, do not meet expectations, or are not delivered in a coordinated and reliable way, their economic result remains unstable.

Traditional approaches to service efficiency in tourism have usually focused on measurable economic indicators such as revenue, profit, tourist arrivals, hotel occupancy, average spending, labor productivity and service volume. These indicators remain important, but they do not fully explain why some tourism enterprises achieve long-term competitiveness while others lose customers despite having similar resources. In the modern tourism market, efficiency is strongly connected with customer satisfaction, emotional impression, service personalization, digital convenience, employee behavior, trust, safety, time-saving and post-service communication.

The relevance of this research is determined by the need to improve the methodological basis for evaluating and increasing tourist service efficiency. Tourism services are intangible, perishable, inseparable from the provider and often heterogeneous. Therefore, their efficiency cannot be measured only after the service is completed. It must be managed before, during and after the customer experience. This requires an integrative model that unites managerial, economic, technological and customer-oriented dimensions.

The purpose of this article is to develop a customer-oriented integrative methodological model for improving the efficiency of tourist services in the tourism and hospitality industry. To achieve this purpose, the article examines theoretical approaches to service efficiency, identifies the main factors influencing tourist service performance, proposes an integrative model and describes practical mechanisms for its application.

The scientific novelty of the article lies in the development of a model that evaluates tourist service efficiency not as a separate economic result, but as an integrated outcome of customer needs, service quality, digital transformation, staff competence, infrastructure coordination and continuous feedback.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON THE SUBJECT

The issue of service efficiency in tourism has been widely studied in the fields of tourism management, hospitality marketing, service quality theory and destination competitiveness. Scholars have emphasized that tourism services differ from material products because the customer directly participates in service production and evaluates the result through personal perception. This means that service efficiency is not only produced by the enterprise, but co-created together with the tourist.

Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry developed the SERVQUAL model, which explains service quality through reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and tangibles. This approach is important for tourism because customers usually evaluate service not only by the final result, but also by the process of interaction with employees. In hotels, restaurants and travel agencies, politeness, speed, accuracy and trust can significantly influence the perceived value of the service.

Kotler and Keller emphasized that customer satisfaction depends on the comparison between expectations and perceived performance. In tourism, expectations are formed before the trip through advertising, social media, reviews, recommendations and previous experience. If the actual service is lower than expected, dissatisfaction appears even when the service is objectively acceptable. Therefore, tourism enterprises must manage both the real service process and the expectations created in the customer's mind.

Pine and Gilmore's experience economy theory is also relevant to tourism and hospitality. According to this view, customers increasingly seek memorable experiences rather than simple services. A tourist does not only buy a hotel room, a tour package or a meal; he or she buys comfort, emotion, authenticity, cultural discovery, safety and personal meaning. This changes the understanding of efficiency. A service becomes efficient when it creates economic value for the provider and memorable value for the customer.

Buhalis and Law highlighted the role of information technologies in transforming tourism. Digitalization has changed how tourists search for information, compare prices, book services, share feedback and evaluate destinations. Online platforms, mobile applications, artificial intelligence, digital payment systems, electronic maps, online reviews and customer relationship management systems have become essential instruments of service efficiency.

However, the literature shows that many approaches analyze service efficiency separately: some focus on quality, others on financial performance, digitalization, staff training or destination competitiveness. The

methodological gap is the absence of a unified model that connects these dimensions into one practical mechanism. This article attempts to address this gap by proposing a customer-oriented integrative methodological model.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research is based on a qualitative methodological approach. The main methods used in the article are systematic analysis, comparative analysis, abstraction, synthesis, induction, deduction and conceptual modeling. The systematic approach allows tourism services to be considered as a complex system consisting of interrelated elements: customers, employees, technologies, infrastructure, management, communication and feedback.

Comparative analysis is used to compare traditional and modern approaches to tourist service efficiency. Traditional approaches mainly evaluate quantitative results, while modern approaches include qualitative and customer-based indicators. Synthesis is applied to combine different theoretical views into a unified model. Conceptual modeling is used to design the proposed customer-oriented integrative methodological model.

