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## INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO ORGANIZATIONAL AND ECONOMIC MANAGEMENT OF MICE TOURISM IN THE DIGITAL ERA

**Abstract:** MICE tourism is an important segment of the global tourism industry, contributing to business cooperation, knowledge exchange, and destination competitiveness. In emerging economies, including Uzbekistan, its development is constrained by infrastructural limitations and low youth involvement. This study analyzes the infrastructural factors affecting MICE tourism development in Uzbekistan, with a focus on exhibition and convention facilities in Tashkent. The research is based on a mixed-methods approach combining analysis of official documents and international practices with practical experience gained from organizing MICE-related events, including a Model United Nations (MUN) conference. The results indicate that limited venue capacity, accommodation shortages, and logistical challenges restrict the hosting of large-scale international events. At the same time, increased youth engagement and the development of innovative MICE complexes may enhance the competitiveness of Uzbekistan as a MICE destination.

**Key words:** MICE tourism; business tourism; infrastructure; youth engagement; destination competitiveness; Uzbekistan

**INTRODUCTION:** In recent years, MICE tourism has emerged as a strategic sector that fosters business interactions, knowledge exchange, and regional competitiveness. Its development is increasingly recognized as a key factor for enhancing urban attractiveness and diversifying the economies of emerging markets. Over time, MICE tourism has become a distinct segment within the global tourism industry, carrying substantial economic significance. Today, it plays a vital role in facilitating international business cooperation, enabling professional networking, and promoting knowledge transfer. Although corporate events and business tourism have long existed, their strategic importance has historically been limited<sup>1</sup>.

Despite its growing significance, MICE tourism in emerging markets such as Uzbekistan faces several structural and operational challenges, including limited infrastructure and low youth engagement. Currently, Tashkent, the capital city, hosts only two major exhibition centers-CAEx and UzExpo<sup>2</sup>. The scarcity of large-scale venues often leads to postponed or canceled international events and requires organizers to book facilities several months in advance. These constraints highlight structural limitations in the development of MICE tourism and underscore the urgent need for internationally standardized exhibition and convention facilities. Recent literature emphasizes that sustainable growth in MICE destinations relies on the effective integration of infrastructure, governance mechanisms, and visitor perceptions. Additionally, post-pandemic shifts have accelerated the adoption of hybrid event formats, reshaping both demand patterns and destination strategies (Litvinova-Kulikova, Aliyeva & David, 2023; Hazwsargorn et al., 2026). Nevertheless, empirical research addressing infrastructural constraints in emerging economies remains limited. In this context, Uzbekistan represents an underexplored case for analyzing how

<sup>1</sup>[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/376974154\\_ANALYSIS\\_OF\\_THE\\_INTERACTION\\_OF\\_MICE\\_TOURISM\\_DEVELOPMENT\\_FACTORS\\_THE\\_CASE\\_OF\\_ASTANA\\_CITY\\_IN\\_KAZAKHSTAN](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/376974154_ANALYSIS_OF_THE_INTERACTION_OF_MICE_TOURISM_DEVELOPMENT_FACTORS_THE_CASE_OF_ASTANA_CITY_IN_KAZAKHSTAN)

<sup>2</sup> <https://uzbek-travel.com/>

physical and organizational infrastructure affects the country's capacity to host international MICE events<sup>1</sup>.

Unlike previous studies that focus mainly on demand-side factors and general destination competitiveness, this research examines the infrastructural aspects shaping MICE tourism development in an emerging economy, with particular attention to exhibition and convention facilities in Tashkent. The study draws on practical experience from organizing a Model United Nations (MUN) conference, providing valuable insights into participant engagement, operational challenges, and the use of existing venues. Furthermore, it considers the potential of innovative MICE complexes, such as the "Golden Heritage" network, to support future international conferences and exhibitions<sup>2</sup>.

