

## Statistical Analyses of the Tourism Industry of Uzbekistan: Challenges in Collecting Information

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**Abstract:** To understand the endowment of the tourism industry to the economy of countries, analyses based upon tourism statistics should be done. Consequently, one of the key performance indicator of the tourism industry, i.e. tourist flow of inbound and outbound tourism of Uzbekistan is analyzed. Therefore, the aim of this paper is to estimate current changes in the tourism industry of Uzbekistan, to evaluate current challenges in collecting the statistical data of tourist flow of the sector and to recommend solutions accordingly.

**Keywords:** tourism, tourism statistics, inbound tourism, outbound tourism, purpose, gender and age.

### INTRODUCTION

Tourism is an activity of people, which encompasses their mobility from the usual environment to the destinations with different purposes including business, professional, educational, leisure and so forth.<sup>1</sup> Tourism has become one of the important activities to support the economy. Therefore, governments try to improve and develop the framework for sustainable tourism and to protect cultural heritage and art to attract more tourists. Along the same line, development of tourism industry helps to enhance an infrastructure, education and healthcare system of countries as well as a livelihood of people. Thus, tourism statistics is utilized to evaluate the prospects of the sector.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.unwto.org/glossary-tourism-terms>

Statistics, in the context of tourism, is a collection of data<sup>2</sup> regarding to aspects of the tourism industry, which is utilized to analyze the collected records, interpret current state and predict future outcomes based upon the findings and analyses. A quality tourism statistics is a foundation for tourism research, planning and development. Therefore, tourism statistics is a vital instrument to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of tourism policy and management decision, modify marketing strategies in a competitive market and establish a national policy.

The aim of this paper is to analyze and compare the data on tourism statistics from State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics, present current challenges and propose recommendations in gathering statistical data.

### Literature review

There has been disputes among tourism specialists about the impacts of tourism on the economy of countries in terms of employment, GDP, investment and trade. Thus, in order to measure the tourism impacts, quantitative research should be implemented.

Alongside, as there is no proper tool to measure the tourism impact, it is not easy to record exact number of both foreign and domestic tourists while their spending of money can differ apart from tourism businesses.

One of the methods to collect and present the impacts and demand on the tourism industry is Tourism Satellite Account (TSA). This method was developed by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the Statistical Office of the European Communities (Eurostat) and the United Nations Statistics Division. The TSA is used to summarize interrelated tables describing the size and distribution of inbound, domestic and outbound tourism expenditure, internal tourism expenditure, production accounts of tourism industries, employment, investment, Gross Domestic Product relatively to tourism and so forth.<sup>3</sup> Because of the deficiency of statistical information in regions, regional TSA was implemented in some countries. According to Laimer, Statistical office in Austria developed its regional TSA for Vienna, Upper Austria and Lower Austria to get much more accurate data on economic impacts of tourism on regional scale. Frechtling mentions the issues regarding to regional TSA, which indicate the deficiency of conceptual framework to compare regional and national accounts as well as some activities in the tourism industry cannot be explored regionally.

### Methodology

The data are collected from the official website of State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics for the period January-September 2022 and other secondary resources. Comparative and statistical methods are used to make further analyses. The quantitative method is used to present

<sup>2</sup><https://www.virtualkollage.com/2018/05/the-importance-of-tourism-statistics.html>

<sup>3</sup><https://www.oecd.org/cfe/tourism/tourismsatelliteaccountrecommendedmethodologicalframework.htm>

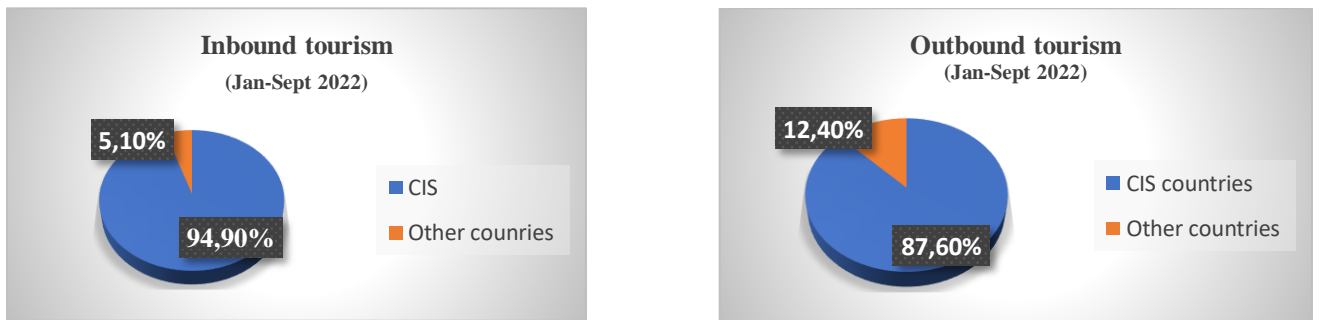
quantity and segmentation of tourist statistical data. In addition, diagrams and tables are utilized to display visual trends in the tourism industry of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

