



## Educational Tourism In Uzbekistan: A Strategic Direction For Shaping International Image

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**Abstract.** This article analyzes the current state, international trends, and prospects of developing educational tourism in Uzbekistan. Particular attention is paid to enhancing the country's reputation in the international educational arena, attracting foreign students, and shaping an international image by studying the achievements of leading countries in education, especially the Finnish education system, and adapting them to the national system. Additionally, the economic, cultural, and geopolitical significance of educational tourism is examined. The article proposes strategic directions and promising suggestions that should be implemented in the field of educational tourism in Uzbekistan.

**Keywords:** educational tourism, international image, strategic direction, Finnish education system, teacher potential, academic mobility, innovative education, educational policy of Uzbekistan, foreign students, educational diplomacy

### Introduction.

In the context of globalization, the field of education is emerging not only as the main pillar of national development but also as a crucial strategic factor in shaping a country's image on the international stage. In particular, educational tourism has been recognized globally in recent years as an economic and cultural sector with high potential. As a result of reforms implemented in Uzbekistan in recent years, the education sector has reached a new level, and significant steps have been taken to create an attractive educational environment for foreign students. This article analyzes the current state and prospects of Uzbekistan's educational tourism and its strategic importance in shaping the country's international image.

Today, great attention is paid to the development of educational tourism in Uzbekistan. In educational tourism, learning is recognized as the main goal of travel. Studying in higher educational institutions, universities and institutes, language schools, trips to various educational institutions are the main directions for studying educational tourism. "According to definitions adopted by international organizations, trips involving education and professional training are reflected in the following types of activities: - Studying in short-term courses - Acquiring professional qualifications and competencies through participation in official courses In this context, the concept of "educational tourism" encompasses any activity where a person travels in a specific direction for a period of up to one year, outside their usual environment, without the intention of economic gain"[1;416].



### Materials and methods

Educational tourism, as one of the multifaceted types of tourism, encompasses various incoming and outgoing areas such as language learning, education, professional development, vocational training, participation in conferences, and the study of sports. "Our country possesses opportunities and untapped potential for tourism development that are not inferior to any foreign country. Therefore, the rapid development of this type of tourism is considered a key factor in ensuring our achievement of great success in economic development" [2].

"Uzbekistan has enormous potential in the field of tourism," said President Shavkat Mirziyoyev. – "Currently, one of the promising sectors that brings high income to the national economy is tourism. Uzbekistan is a country with great potential in the field of tourism. There are more than 7,300 cultural heritage sites in our country, most of which are included in the UNESCO list. At the same time, it is possible to open new tourist destinations using the unique nature of our country and the opportunities of beautiful recreation areas. Actively attracting world brands to this area, we need to pay special attention to the development of pilgrimage tourism, ecological, educational, ethnographic, gastronomic tourism and other sectors of this industry. In this regard, we should take into account that the use of public-private partnerships opens up broad opportunities for the development of the industry" [3].

### Results

The concept of educational tourism is broad and encompasses the notion of educational travel. Furthermore, the term "educational tourism" is closely related to concepts such as "cultural tourism" and "cultural and excursion-cognitive tourism." Educational tourism comprises a set of tourist trips and excursions aimed at fulfilling tourists' educational objectives, satisfying their interest in specific objects, and meeting other needs related to studying various things and phenomena. It includes a complex of tourist journeys.

Educational tourism refers to trips undertaken by individuals or groups to specialized countries and regions with the purpose of obtaining quality educational services within the framework of specific educational programs.

Educational tourism is associated with human cognitive processes and the acquisition of new knowledge and impressions. According to the IRTS 2008 classification, "educational tourism stands out as a distinct subtype of inbound tourism and differs from other types of tourism in accordance with the objectives of tourist travel. Educational tourism is a form of study and lifestyle, a type of travel that contributes to human development, qualitative improvement of knowledge, and personal growth" [4]. When organizing educational tourism, several factors are taken into account: the purpose of education, the characteristics of the tourist group and the visited region, the duration and season of the trip, the age, experience, and preparation of tour participants, as well as the financial expenses for the study group.

Educational tourism has its own classification characteristics and can be categorized as follows: "1. By participant composition: Schoolchildren, university students, master's students, PhD candidates, specialists, and independent learners. 2. By purpose: General, skills development, professional skills development, receiving education, providing instruction, and mixed (both receiving education and providing instruction). 3. By subject area: Comprehensive, environmental, socio-economic, humanitarian, technical, and professional. 4. By number of participants: Individual and group. 5. By organization: Specially organized and unorganized. 6. By activity



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On November 6, 2020, a Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Measures for the Development of Education, Upbringing, and Science in the New Period of Uzbekistan's Development" was adopted, which assigned the task of studying the experience of advanced countries in school education and their education systems. In the education systems of foreign countries, "for example, in Finland's education system, literacy is defined as "students' ability to apply knowledge and skills on key subjects, effectively analyze, reason, and communicate in identifying, interpreting, and solving problems in various situations." Within the framework of the PISA program, students' literacy in mathematics, natural sciences, and reading is assessed in cycles repeated every 3 years" [6].

In the process of globalization, educational tourism is becoming an effective means of knowledge and cultural exchange between countries. Uzbekistan is also actively working in this direction: through educational reforms in the country, the goal is to create a favorable environment for international students, ensure academic mobility, and take its place in the global educational space. In this process, great attention is paid to studying the experience of the education system of developed countries of the world, including Finland, which is known for its quality of education and innovative approaches. Achievements in Finland, such as equality-based education, trust in teachers, and an individual approach, serve as a source of inspiration in shaping Uzbekistan's educational tourism strategy.

In this regard, the practical application of world experience, especially the achievements of the Finnish education system, is of particular importance. Innovative and humanistic approaches of the Finnish educational model serve as one of the strategic priorities in the development of educational tourism in Uzbekistan. Therefore, studying the best practices at the international level and adapting them to the national system creates the basis for the sustainable and attractive development of educational tourism.

## Conclusion.

In conclusion, the development of educational tourism is an important opportunity to strengthen Uzbekistan's international image, demonstrate its intellectual potential to the wider world community, and occupy a worthy place in the global educational arena. The strategic measures being implemented in this area - educational programs that meet international standards, cooperation with foreign educational institutions, improvement of educational infrastructure, and strengthening of cultural ties - serve to enhance the country's prestige. Therefore, comprehensive support for educational tourism will remain one of the decisive factors in determining Uzbekistan's future global position.

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