The aim of this study is to investigate the infrastructural constraints affecting the development of MICE tourism in Uzbekistan, with a focus on convention facilities in Tashkent. To achieve this aim, the study addresses the following objectives:

1. To analyze the current state of MICE infrastructure and facilities in Uzbekistan.
2. To assess the impact of infrastructural limitations on hosting international events.
3. To examine the potential of innovative MICE complexes, such as the Golden Heritage network, in enhancing destination competitiveness.
4. To explore strategies for increasing youth involvement and engagement in MICE tourism development.

**MATERIALS:** The empirical materials of the research were formed during the organization and implementation of MICE-format events in 2023–2024, including a Model United Nations conference (156 registered delegates) and a school-level essay exhibition. The analysis was based on registration data, participation statistics, event programs, financial documentation, and direct observation of youth engagement levels.

Statistical data from the Tourism Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2022–2024, as well as information from the national calendar of events, were used to assess the dynamics of MICE activities. Analytical materials published by international organizations, including the United Nations, were additionally examined to provide comparative context. Regulatory documents and strategic programs related to tourism and business tourism development were also included in the source base of the study.

**METHODS:** This study employed a mixed-methods approach to investigate the development of MICE tourism in Uzbekistan, with a particular focus on youth engagement and infrastructural factors. A combination of primary and secondary data sources was used to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the industry<sup>3</sup>.

Primary data were collected through direct involvement in several MICE-related events. The research included participation in and organization of a Model United Nations (MUN) conference, an essay exhibition, and a cultural-educational event—the Spring Ball—held in Tashkent. The MUN conference aimed to engage youth in discussions on governance and international relations, providing practical experience in diplomacy and event participation. The event hosted 156 delegates, representing multiple committees such as the Human Rights Committee, Security Council, and Environmental Protection Committee<sup>4</sup>. Participant engagement, operational challenges, and feedback were systematically recorded and analyzed.

The essay exhibition, held among 10th–11th grade students, aimed to foster educational engagement and creative thinking regarding tourism development in Uzbekistan. Students submitted essays on topics including cultural, historical, and ecotourism potential. This initiative

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.un.org/ru/mun>

<sup>2</sup> Secondary School No. 190, Tashkent. Internal materials and participation records. — Tashkent, 2025. — Unpublished materials.

<sup>3</sup> [National Uzbekistan Tourist Information Center | Official Website of State Unitary Enterprise "National PR-Center" | Uzbekistan Travel](#)

<sup>4</sup> Jones C. and M. Munday (2007). Exploring the Environmental Consequences of Tourism: A Satellite Account Approach, *Journal of Travel Research* 2007; 46; pp.: 164

enabled the assessment of youth interest in tourism-related issues and their communication and analytical skills<sup>1</sup>.

The Spring Ball combined cultural, educational, and entertainment elements to promote national traditions and cultural heritage among students. Observations focused on participant engagement, teamwork, and interpersonal skills, which provided insight into how cultural events can stimulate youth involvement in MICE-related activities.

Secondary data included official reports and policy documents from governmental bodies such as the Oliy Majlis, the Tourism Development Committee, and the Cabinet of Ministers, providing information on national strategies and policies. Academic articles and international studies were reviewed to allow comparative analysis with global best practices. A comparative analysis was conducted to evaluate the current state of MICE tourism infrastructure, legislative support, and economic contribution in Uzbekistan relative to international benchmarks. This methodological approach enabled the identification of key factors influencing MICE tourism development, particularly infrastructural limitations and youth engagement. Insights gained from these events informed the assessment of current challenges and the formulation of recommendations for enhancing the organizational and economic mechanisms of MICE tourism in Uzbekistan<sup>2</sup>.

