

**THE PECULIARITIES OF BENCHMARKING IN ACHIEVING A
COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE OF THE TOURISM CLUSTER**

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ANNOTATION

This article discusses the need to mitigate the very negative impact of pandemic conditions on tourism, the development of tourism in Uzbekistan, including the creation of clusters in the tourism industry, the introduction of benchmarking in these clusters. Benchmarking is a consistent comparison and assessment of experience, workflow and results as a growth and self-regulation aid. By concept, "benchmarking is the process of comparing the performance practices, processes and exhibitions of a company with specially selected benchmarking partners."

Key words: *tourism, benchmarking, pandemic, tourism sector, traveling, tourists, promotion, tour operator, tourism cluster.*

The targeted support initiatives for tourism organizations set out in the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated 28 May, 2020 on urgent steps to support the tourism sector in order to reduce the negative impact of the corona virus pandemic have so far been acknowledged.

The corona virus pandemic has drastically altered the customer base. In the near future, people would avoid traveling abroad in public, preferring domestic tourism. Fernando Galyardo, a Spanish tourism expert, placed an emphasis in an interview with RIA News. Tourist intensity is currently in a state of downward trend, closing the borders of Europe, China as well as Latin America. There are a lot of people living in these parts of the world, they're not traveling anywhere and they're not thinking of moving in the near future, the expert said. In his personal belief, the traffic of tourists "just stops" in which case it cannot be circulated in whichever direction. This is an assumption of what has been said for the short term. Global recession would have an impact on the global economy in the long run. Imposed with the economic downturn, it would take longer than expected for the tourism industry to stabilize, he said.

Presently, the economy of the country cannot be visualized without a tourism mechanism. In the process of deepening the international division of labor and the convergence of social production, tourism is seen not only as a way of tackling costs but also as a factor in accelerating interrelationships. In these circumstances, it is vital to increase the competitive nature of tourism clusters by the activities of tourism enterprises. The survey comes up with the following theoretical principles and realistic approaches to competition, competitiveness and competitive advantage. A roughly similar investigation of the interpretations of these terms by international and domestic scholars and the conceptualization of the author has been established.

It best reflects with the essence of rivalry and the sources of maximum potential in tourism clusters. Clusters that are significantly bigger than businesses will have complementary resources, infrastructure, facilities and marketing that will largely take into account consumer needs. Such attachments are extremely important for competitiveness, efficiency and, in particular, strategy. In the development of tourist clusters, it is presumed that the means to meet the additional needs of visitors and excursionists would be expressed in one location. When encouraging tourists to the country, the classified info on the cluster should be presented in detail and in precision on the additional services and facilities it offers. If we discuss the needs of visitors many of whom are being observed marketing, we may divide them into several segments:

-View of historic landmarks, artifacts and locations, get specific information about them;

- Use of tourism packages with a specific proposal and direction;
- Ensure the safety of tourists;
- Stay in hotels with high-quality Internet access;
- Participation in the preparation of national dishes and display of national costumes;
- Organization of health checkpoints at the hotel;
- Ensure harmony in hotels at leisure time.

In our perspective, tourism cluster competition is a competition between market participants to gain the loyalty of customers, to obtain the intended funds by achieving the price and quality of the services offered by the cluster enterprise in the pursuit of optimum conditions. The competitiveness of a tourism cluster enterprise is the ability to compete with similar rivals, as well to preserve equality. Competitive advantage is the difference in price, quality and compatibility of a market entity with competitors, i.e. the difference in profitability for buyers and consumers.

In the research work carried out in our republic and abroad, various alternate meanings are given of the general principle of healthy competition, which are typically defined separately on the basis of different diagrams. However, they are not part of a single scheme. In order to penetrate the international tourism market and increase the competitiveness of the country's tourism industry, it is important to bring the underlying principle of marketing into long term effect. It is therefore important for the Bukhara Tourism Cluster to be able to find new ways of enhancing the quality and productivity of its services, to compare them with the services of competitors or leading companies in other industries and to establish a benchmarking methodology for the introduction of innovations.

A benchmark is something whose quality or quantity is defined and can therefore be used as a norm for distinguishing other items. Sylvia Coding points out that the principle of benchmarking was first used in ancient Egypt to calculate the weight of objects by putting an iron rod at a point of scale. Much of the literature describes it as: "Benchmarking is the process of comparing, learning from each other, and thus collaboratively improving the weaknesses and problematic aspects of an institution." Any university management that uses the benchmarking approach should have a specific and consistent partner of their choosing. Benchmarking is a consistent comparison and assessment of experience, workflow and results as a growth and self-regulation aid. By concept, "benchmarking is the process of comparing the performance practices, processes and exhibitions of a company with specially selected benchmarking partners." In other words, benchmarking is not only a method of meeting a set of goals and objectives, but also a process of researching and recording the best practices of the sector that can help to accomplish those objectives.

Since benchmarking is a method for defining "best practices" for products and the methods through which these products are manufactured and distributed, it appears to be the ideal technique for exploring various techniques and general approaches. The essence of benchmarking is, firstly, to equate their results with the performance of advanced tourism firms or rivals and, secondly, to stress the importance of others as a technology for the analysis and application of good best practices. The Bukhara tourism cluster has established an improved marketing database system, taking into account the significance of the function and importance of the database in the organization and implementation of benchmarking processes, marketing and implementation of competitive strategies. The role of advertisement in the selling of services on the national and global market for tourism services is very critical. There is also a need to establish an efficient promotional system. In order to further increase the amount of sales and the quality of tourist services in the Bukhara tourist cluster, it is important to create a new diversified advertisement cost structure.

Tourism is the strongest opportunity of the Uzbek economy, and the development of this sector, especially through the establishment and development of tourist clusters on the territory of ancient Bukhara, will have a positive impact not only on tourists but also on the socio-economic situation in Bukhara.

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