**Results**

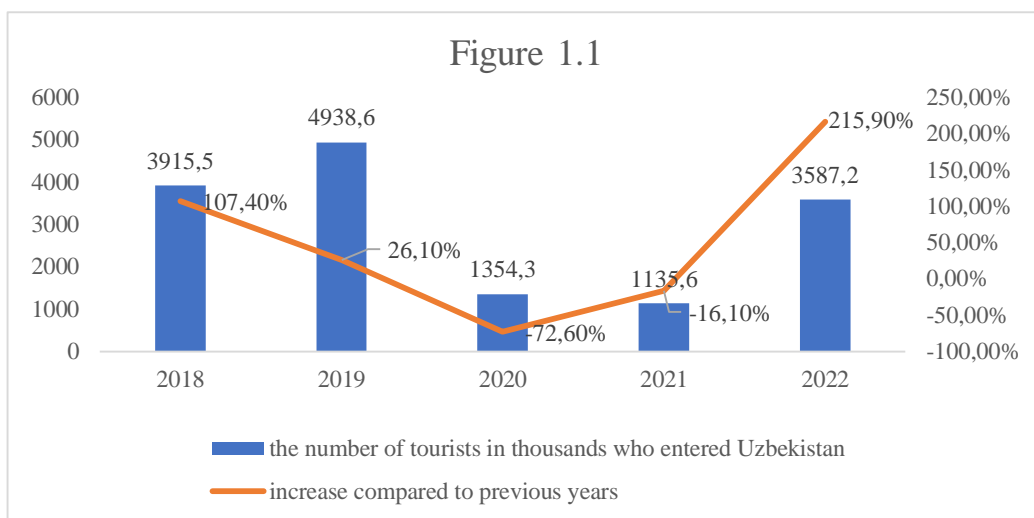
In the following paragraphs, key indicators of the tourism industry of Uzbekistan are analyzed, i.e. statistics of inbound and outbound tourism, purpose, gender and age of tourists in the tourism sector of Uzbekistan.

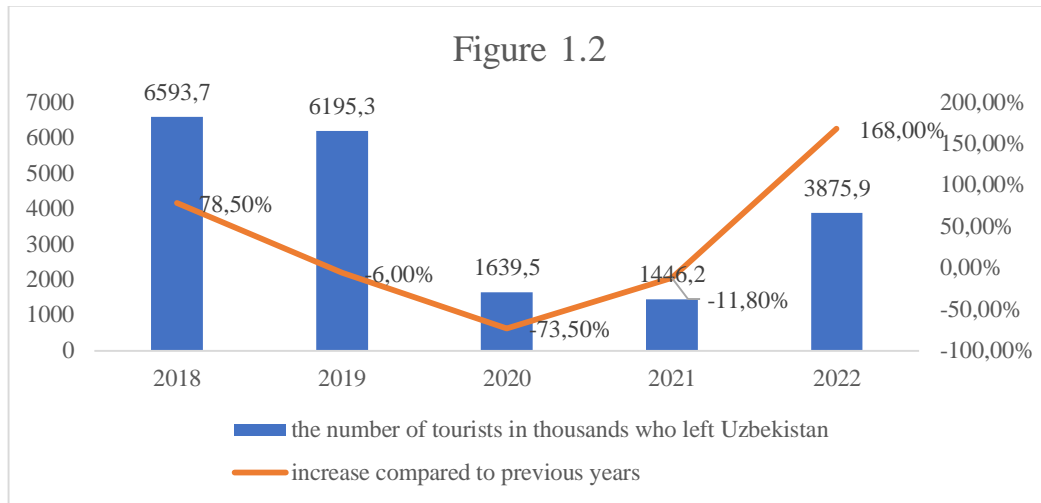
According to the results of inbound tourism, 3587.2 thousand people entered the Republic of Uzbekistan with tourism purposes over the period Jan-Sept 2022. Of these, 3403.1 thousand people marking up 94.9% of total visitors are the residents of CIS countries, whilst 184.1 thousand people marking up 5.1% of all visitors are the residents of other countries.

