

## ANNOTATION

**to the dissertation work of Shokhamanova Arailym Muratovna «Strategy for the development of youth innovative entrepreneurship as a factor in increasing the competitiveness of the tourism industry of the Republic of Kazakhstan», submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in the educational program 8D04107 «Innovation Management»**

**Relevance of the research topic.** Tourism in the global economy is considered a highly dynamic sector with a huge multiplier effect: in 2024, its direct, indirect and induced share reached 10% of global GDP, that is, it was estimated at 10.9 trillion US dollars. Statistics from the World Tourism Organization show that the net direct added value of tourism remains at about 3 %; Thus, the real impact of the industry is much broader than official macro indicators, as it activates such related industries as transport and logistics, construction, information technology, and creative industries. Although tourism has been identified as a strategic growth point in the case of Kazakhstan, in 2023 its share in GDP is still about 1%, which means that the potential has not been fully exploited. Despite the fact that the results of government benchmarks and infrastructure projects are gradually beginning to manifest themselves, the share of intersectoral innovations and young entrepreneurs is insufficient.

Kazakhstan's competitive position is strengthening against the background of global indicators: in the Travel & Tourism Development Index (TTDI) At the 2024 World Economic Forum, the country ranked 52nd out of 119 countries, increasing the cumulative score to 4.07; in the 2021 ranking, this figure was 66th. However, indicators of human capital, innovative entrepreneurship and digital services in tourism are not above average. Kazakhstan's competitive position is strengthening against the background of global indicators: in the Travel & Tourism Development Index (TTDI) At the 2024 World Economic Forum, the country ranked 52nd out of 119 countries, increasing the cumulative score to 4.07; in the 2021 ranking, this figure was 66th.

President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev clearly underscored the urgency of the issue at the meeting on tourism development held on June 13, 2024: “Over the past four years, tourism’s share in the national economy has declined from 3.7% to 3.2%—three times lower than the global average; an urgent, systematic set of measures is needed to achieve a qualitative breakthrough.” In addition, in his Address to the People of Kazakhstan on September 8, 2025, titled “Kazakhstan in the Age of Artificial Intelligence: Current Challenges and How to Address Them Through Fundamental Digital Transformation,” the President openly pointed to unresolved problems in the tourism sector, noting that “our competitiveness in this area remains modest,” and emphasized that for the dynamic development of regional tourism “the most pressing issue is the construction of modern infrastructure.” In his New Year’s message on the eve of 2026, the President also highlighted national priorities such as supporting small and medium-sized businesses, developing transport logistics and infrastructure in tourism, and advancing digitalization and the adoption of artificial intelligence—priorities that create an institutional foundation for modernizing tourism services and expanding market opportunities.

The role of young people is particularly significant in achieving these objectives. The Address emphasizes that the key measure of patriotism for youth is “creativity and

innovation,” that they strive “to discover innovations that benefit society and to start new ventures,” and that, amid global change, artificial intelligence has heightened importance. Therefore, in the context of intensifying international competition and weaker national indicators, enhancing the competitiveness of Kazakhstan’s tourism sector makes the development of a strategy for youth innovative entrepreneurship a pressing scientific and practical task, since such a strategy aims to strengthen sustainable growth and competitive advantages in tourism by expanding digital services, introducing new tourism products, and developing new business models. Thus, growing global competition, relatively low national performance, and the need for urgent measures identified by the President together place the transformation of youth innovative entrepreneurship into a growth driver for tourism among the most relevant scientific and practical priorities.

**The degree of scientific elaboration of the research topic.** Earlier studies relevant to this dissertation may be grouped into the following strands: entrepreneurship, youth entrepreneurship, innovative entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship in tourism, development strategy, and entrepreneurial ecosystems. Problems of entrepreneurial development have been examined in depth by foreign scholars such as R. Cantillon, A. Smith, A. Marshall, F. Walker, J. Schumpeter, J.-B. Say, P. Drucker, and L. von Mises; and, in the context of tourism entrepreneurship, by F. Knight, F. Hayek, A. Thunen, S. Pratt and others.