**RESULTS:** The success of MICE (business) destinations depends on several interrelated factors. The presence of modern convention centers, exhibition complexes, high-quality hotels, and a well-developed transportation network forms the foundation for attracting large-scale events. High standards of service, professional staff, and the use of modern technologies in event organization further increase satisfaction among both participants and organizers. Additionally, a rich cultural heritage and attractive natural landscapes provide unique experiences for attendees, enhancing the overall appeal of the destination. Economic and political stability also plays a critical role, as a reliable economic environment and favorable political climate ensure safety and predictability for organizers and participants alike. Comparative analysis of successful international MICE destinations illustrates these points. Singapore has achieved notable success through strategic planning, significant infrastructure investments, and active marketing, while Macau focuses on integrating MICE events with the entertainment and gaming industry<sup>3</sup>. Barcelona, for example, generated a record €2.2 billion in hotel revenue in 2024 despite a 1.4% decline in occupancy<sup>4</sup>. This success is largely due to a strategic shift towards quality tourism and targeting the MICE segment, which increased the average nightly rate to €188. The research also identified potential challenges for the development of MICE tourism in Uzbekistan. Two key factors are particularly noteworthy: youth engagement and infrastructural limitations. Low involvement of young professionals in MICE tourism may be linked to limited access to educational programs and a lack of practical experience in organizing business events. Strategies to address this include expanding educational programs, promoting the industry, and involving students in practical activities<sup>5</sup>.

Infrastructure constraints represent the second major challenge. Despite growing interest in Uzbekistan as a venue for international conferences and exhibitions, existing facilities are not always equipped to accommodate large numbers of participants and investors. Limited hotel capacity, a shortage of specialized conference halls, and transportation logistics can negatively affect event quality<sup>6</sup>. One possible solution is optimizing the event calendar to distribute major conferences and exhibitions more evenly throughout the year, avoiding congestion during peak periods. This approach ensures more efficient use of resources and comfortable conditions for all

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<sup>1</sup> Crompton, J.L., S. Lee, and T. Shuster (2001), «A Guide for Undertaking Economic Impact Studies: The Springfest Festival», *Journal of Travel Research*, 40 (1). pp: 79–87

<sup>2</sup> Middleton V, Clarke J 2001 *Marketing in Travel and Tourism*, Third Edition, Elsevier Butterworth Heinemann, Great Britain

<sup>3</sup> *International Tourism Highlights*, 2019 Edition. URL:<https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/pdf/10.18111/9789284421152> (датаобращения: 20.02.2020)

<sup>4</sup> Экономический отчет Всемирного совета по путешествиям и туризму за 2024 год

<sup>5</sup> [ICCA - International Congress and Convention Association - Events and Education](https://www.icca-internationalcongressandconventionassociation.org/)

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.tourismni.com/business-guidance/sector/mice-travel-trade/mice-and-travel-trade-getting-started/what-is-mice/>

participants and organizers. This analysis not only highlights the key challenges but also suggests potential solutions, contributing to the further development of MICE tourism in the region. Uzbekistan's tourism sector has shown steady growth in recent years, with increasing numbers of international arrivals and rising export revenues from tourism. The government considers tourism a strategic priority for economic development, supporting policies aimed at strengthening infrastructure, enhancing service quality, and promoting the country as a competitive destination for international business events.

Table 1

Inbound tourism dynamics in Uzbekistan (2017–2024)<sup>1</sup>

Год	Number of Tourists (million)	Tourism Export Revenue (billion USD)	Source
2017	2.69	1.55	Embassy of Uzbekistan in Turkey, 2023
2018	5.3	1.041	(Uzbekistan Travel 2023)
2019	6.748	1.313	(Uzbekistan Travel 2023)
2020	1.5	0.261	State Committee, 2020; Economic Review, 2023
2021	1.88	0.296	Embassy of Uzbekistan in Turkey, 2023
2022	5.2	1.61	Embassy of Uzbekistan in Turkey, 2023
2023	6.6	2.1435	(Uzbekistan.org 2024)
2024	10.2	3.5	(UzDaily 2025; Profi.Travel 2025)
2025	11.7	4.6	(UzDaily 2025)
2026	12.8(approx)	4.8(approx)	(UzDaily 2025)