The research object is tourist services in the tourism and hospitality industry. The research subject is the methodological foundations and mechanisms for improving the efficiency of these services. The article does not rely on one enterprise or region only; instead, it proposes a general model that can be adapted to hotels, travel agencies, restaurants, tour operators and destination management institutions.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Tourist service efficiency should be understood as the ability of a tourism or hospitality enterprise to create maximum value for customers and stakeholders by using available resources rationally, ensuring high service quality and achieving sustainable economic results. This definition includes three important dimensions.

The first dimension is economic efficiency. It includes revenue growth, profit, cost optimization, labor productivity, occupancy rate, repeat sales and market share. Without economic efficiency, enterprises cannot survive in a competitive environment.

The second dimension is customer efficiency. It reflects the level of customer satisfaction, loyalty, trust, positive emotions, perceived value and willingness to recommend the service to others. In tourism, customer efficiency is extremely important because one satisfied tourist can influence many potential customers through online reviews and personal recommendations.

The third dimension is organizational and technological efficiency. It includes the speed of service delivery, digital convenience, coordination between departments, employee competence, reduction of errors, flexibility and innovation. These indicators show how well the enterprise manages its internal processes.

Thus, tourist service efficiency is not a single indicator. It is a multidimensional result formed by the interaction of economic, social, technological and emotional factors.

Many tourism enterprises still evaluate service efficiency mainly through short-term financial indicators. This approach has several limitations. First, financial indicators usually show the result after the service has already been provided. They do not explain the reasons for customer satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Second, they may ignore the emotional and experiential aspects of tourism. Third, they do not show the quality of internal service processes. Fourth, they may lead managers to reduce costs in a way that damages service quality.

Another problem is the fragmented structure of the tourism product. A tourist's final impression is formed by many service providers: hotel, restaurant, transport company, guide, museum, airport, booking platform and local community. If one element fails, the entire experience may be negatively affected. Therefore, efficiency should be evaluated not only at the enterprise level, but also at the level of the whole service chain.

There is also a problem of insufficient feedback management. Many enterprises collect customer reviews, but do not analyze them systematically or use them for managerial decisions. Feedback should not be treated only as a marketing tool; it must become a source of continuous improvement.

The proposed model consists of six interconnected components.

The first component is customer needs identification. Tourism enterprises should study customer segments, travel motivation, expectations, cultural preferences, spending capacity, digital behavior and previous experience. This stage helps the enterprise understand what kind of value the customer expects.

The second component is service quality management. It includes standardization of service processes, clear service protocols, quality control, complaint management and service recovery. Quality must be measured not only by internal standards, but also by customer perception.

The third component is digital service transformation. Digital tools should simplify booking, payment, communication, navigation, check-in, feedback and personalized offers. Digitalization increases efficiency by

reducing time, lowering transaction costs and improving customer convenience.

The fourth component is staff competence development. In hospitality and tourism, employees are the main carriers of service quality. Their communication skills, foreign language ability, professional knowledge, emotional intelligence and problem-solving capacity directly influence the tourist experience.

The fifth component is integrated performance evaluation. Enterprises should use a balanced system of indicators, including financial results, customer satisfaction, service quality, employee productivity, digital engagement and sustainability indicators.

The sixth component is feedback-based continuous improvement. Customer reviews, complaints, suggestions, online ratings and repeat purchase behavior should be regularly analyzed. Based on this analysis, enterprises should improve service processes, staff training, digital tools and customer communication.

These six components form a circular system. The model begins with understanding customer needs and ends with feedback analysis, which again helps update customer knowledge. Therefore, the model is not static; it is a continuous improvement mechanism.

For practical application, the model requires a system of indicators. Economic indicators may include revenue per customer, average daily rate, occupancy rate, cost per service unit, profit margin and repeat purchase rate. Customer-oriented indicators may include satisfaction index, complaint rate, online review score, Net Promoter Score and customer loyalty level.

Service quality indicators may include waiting time, accuracy of service delivery, number of service errors, responsiveness of staff and compliance with service standards. Digital indicators may include online booking share, website or application usability, response time in digital communication, digital payment convenience and customer engagement through online platforms.

Employee-related indicators may include training hours per employee, staff turnover, language competence, service culture assessment and employee satisfaction. Sustainability indicators may include resource-saving practices, waste reduction, local community involvement and responsible tourism activities.