The foundations of entrepreneurship theory in Kazakhstani scholarship were laid by O. S. Sabden, A. N. Toksanova, K. K. Zhuyrikov, A. B. Kosherbayeva, G. B. Birinshinova, A. K. Koshanov, B. G. Mukhamedzhanov, A. S. Seidakhmetov, S. T. Bektimisova, G. E. Nakipova, A. R. Alipov, U. K. Shedenova and others. The innovative orientation of youth entrepreneurship—rooted in personal qualities, autonomy and initiative—has been emphasised by N. V. Akhiyarova, E. K. Osifuah, S. Riahi, S. G. Petrosyan, A. V. Ivanova, A. I. Dalibozhko, Zh. S. Khusainova, Zhartai Zh. and their colleagues. In modern local scientific works, the problems of entrepreneurship and its role in increasing employment are explored in the works of G.S. Akybayeva, S.S. Mambetova, A.O. Musabekova and others, where special attention is paid to institutional conditions, the development of small and medium-sized businesses and the role of entrepreneurship in socio-economic development.

Substantial contributions to the study of tourism-sector entrepreneurship have been made by Russian economists A. V. Busygin, V. S. Bogolyubov, A. I. Shapiro, B. L. Vinokurov, N. G. Mozhaeva, M. A. Zhukova, V. S. Senin, I. V. Zorina, G. V. Kabak, E. A. Kotlyarov and others. Issues of developing Kazakhstan’s tourism industry and tourist entrepreneurship are addressed in the works of A. T. Tleuberdinova, Zh. M. Shaekina, Z. N. Borbasova, D. M. Salauatova, A. Zh. Saduov, M. R. Smykova, Shokhan R., Orynassarova E.D., Kose Zh.K. and many others.

In academic research, considerable attention is devoted to issues of innovation activity, innovation studies, and the management of innovation-driven development, as reflected in the works of Aliyev E.A., Bugayan I.R., Kaymachnikova N.V., Yaroslavskaya E.A., Yakubov B.A., Krutilina S.F., and others. Among Kazakhstani scholars, this problem has been examined by Aimagambetov E.B., Alimbayev A.A., Pritvorova T.P., and others. Theoretical and methodological foundations for studying the strategy development of systems at various levels are presented in the works of M. Porter, M. Hammer and J. Champy, G. Hamel, Kim and Mauborgne, A. Chandler, H. Mintzberg, and other scholars.

In the study of business ecosystem issues, the works of D. Isenberg, E. Stam, Mason and Brown, B. Spiegel, N. Rahman, and M. Novelli are particularly noteworthy.

Although previous academic research has addressed certain aspects of entrepreneurship, studies specifically focused on the development of strategies for youth innovative entrepreneurship in the tourism sector — aimed at enhancing industry competitiveness — remain insufficient. This dissertation is intended to fill these scientific gaps and bridge the divide between the theory of innovation management and tourism studies.

**The purpose of the dissertation** is to develop a scientifically grounded strategy for the development of youth innovative entrepreneurship aimed at enhancing the competitiveness of Kazakhstan's tourism sector.

The purpose of the research determined the formulation and solution of the following **tasks of the dissertation**:

- to reveal the essence and development features of the concept of “youth innovative entrepreneurship”;
- to define a development strategy for youth innovative entrepreneurship as a factor in the competitiveness of the tourism sector;
- to analyze international experience in the development of competitive startup projects in the tourism industry;
- to examine the position of youth innovative entrepreneurship within the overall structure of Kazakhstan's tourism business development;
- to assess the development potential of youth innovative entrepreneurship in tourism and its impact on the competitiveness of the tourism industry;
- to analyze the organizational and economic mechanisms for supporting and developing youth innovative entrepreneurship in Kazakhstan;
- to develop proposals for forming an entrepreneurial ecosystem to foster youth innovative entrepreneurship as a factor enhancing the competitiveness of the tourism industry;
- to develop a competitive development strategy for youth innovative tourism entrepreneurship in the Republic of Kazakhstan.