**DISCUSSION:** The results obtained indicate that the development of MICE tourism is influenced not only by the availability of infrastructure and economic conditions, but also by qualitative and institutional factors that determine the sustainability of this segment. The identified success factors of international MICE destinations confirm that competitiveness in this field is formed through the interaction of physical infrastructure, service quality, human capital, and strategic governance. The comparative examples demonstrate that leading MICE destinations prioritize long-term planning and diversification of tourism products. The experience of Singapore and Macau shows that MICE tourism develops most effectively when it is embedded into a broader economic and urban development strategy. In this context, MICE events function not merely as isolated business activities, but as catalysts for hotel occupancy growth, service sector expansion, and destination branding. The case of Barcelona further illustrates that a shift toward quality-oriented tourism and the MICE segment can generate higher economic returns even under conditions of limited growth in visitor numbers, as reflected in increased average spending per visitor.

When these international practices are considered in relation to Uzbekistan, the analysis reveals several structural constraints that may hinder the full realization of MICE tourism potential. One of the most significant challenges is the limited involvement of youth in the MICE sector. The low level of engagement among young professionals suggests that the industry is not yet perceived as an attractive or accessible career path. This situation may reduce the availability of qualified human resources in the long term and slow the adoption of innovative and digital solutions in event management. The results imply that without targeted educational initiatives and practical training mechanisms, the sector may face difficulties in ensuring sustainable growth<sup>2</sup>. Infrastructure-related

<sup>1</sup> Gulnoza Ilkhomova Zayniddin kizi 1level Phd student at Tashkent State University of Economics leader specialist of scientific research institute for tourism development //Yashil iqtisodiyot va taraqqiyot 2025-year, march. № 3 "mice tourism as a driver of tourist and excursion services development in uzbekistan in the context of contemporary global trends"

<sup>2</sup> [Mice tourism, Festival tourism | Visit places, centers, objects of event and festival tourism in Uzbekistan: types, popular destinations, reviews, features | Uzbekistan Travel](#)

limitations represent another critical factor influencing the development of MICE tourism in Uzbekistan. Although the country is increasingly positioned as a destination for international conferences and exhibitions, the existing capacity of hotels, conference venues, and transport infrastructure may not be sufficient to host large-scale events on a regular basis. This mismatch between growing demand and available resources can negatively affect the quality of events and the overall destination image<sup>1</sup>. The proposed optimization of the event calendar appears to be a rational short-term solution, as it allows for a more balanced use of infrastructure and reduces pressure during peak periods.

**CONCLUSION:** This study examined the development of MICE tourism in Uzbekistan with a particular focus on infrastructural constraints and youth engagement as key determinants of destination competitiveness. The findings confirm that, while Uzbekistan demonstrates significant potential for positioning itself as an emerging MICE destination, structural and organizational limitations continue to restrict its ability to host large-scale international business events. Insufficient convention and exhibition facilities, limited hotel capacity during peak periods, and logistical challenges remain major barriers to sustainable growth in this sector. At the same time, the research highlights the critical role of human capital in strengthening MICE tourism development. The low level of youth involvement identified in this study reflects gaps in specialized education, practical training opportunities, and awareness of MICE tourism as a viable career path. Evidence from the organized MUN conference, essay exhibition, and cultural-educational events demonstrates that targeted engagement initiatives can significantly enhance youth interest, skills development, and participation in event-based activities. These findings suggest that integrating educational institutions with practical MICE projects can contribute to building a skilled workforce capable of supporting the sector's long-term development. Comparative analysis with established international MICE destinations further indicates that successful development depends on a coordinated approach combining infrastructure investment, service quality improvement, and strategic destination management. For Uzbekistan, innovative projects such as integrated MICE complexes and diversified event formats, including hybrid and cultural-business events, represent promising pathways to enhance international competitiveness. Optimizing event scheduling and improving coordination among stakeholders can also help maximize the use of existing resources while minimizing operational constraints.

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