The advantage of this indicator system is that it does not separate customer satisfaction from economic performance. It shows that long-term financial success in tourism depends on the quality of customer experience and organizational capability.

Hotels can apply the model by analyzing customer expectations before arrival, improving online booking systems, training reception staff, reducing check-in time and collecting feedback after departure. A hotel that uses this model will not only measure room occupancy, but also evaluate how comfortable, safe and emotionally positive the stay was for the guest.

Travel agencies can use the model to design tour packages based on customer motivation and travel style. For example, cultural tourists, eco-tourists, business tourists and family tourists have different expectations. A customer-oriented approach helps agencies create more personalized and efficient products.

Restaurants and catering enterprises in tourist destinations can apply the model by improving menu accessibility, hygiene standards, service speed, local cuisine presentation and digital payment systems. Food service is an important part of tourist experience, and its quality can strongly affect the image of the destination.

Destination management organizations can use the model at the regional level. They should coordinate hotels, transport providers, guides, museums, restaurants and local authorities. Destination-level efficiency depends on the harmony of all these elements. A tourist may stay in a good hotel, but if transport is poor or information is unclear, the general impression becomes weaker.

The implementation of the customer-oriented integrative model can produce several positive results. First, it increases customer satisfaction because services are designed according to real needs and expectations. Second, it improves competitiveness because enterprises become more adaptive and innovative. Third, it strengthens customer loyalty and increases the probability of repeat visits. Fourth, it improves internal management by connecting different departments and indicators. Fifth, it supports sustainable development because efficiency is evaluated not only by profit, but also by long-term social and environmental value.

The model also helps reduce managerial uncertainty. When managers rely only on financial results, they may not understand why performance changes. But when they analyze customer feedback, service quality, staff competence and digital activity together, they can identify the exact source of problems and make better decisions.

The following statistical section may be inserted into the article as a new subsection under Results and Discussion. Suggested subsection title: "Statistical justification of the need to improve tourist service efficiency".

The dynamics of international tourist arrivals show that the tourism sector has entered a new recovery and expansion stage. Global international arrivals fell sharply from 1.468 billion in 2019 to 408 million in 2020. However, the recovery accelerated after 2021 and reached 1.470 billion in 2024. In 2025 the figure increased to approximately 1.520 billion. This trend proves that the post-pandemic period is no longer only a recovery phase; it is a stage of renewed competition between destinations and hospitality enterprises. In such conditions,

service efficiency becomes a decisive factor because growing tourist flows increase pressure on hotels, travel agencies, guides, restaurants, transport providers and digital booking systems (Figure 1).