**The object of the research** is the process of formation and development of youth innovative entrepreneurship in the tourism industry of Kazakhstan.

**The subject of the research** comprises the organizational and economic relations arising in the process of developing youth innovative tourism entrepreneurship and the factors influencing strategic choice.

**The theoretical and methodological foundations** of the dissertation are based on the fundamental works of domestic and international scholars in the fields of innovation management and entrepreneurial ecosystems. The methodological basis includes dialectical, abstract-logical, statistical, and econometric methods, as well as methods for assessing industry competitiveness and designing targeted development programs. The empirical part is based on expert evaluations and a sociological survey of tourism service consumers.

**The information base of the dissertation research** includes scholarly works by Kazakhstani and foreign economists on the studied topic; legislative and regulatory acts of the Republic of Kazakhstan; data from the Bureau of National Statistics; WTO statistics;

Global Entrepreneurship Monitor analytics; materials from periodicals and online sources; as well as academic publications relevant to the research theme.

**The scientific novelty of the dissertation research.** The most significant results containing scientific novelty and submitted for protection include the following:

1) an author's interpretation of the concept of "youth innovative entrepreneurship" is proposed, revealing its essence through a system of goals, objectives, criteria, driving factors, and development effects;

2) an author's definition of the "strategy for developing youth innovative entrepreneurship" is proposed, and the advantages of designing such a strategy as a tool to stimulate youth innovation and entrepreneurial activity are substantiated;

3) a theoretical model of a strategy for developing youth innovative entrepreneurship in the tourism sector is formulated;

4) key competitive characteristics of tourism start-ups are identified based on international experience;

5) an author's model of the entrepreneurial ecosystem for youth innovative entrepreneurship in the tourism industry of the Republic of Kazakhstan is developed;

6) a strategy for developing youth innovative entrepreneurship in the tourism industry of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2027–2036 is proposed.

**The main scientific provisions of the dissertation research submitted for defense.**

As a result of the conducted research, the following provisions developed by the author are submitted for protection:

- the author's approach to interpreting the concept of "youth innovative entrepreneurship";

- the author's vision of the content of a strategy for the development of youth innovative entrepreneurship;

- the author's model of the strategy for the development of youth innovative entrepreneurship in the tourism sector;

- empirical evidence of the socio-economic impact of youth tourism entrepreneurship on national economic growth indicators and sectoral development;

- the author's conceptualization of an entrepreneurial ecosystem model for youth innovative entrepreneurship in the tourism sector of the Republic of Kazakhstan;

- a development strategy for youth innovative entrepreneurship in the tourism sector for the period 2027–2036.

**The theoretical and practical significance of the dissertation research** lies in the author's contribution to the development of theoretical and methodological foundations for the formulation of a strategy for the development of youth innovative entrepreneurship that promotes the competitiveness of the tourism sector.

The practical significance of the research is determined by the applicability of its findings to the development of youth innovative entrepreneurship in tourism. In particular, the recommendations for forming a development strategy for innovative tourism entrepreneurship and modeling the entrepreneurial ecosystem can be used by national, regional, and local public authorities and administrative bodies to improve tourism development plans aimed at enhancing destination competitiveness. The application of the research results in the educational process may increase the practical relevance of the following academic disciplines: "Entrepreneurship," "Entrepreneurial Projects:

Management and Organization,” “Strategic Management,” and “Contemporary Management Issues in the Economy of Kazakhstan”.

**As a result of the dissertation research, a number of scientific, theoretical and practical concepts were developed.**

In the dissertation research, the strategy for the development of youth innovative entrepreneurship was considered comprehensively as a factor in increasing the competitiveness of the tourism industry in the Republic of Kazakhstan. The system theoretical and methodological, analytical and applied tasks set in each chapter of the work have been solved, and the following key results have been obtained:

1. A comprehensive analysis of domestic and international literature on the research topic was conducted, thoroughly examining the works of scholars on the definitions of entrepreneurship, youth entrepreneurship, and innovative entrepreneurship. As a result, the concept of youth innovative entrepreneurship was clarified, with its components, essence, and content fully covered.