Meanwhile, 3875.9 thousand people left the Republic of Uzbekistan with tourism purposes for the same period. Of these, 87.6% amounting 3395.5 thousand people left for CIS countries, when 12.4% equaling to 480.4 thousand people left for the other countries.



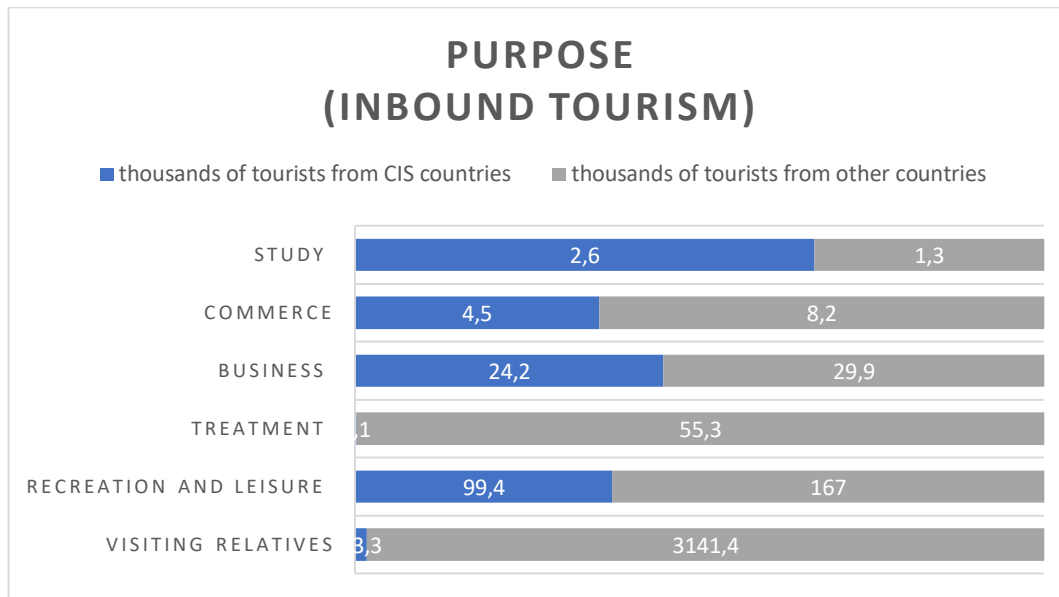
On Figure 1.1 and Figure 1.2 representing inbound and outbound tourism respectively, a sharp decline is witnessed in Jan-Sept 2020. However, this trend has changed positively by 215,9% and 168% in 2022 for the same period regarding to both inbound and outbound tourism of Uzbekistan.



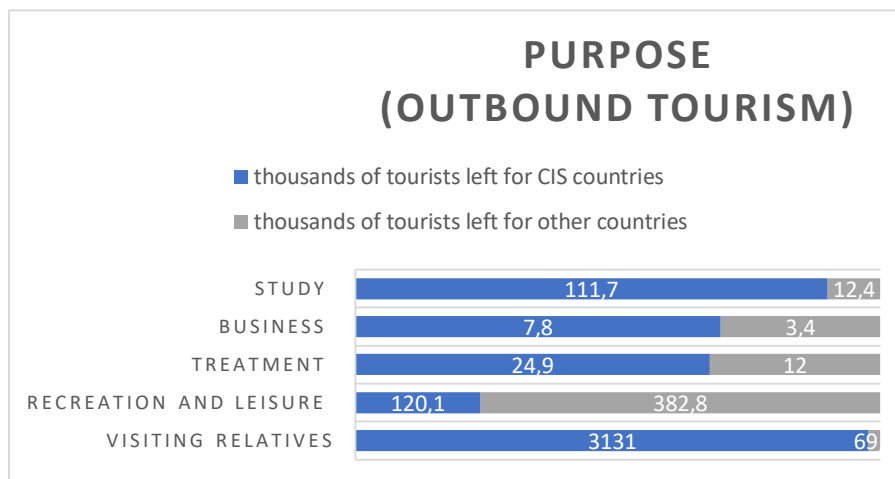


Of total amount of tourists visited Uzbekistan, 3.9 thousand people (out of these 1.3 thousand visitors from the CIS countries and 2.6 thousand from other countries) were with educational purposes. In addition, 12.7 thousand people (8.2 thousand visitors from the CIS countries, 4.5 thousand from other countries) entered the borders of Uzbekistan with commercial purposes, whilst 54.1 thousand people (29.9 thousand from the CIS countries, 24,2 thousand from other countries) were with business purposes. When 55.4 thousand people (55.3 thousand from the CIS countries, 0.1 thousand from other countries) came for treatment, 266.4 thousand people (167.0 thousand from the CIS countries, 99.4 thousand from other countries) entered Uzbekistan for rest and leisure. Meanwhile, 3194.7 thousand people (3141.4 thousand from the CIS countries, 53.3 thousand from other countries) visited Uzbekistan with the purpose to contact the relatives.