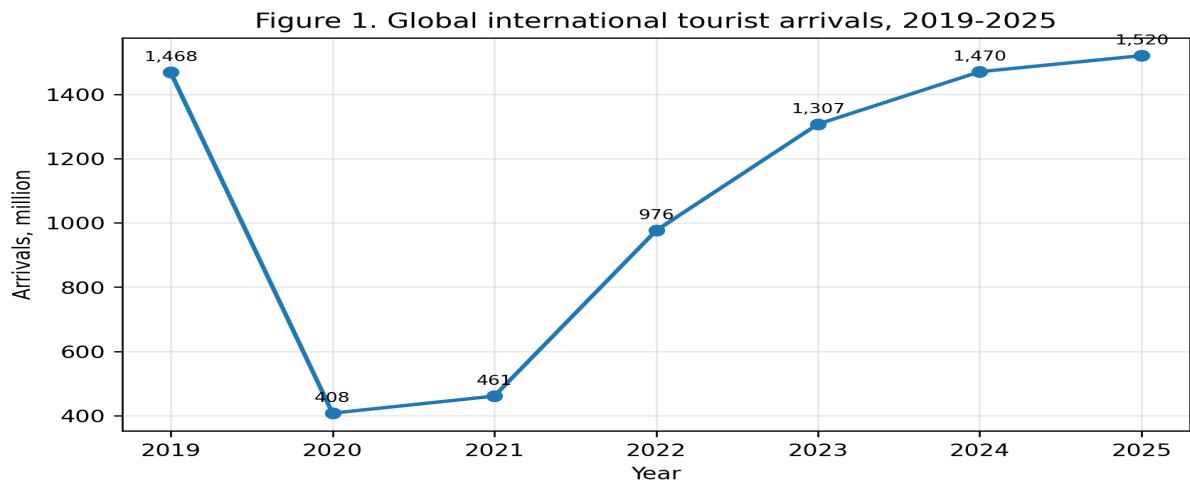


Figure 1. Global international tourist arrivals, 2019-2025¹

The figure indicates that demand for international tourism has not only recovered but exceeded the pre-pandemic level. For the proposed customer-oriented model, this means that enterprises must improve service speed, information availability, digital communication, staff readiness and feedback management. Otherwise, quantitative growth in tourist flows may lead to lower service quality and weaker customer satisfaction.

The global economic contribution of Travel and Tourism also confirms the importance of methodological improvement in service efficiency. According to WTTC data, the sector contributed US\$10.1 trillion to global GDP in 2023 and US\$10.9 trillion in 2024. In 2025 the indicator reached US\$11.6 trillion. This means that tourism and hospitality should be considered not only as a cultural or recreational field, but also as a major economic system that requires scientifically grounded management methods (Figure 2).

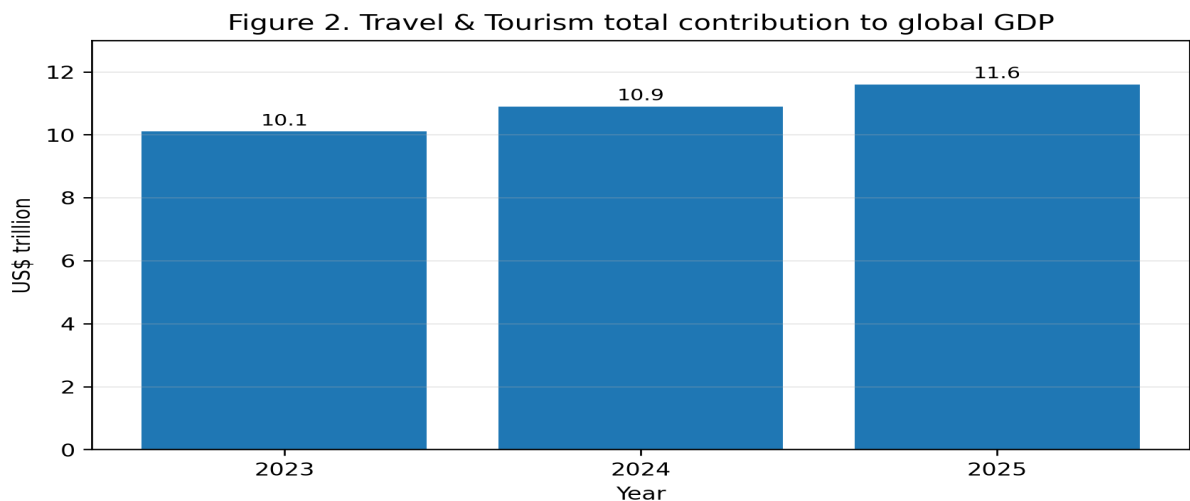


Figure 2. Travel & Tourism total contribution to global GDP²

The increase in the sector’s GDP contribution supports the idea that tourist service efficiency must be evaluated through an integrated system of indicators. Profit and revenue are important, but they depend on customer satisfaction, repeat visits, online reputation, staff competence and the reliability of the full service chain. Therefore, the proposed model is relevant for tourism enterprises that aim to transform quantitative

1 Source: compiled by the author based on UN Tourism World Tourism Barometer data, 2025-2026.

2 Source: compiled by the author based on WTTC Economic Impact Research and Travel & Tourism Economic Impact 2025: Global Trends.

growth into long-term competitiveness.

The tourism statistics of Uzbekistan demonstrate a strong upward trend in inbound tourism. In 2020 foreign citizens made 1,504.1 thousand tourist trips to Uzbekistan. By 2024 this figure reached 7,957.2 thousand trips. Compared with 2023, the number of inbound tourist trips increased by 20.1%. At the same time, outbound trips of citizens of Uzbekistan reached 6,183.8 thousand in 2024, increasing by 29.2% compared with the previous year. These indicators show both the growing attractiveness of Uzbekistan as a destination and the increasing demand of residents for tourism services (Figure 3).