2. The development strategy for youth innovative entrepreneurship was considered as a factor for improving the competitiveness of a tourist destination. The concepts of “strategy” and “development strategy” were analyzed in detail; a definition of the strategy for youth innovative entrepreneurship was formulated, and an authorial approach to its content was proposed. The advantages of developing such a strategy were substantiated. Based on the analysis of international experience, the key components of development strategies for youth innovative entrepreneurship were identified. Consequently, an authorial model for the strategy of youth innovative entrepreneurship development in the tourism sector was designed.

3. Based on the study of international experience in developing competitive startup projects in tourism, the main characteristics that ensure the competitiveness of tourism startups were identified. Specific features of tourism startups and the main directions of their competitive advantages in global practice were also determined.

4. The analysis of the development of youth innovative entrepreneurship in Kazakhstan's tourism sector, based on data from the Bureau of National Statistics of the Republic of Kazakhstan, included the calculation of the compound annual growth rate (CAGR) compared to other sectors of the economy. It was found that over the past seven years, the number of youth enterprises in tourism increased on average by 29.41% annually, indicating a stable positive trend. However, in terms of growth rate, tourism ranks only eighth, lagging behind sectors such as public administration and defense (93.66%), healthcare (48.39%), and industry (46.78%). A detailed clarification of the number of individual entrepreneurs and legal entities, along with their regional distribution, made it possible to identify key factors influencing the development of the sector. Despite the growth, the decreasing share of tourism within the overall structure of youth entrepreneurship indicates the need for deeper analysis and the development of targeted support measures for the industry.

5. A cluster analysis of the regional potential of youth innovative entrepreneurship in the tourism sector of Kazakhstan revealed significant territorial heterogeneity. No region demonstrates complete dominance, and growth rates vary substantially. Leading positions are held by Turkestan, Almaty, and Karaganda regions, where high development potential has been recorded. In a number of regions, an increase in entrepreneurial intentions among

youth is observed, contributing to the strengthening of the tourism industry and improvement of socio-economic indicators.

The results of the analysis make it possible to adapt youth entrepreneurship development strategies considering cluster-specific features. Kazakhstan's geographic diversity, including a variety of natural and climatic conditions, results in significant regional disparities. In 2024, the highest concentration of youth tourism enterprises was recorded in the cities of Almaty, Astana, Shymkent, and the Turkestan region. According to the constructed BCG matrix, these areas fall into the segment with a high market share and active growth. Other regions are mainly characterized by a low market share, although growth continues. This reflects the multiplicity of internal and external factors influencing the development of youth entrepreneurship in tourism.

6. To assess the impact of youth tourism entrepreneurship development on economic growth and the strengthening of the sector, a correlation analysis was conducted. The results showed that growth in entrepreneurship contributes to increases in gross regional product and gross value added, overall employment, innovation activity in the economy, and labor productivity, while also stimulating the development of the tourism industry.

Thus, the analysis confirmed the significant impact of youth tourism entrepreneurship on key indicators of the national economy, regional development, and the tourism sector.

7. In order to identify initiatives aimed at developing youth tourism entrepreneurship, as well as factors hindering its development, a youth sociological survey was conducted in each region of Kazakhstan. The social research was conducted from August 26 to October 4, 2024 through Google Forms and distributed via social media. The survey was conducted in two languages and consisted of 16 questions. The study involved 601 respondents aged 18 to 35 from 20 regions of the country. The main outcome of the survey was a high level of youth interest in tourism entrepreneurship, along with the identification of attractive aspects and barriers within the field.