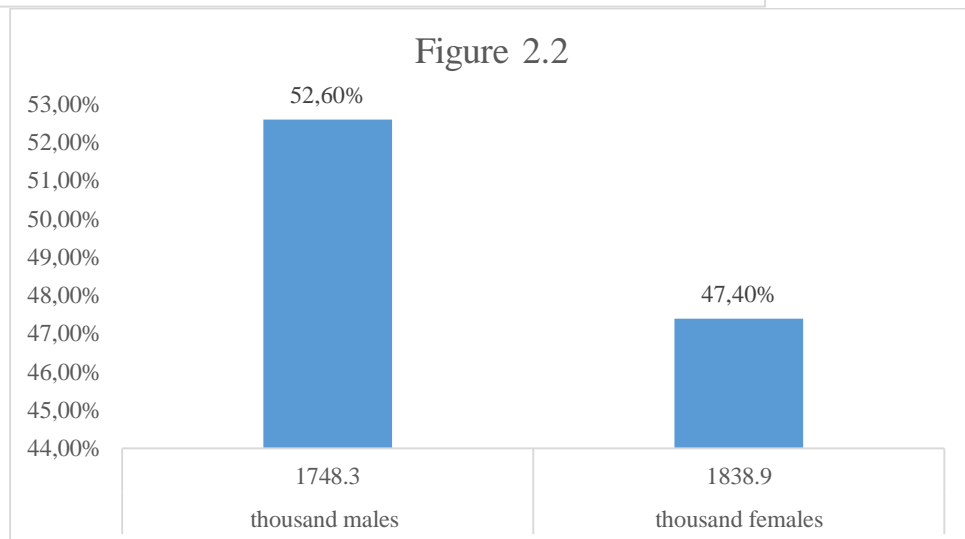
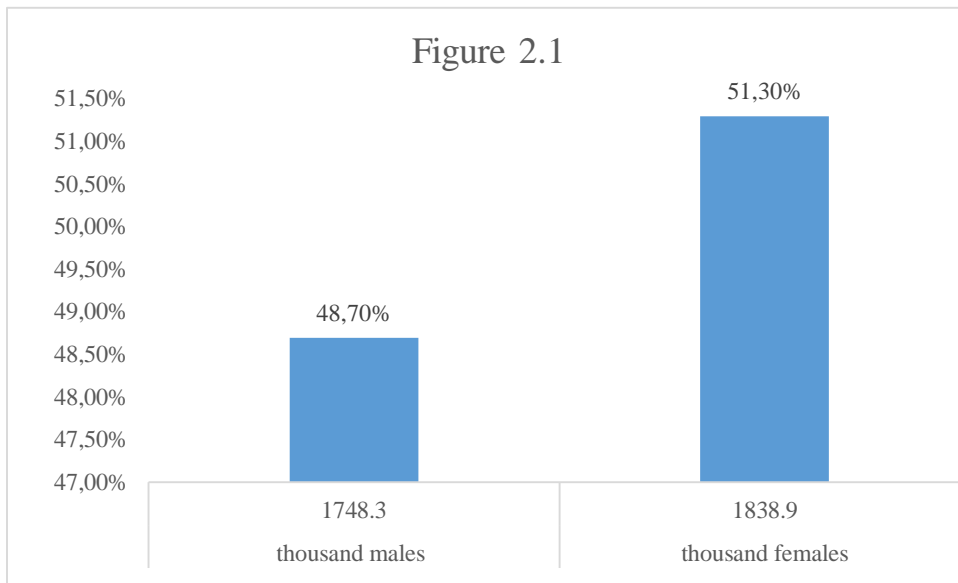
In comparison with the same period Jan-Sept 2021, business and commercial trips increased by 32.3% and 17.6% respectively. While recreation and leisure, medical and VRF (visiting relatives and friends) trips soared by 2.5%, 3.1% and 3.3% respectively. By contrast, study trips decreased by 20.4%.