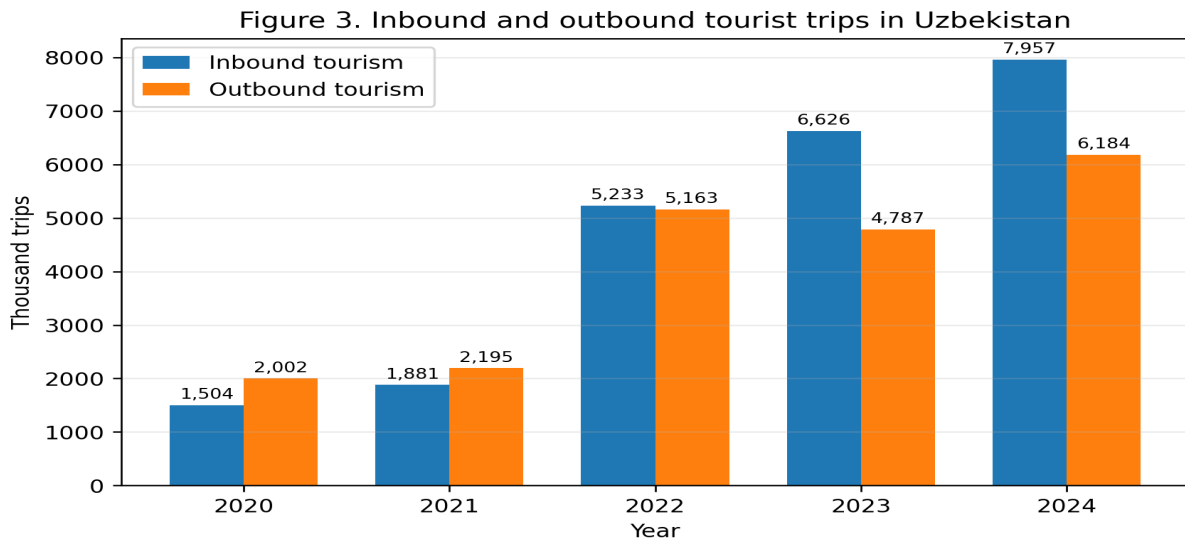


Figure 3. Inbound and outbound tourist trips in Uzbekistan³

The rapid increase in inbound tourism creates a practical need to improve service methodology in hospitality and destination management. A growing number of visitors requires more efficient accommodation, transport, excursion, catering, information and digital services. The proposed customer-oriented integrative model is therefore suitable for Uzbekistan because it links service quality with demand growth and customer experience.

The structure of inbound tourist trips in 2024 shows that 76.7% of trips were made for visiting relatives, while leisure and recreation accounted for 14.9%, business trips for 4.3%, commerce for 2.5%, treatment for 1.3%, and studies for 0.3%. This structure is important for the article because it shows that Uzbekistan has a significant opportunity to increase the share of leisure, cultural, recreational, health and business tourism through better service design and destination management (Figure 4).

