



“PROMOTING UZBEKISTAN: HOW MASS MEDIA AND
PR DRIVE TOURISM GROWTH”

Shakarova Munajat Usanbay qizi

O'ZJOKU magistranti

Abstract —*This study examines the role of mass media and public relations (PR) strategies in shaping Uzbekistan's global tourism image, highlighting the impact of digital engagement, social media marketing, and influencer campaigns. The analysis explores various tourism categories, demonstrating how Uzbekistan is leveraging modern digital tools to enhance its international appeal and strengthen its position in the global tourism market.*

Keywords —*Uzbekistan tourism, mass media, PR strategies, media influence, destination branding.*

Uzbekistan's tourism sector has experienced remarkable growth in recent years, evolving into a prominent destination for travelers seeking a blend of rich history, culture, and natural beauty. Several factors have contributed to this rise, including political reforms, improved infrastructure, and a concerted effort to promote the country's unique attractions. According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), Uzbekistan saw a substantial increase in international tourist arrivals, with a record-breaking 6.7 million visitors in 2019 (UNWTO, 2019). As a result of the global crisis due to the coronavirus pandemic, tourism has become one of the hardest hit industries. In 2020, according to UNWTO, a total of 1.6 million people visited by foreign tourists, while in 2021 there were 1.9 million (UNWTO, 2022). According to the State Statistics Agency of Uzbekistan, the number of tourists arriving in the country from abroad in 2022 increased 2.8 times compared to the previous year and reached 5 million 200 thousand people³⁸. The creation of a new tourist center in Samarkand has attracted an additional 2 million tourists. Large-scale preparations are being carried out for the forthcoming General Assembly of the World Tourism Organization in Uzbekistan this year. One of the high results of activities in this direction is that Uzbekistan's historic city of Samarkand was chosen as the 2023 World Tourism Capital at the 24th General Assembly of the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) in Spain³⁹. “In January-February 2025, approximately 1.3mn foreign nationals [visited](#) Uzbekistan for various purposes, reflecting a 37.1% rise compared to the same period in 2024. The leading countries of origin for tourists to Uzbekistan were Kyrgyzstan, with 422,591 visitors, Tajikistan at 401,377, and Kazakhstan with 199,048.

³⁸ <https://stat.uz/uz/default/press-relizlar/34336-2023-yil>

³⁹ https://www.unwto.org/25-session-of-the-unwto-general-assembly/official-messages?utm_source=daily01&utm_medium=crm#msguzgb





Other notable sources of visitors included Russia (90,611), Afghanistan (81,797), Turkmenistan (48,871), Turkey (22,520), China (14,062), India (10,326), and South Korea (5,292). Additionally, 38,810 visitors came from other countries during this period. The primary reasons for foreign citizens [traveling](#) to Uzbekistan in January-February 2025 were family visits, business trips, tourism, and commerce. Among the foreign visitors, 461,277 came for family reunions, 88,336 for business purposes, 75,392 for tourism, and 41,196 for commercial activities. Other reasons included medical treatments (8,966 visitors) and study-related travel (3,508 visitors)⁴⁰.”

The use of digital media by PR companies to market products or services with the primary objective of attracting customers and connecting them with the brand through digital media is called digital marketing. Social media marketing is one of the most important methods of digital marketing⁴¹ in tourism industry. Digital marketing is also known as online marketing, and it may be accomplished through websites, online adverts, opt-in emails, interactive kiosks, interactive TV, or mobile devices. Other researchers describe digital marketing as brand promotion that takes advantage of all accessible digital advertising platforms to reach the target audience⁴². Digital marketing refers to the promotion of goods and services using digital advertising channels such as social media platforms Facebook, Instagram, and Tiktok for the purposes of this study. Efficient communication is crucial in the hospitality and tourist industries to successfully exhibit a facility's or destination's people, services, and physical setting. When there is structured engagement, the concrete offers of these companies elicit a good response. In order to attract visitors and provide a great experience, it is also critical to promote the product, pricing, location, and promotional activities⁴³. The Republic of Uzbekistan, with its rich cultural history and various landscapes, has enormous tourist potential. A solid digital marketing and advertising plan is required to fully realize this potential. The following are the five most well-known categories of tourism in Uzbekistan⁴⁴:

1. *Pilgrimage tourism*: Centers around visiting religious sites, pilgrimage destinations, and participating in religious ceremonies;

2. *Cultural and historical tourism*: Centered around experiencing the local culture, traditions, art, and history of a destination. This may include visits to museums, historical sites, and participation in cultural events. Historical tourism revolves around visiting historical sites, monuments, and landmarks to learn about the past of a particular destination;

40 <https://daryo.uz/en/2025/05/07/uzbekistan-sees-rise-in-cross-border-travel-as-outbound-tourism-jumps-20%25>

41 Haffey, D. and Smith, P. (2008), *Emarketing Excellence: Planning and Optimizing Your Digital Marketing*, Routledge, London and New York, NY

42 Mandal, P., Joshi, N. and Sheela., K. (2016), “Understanding digital marketing-theories and strategies”, *International Research Journal of Management Science and Technology*, Vol. 7 No. –9, pp. 50-60

43 Kumar, M.M. and Jincy, K.B. (2017), “Digital marketing: challenges and opportunities”, *Paripex-Indian Journal of Research*, Vol. 6 No. 11, pp. 117-119.

44 <https://uzbekistan.travel/en/uzbekistan/>





3. *Ecotourism and wellness tourism*: A sustainable form of tourism that aims to minimize the impact on the environment and promote conservation. It often involves visiting natural areas to appreciate and preserve biodiversity. *Wellness tourism*: Emphasizes activities and experiences that promote health and well-being, including spa retreats, yoga retreats, and wellness resorts;

4. *Adventure and sport tourism*: Involves exploration of remote or exotic areas, often with a focus on physical activities such as hiking, trekking, and water sports;

5. *Culinary Tourism*: Focuses on exploring and experiencing the local cuisine and culinary traditions of a region.

The growth of Uzbekistan's tourism sector is indicative of its commitment to modernization and economic development. By harnessing the power of digital platforms, the country has expanded its reach, attracted a diverse range of tourists, and positioned itself as a must-visit destination in Central Asia.

References

1. <https://stat.uz/uz/default/press-reizlar/34336-2023-yil>
2. https://www.unwto.org/25-session-of-the-unwto-general-assembly/oficial-messages?utm_source=daily01&utm_medium=crm#msguzgb
3. 1 <https://daryo.uz/en/2025/05/07/uzbekistan-sees-rise-in-cross-border-travel-as-outbound-tourism-jumps-20%25>
4. 1 Haffey, D. and Smith, P. (2008), *Emarketing Excellence: Planning and Optimizing Your Digital Marketing*, Routledge, London and New York, NY
5. 1 Mandal, P., Joshi, N. and Sheela., K. (2016), "Understanding digital marketing-theories and strategies", *International Research Journal of Management Science and Technology*, Vol. 7 No. -9, pp. 50-60
6. Kumar, M.M. and Jincy, K.B. (2017), "Digital marketing: challenges and opportunities", *Paripex-Indian Journal of Research*, Vol. 6 No. 11, pp. 117-119.
7. <https://uzbekistan.travel/en/uzbekistan/>