For the period Jan-Sept 2022, 11.2 thousand people (7.8 thousand people to the CIS countries, 3.4 thousand to other countries) left Uzbekistan for business purposes, while 124.1 thousand people (111.7 thousand to the CIS countries, 12.4 thousand to other countries) departed with to study. In addition, 502.9 thousand citizens of Uzbekistan (of these, 120.1 thousand to the CIS countries, 382.8 thousand to other countries) and 36.9 thousand people (24.9 thousand to the CIS countries, 12 thousand to other countries) went abroad for recreation and leisure as well as for treatment respectively. Meanwhile, 3 200.8 thousand people (3131.0 thousand to the CIS, 69.8 thousand to other countries ) departed with the purpose to visit relatives. On the contrary, there is no statistical data about departures for commerce.



On Figure 2.1 (inbound tourism) and Figure 2.2 (outbound tourism), a slight difference can be noticed. Out of total tourists, who entered Uzbekistan for the period Jan-Sept 2022, 51.3% comprise females and 48.7%-males. Meanwhile, in terms of outbound tourism, 52.6% of male and 47.4% of female citizens of Uzbekistan left for other countries.



The majority of male and female tourist visited Uzbekistan at the 31-55 years old. It is followed by 19-30 year-old male tourists and over 56 year-old females visitors. This trend can be seen in outbound tourism of Uzbekistan.

**People who entered Uzbekistan (Jan-Sept 2022, inbound tourism) by gender and age**

Age	Male (in thousands)	Female (in thousands)
0-18	273,1	257,9
19-30	344,2	229,0
31-55	851,6	903,6

56+	279,4	448,4
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### People who left Uzbekistan (Jan-Sept 2022, outbound tourism) by gender and age

Age	Male (in thousands)	Female (in thousands)
0-18	261,3	221,3
19-30	635,0	302,0
31-55	906,6	881,1
56+	236,6	432,0

### Discussion

Collecting tourism statistical data can be performed by national offices of Uzbekistan such as State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics and the Ministry of Tourism and Cultural Heritage as well as by international organizations such as Eurostat and UNWTO.

From the data analyses collected from the reports of State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics, the majority of tourists marking up 89.1% of total visitors from the CIS countries entered Uzbekistan with the purpose to visit relatives. Meanwhile, this trend is the same for outbound tourism of Uzbekistan; 82.6% of total amount of Uzbek citizens left for the CIS countries to visit relatives. It can be inferred that these trips are made easily because of a free visa regime for the CIS countries except for Turkmenistan.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, to collect thorough statistical data tourists can be questioned when crossing the borders of Uzbekistan. Yet this method is time consuming and expensive, consequently, the free mobility among the CIS countries diminishes its effectiveness.

The data about inbound and outbound tourism can be collected from the touroperators. The information about tourists include the number of the citizens of Uzbekistan who books outbound trips as well as the number tourists from foreign countries who enters Uzbekistan. However, free individual travelers (FIT) are not recorded and presented in the data.

Public accommodations in Uzbekistan should provide monthly data for governmental organizations about the number of guests, the duration of stay as well as the capacity of facilities. This activity is performed by e-registration of the guest via the website “emehmon.uz”, which helps to get the data from visitors about length of stay, age, gender, country of residence, etc. However, after

<sup>4</sup> <https://kun.uz/en/news/2019/10/25/list-of-countries-whose-citizens-can-visit-uzbekistan-without-a-visa-to-reach-86-from-2020-list>

checking out a host can accommodate more than one hotel, consequently, that visitor is considered as a new visitor. Alongside, in statistical analysis, same-day tourists and visitors who travel with purpose to visit relative and stay at non-profitable organizations i.e. the private houses are not taken into consideration.

Tourism Satellite Account implemented by UNWTO has been introduced in the tourism industry of Uzbekistan, which helps to collect statistical data and analyze the tourism activity impacts on the economy of Uzbekistan. However, there is no data regarding to the current statistical changes in the tourism industry of Uzbekistan.<sup>5</sup>

## Conclusion

From the statistical analyses, it can be inferred that the collected data are not accurate both in terms of inbound and outbound tourism of Uzbekistan. Particularly, the challenges can be witnessed when counting exact number of tourists and collecting data about the purpose of visits as they are travelers who organize their trips individually and spend their capital not only for hospitality businesses, but also for other purposes. To collect more accurate information about tourist flow can be done through modification of the digitalized-registration policy of visitors and tracking transactions at point of sale (POS) through terminals and ATM machines. In addition, indirect data can be collected through observing the devices of tourists' gadgets and devices.

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