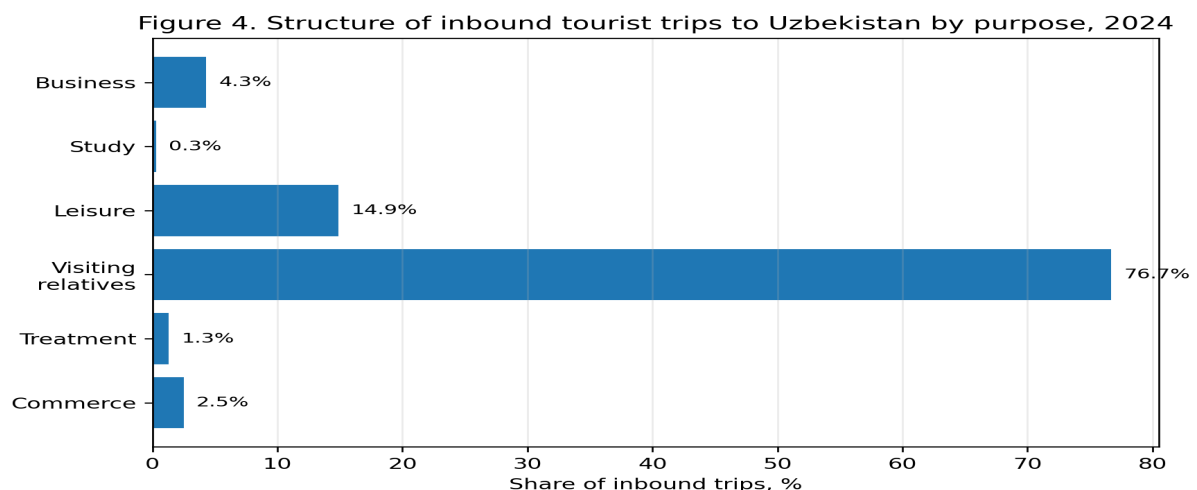


Figure 4. Structure of inbound tourist trips to Uzbekistan by purpose, 2024⁴

3 Source: compiled by the author based on the National Statistics Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Development of tourism and recreation in 2024.

4 Source: compiled by the author based on the National Statistics Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 2024 inbound tourist trips by purpose.

The dominance of trips for visiting relatives means that a large part of tourist flow may not yet be fully converted into high-value organized tourism products. This supports the need for a customer-oriented service model. If tourism enterprises better identify visitor needs and offer personalized cultural, gastronomic, historical, wellness and excursion services, the economic effect of existing tourist flows can be increased.

In 2024, 743 travel companies and organizations operated in Uzbekistan. They served 1,972.9 thousand people and sold 601.5 thousand tours. Compared with 2023, the number of companies increased by 150 units, the number of persons served increased by 815.8 thousand, and tours sold increased by 339.1 thousand. The data show that the organizational base of the tourism market is expanding quickly (Figure 5).

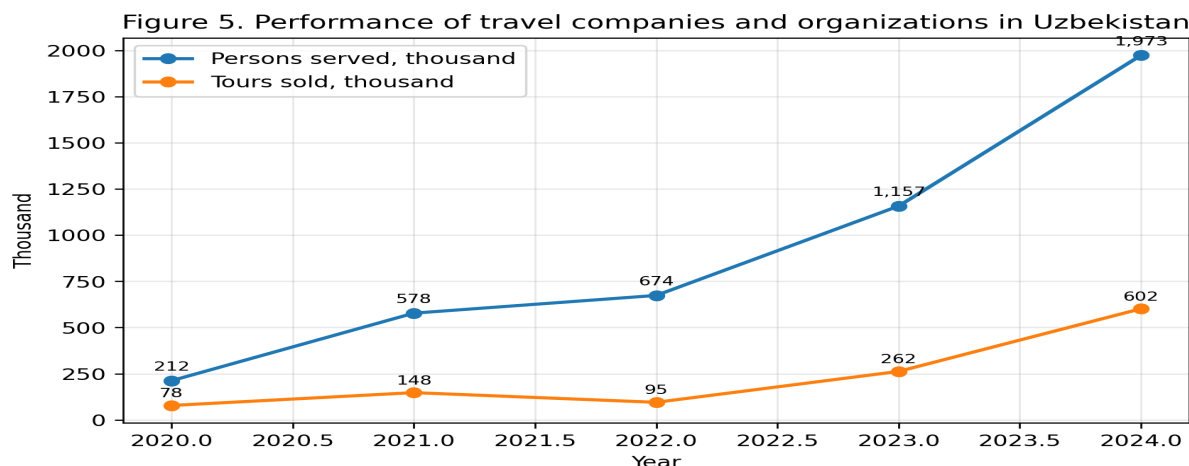


Figure 5. Performance of travel companies and organizations in Uzbekistan⁵

The sharp growth of persons served and tours sold indicates that tourism companies are becoming more active intermediaries between destinations and customers. However, the increase in volume should be supported by methodological improvements in service quality, digital booking, customer relationship management, guide competence and post-tour feedback. Otherwise, rapid market growth may create uneven service standards.

Accommodation capacity is one of the key indicators of hospitality industry readiness. In 2024, Uzbekistan had 2,383 hotels and similar accommodation facilities, 38,075 rooms and 79,469 beds. The number of accommodated persons reached 2,864.3 thousand. Compared with 2023, the number of hotels and similar accommodation facilities increased by 996 units, or 71.8%, while the number of accommodated persons increased by 340.0 thousand, or 13.5% (Figure 6).

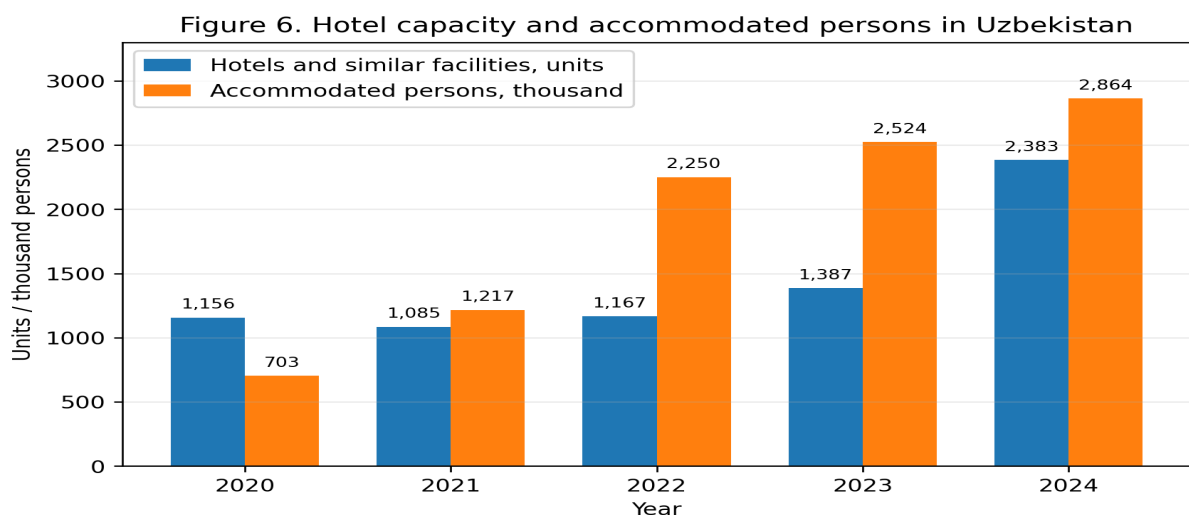


Figure 6. Hotel capacity and accommodated persons in Uzbekistan⁶

5 Source: compiled by the author based on the National Statistics Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan, activities of tourist companies and organizations, 2020-2024.

6 Source: compiled by the author based on the National Statistics Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan, activities of hotels and similar accommodation facilities, 2020-2024.

The increase in hotels and similar accommodation facilities shows that the physical infrastructure of hospitality is expanding. However, infrastructure growth alone does not guarantee service efficiency. It must be accompanied by improved staff competence, service standards, digital guest management, complaint handling and customer satisfaction monitoring (Figure 7).

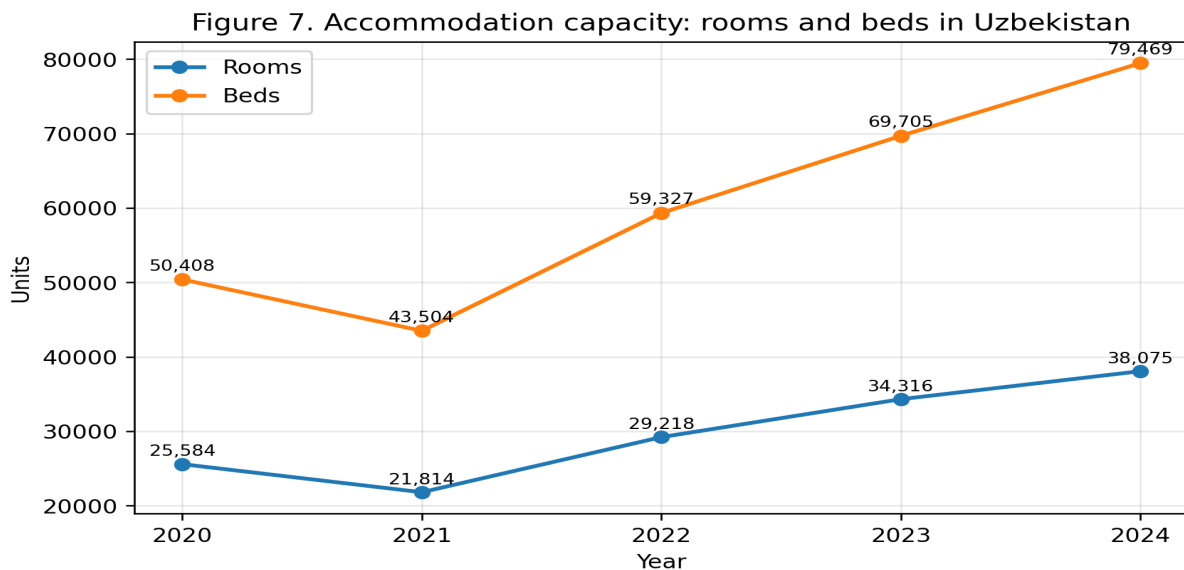


Figure 7. Accommodation capacity: rooms and beds in Uzbekistan⁷

The growth of rooms and beds confirms the expansion of supply in the accommodation sector. For the proposed integrative model, this statistic is important because it proves that the next stage of development should focus not only on building more facilities, but on increasing the efficiency of services provided inside those facilities. The main priority should be to transform accommodation capacity into high-quality customer experience.

The statistical analysis confirms the relevance of developing a customer-oriented integrative methodological model for tourist service efficiency. Global tourism has recovered and exceeded pre-pandemic levels, while the economic contribution of Travel and Tourism continues to rise. In Uzbekistan, inbound tourist trips, activities of travel companies and hospitality infrastructure have all increased significantly. These trends demonstrate that the tourism and hospitality industry is moving from a simple recovery stage to a quality-based competitiveness stage. Therefore, enterprises and destination managers should not evaluate service efficiency only through the number of tourists or the volume of services. They should also include customer satisfaction, service quality, staff competence, digital accessibility, infrastructure readiness and feedback-based improvement. This conclusion directly supports the scientific novelty of the article.

The above statistical indicators show that the increasing scale of tourist flows and hospitality infrastructure requires a new methodological approach to service efficiency. The proposed customer-oriented integrative model responds to this need by connecting six elements: identification of customer needs, service quality management, digital transformation, staff competence development, integrated performance evaluation and feedback-based continuous improvement. Therefore, the model is not only theoretical but also practically justified by the current dynamics of global and national tourism development.

The scientific novelty of the article is reflected in the proposed customer-oriented integrative methodological model. Unlike traditional approaches that evaluate tourist service efficiency mainly through economic indicators, this model combines six dimensions: customer needs, service quality, digital transformation, staff competence, integrated performance indicators and feedback-based improvement. The model considers tourist service efficiency as a dynamic and multidimensional process.

The novelty also lies in the interpretation of the tourist not only as a consumer, but as a participant in value creation. In this approach, service efficiency is achieved when the enterprise and the customer jointly create a positive, reliable and memorable experience.

⁷ Source: compiled by the author based on the National Statistics Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan, accommodation capacity indicators, 2020-2024.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The development of the tourism and hospitality industry requires new methodological approaches to improving the efficiency of tourist services. In the modern market, service efficiency cannot be limited to financial indicators or the number of tourists served. It must include customer satisfaction, service quality, digital convenience, employee competence, emotional experience and sustainability.

The article proposed a customer-oriented integrative methodological model consisting of six components: customer needs identification, service quality management, digital service transformation, staff competence development, integrated performance evaluation and feedback-based continuous improvement. This model allows tourism and hospitality enterprises to evaluate efficiency more comprehensively and improve service processes systematically.

The research shows that the transition from a product-oriented approach to a customer-oriented and experience-based approach is one of the most important conditions for increasing the competitiveness of tourist services. Enterprises that understand customer expectations, use digital technologies, develop staff competence and regularly analyze feedback can achieve higher efficiency and stronger customer loyalty.

The proposed model may be applied in hotels, travel agencies, restaurants, tour operators and destination management organizations. In future research, the model can be tested empirically using surveys, expert evaluation and statistical analysis in specific tourism regions or hospitality enterprises.

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