8. To assess the impact of youth innovative entrepreneurship on the competitiveness of Kazakhstan's tourism sector, indicators from the Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index (TTCI), later transformed into the Travel & Tourism Development Index (TTDI), were used, along with its key component — the "Human Resources and Labor Market" sub-index — for the years 2013, 2015, 2017, 2019, 2021, and 2024. The overall TTCI/TTDI score demonstrates a moderately positive trend — from 3.82 in 2013 to 4.07 in 2024 — accompanied by Kazakhstan's rise in the global ranking from 88th to 52nd place, indicating a gradual strengthening of the country's competitive position in the tourism sector.

The "Human Resources" component shows mixed dynamics: despite a decline in the score from 4.9 to 4.46, the ranking fluctuated from 37th place (in 2015) to 57th (in 2019), improving to 43rd place in 2024. Such volatility may point to structural employment issues as well as the influence of innovative factors, including the growing activity of young entrepreneurs who are creating new demands for workforce qualifications.

However, the limited availability of official TTDI statistical data and its components hindered the implementation of a full quantitative (correlation-regression) analysis. As a result, the research focused on a qualitative interpretative analysis of the available data, demonstrating the potential significance of youth entrepreneurship in enhancing tourism competitiveness. The findings underscore the need to further develop statistical monitoring of youth entrepreneurial activity as one of the key indicators of industry transformation.

9. The analysis of the organizational and economic mechanisms supporting youth innovative entrepreneurship in Kazakhstan covered 129 regulatory documents, including the Constitution, 10 codes, 38 laws, 40 governmental resolutions, 26 national concepts, and 14 Presidential addresses. Among economic tools, particular importance is given to the programs of the “Damu” Fund for loan guarantees and subsidies, which can significantly improve the investment attractiveness of the tourism sector, including for young entrepreneurs, thereby contributing to the competitiveness of national tourism.

A structural analysis of tourism sector funding sources showed that despite an increase in public support, the predominant source of investment remains entrepreneurs' own funds. This indicates a solid foundation for youth entrepreneurship development; however, to enhance its effectiveness, it is necessary to strengthen ecosystem coordination, remove financial barriers, expand regional support platforms, and improve systems for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of implemented measures.

10. The author-developed model of the ecosystem for youth innovative entrepreneurship in tourism systematizes key conditions and resources, establishing a direct connection with the enhancement of the industry's competitiveness. The model, comprising seven structural components, provides a comprehensive assessment of barriers and opportunities, defines priority areas for state support, and promotes effective interaction among stakeholders. Its implementation contributes to strengthening regional competitive advantages, increasing the country's tourism appeal, and creating favorable conditions for the sustainable development of youth entrepreneurship. In the long term, the model's application may reinforce Kazakhstan's position in the international tourism market, boost investment activity, create new jobs, and support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

11. In the final stage of the dissertation, a strategy for the development of youth innovative entrepreneurship in the tourism sector of the Republic of Kazakhstan was proposed. It is based on theoretical approaches to strategic planning and the formation of entrepreneurial ecosystems recognized in global academic practice. Encompassing a phased development logic, adaptation to changes in the external environment, and institutional consolidation of growth models, the strategy offers a comprehensive roadmap aimed at enhancing the long-term competitiveness of the sector.

The results of this dissertation can be applied in the activities of tourism industry stakeholders, including the Ministry of Culture and Sports, regional tourism development departments, industry associations, and academic researchers. The findings may be used to improve the legislative and methodological frameworks for regulating domestic tourism entrepreneurship and to inform the development of regional and national tourism development programs.

**Approbation and implementation of research results.** The main provisions of the thesis have been tested in open print media and presented at international and national scientific and practical conferences. The content of the dissertation work has been published in 9 publications, including 1 article in a journal included in the Scopus database, 3 in journals recommended by the National Research Council of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 5 in collections and materials of international conferences in non-CIS countries.

The results of the dissertation were studied and implemented in the activities of the Institute of Economics of the National Committee of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, in the activities of the State Institution "Management of Tourism of the Karaganda region".

The dissertation research was carried out within the framework of AP26199455 "Motivation of entrepreneurial activity as a factor of diversification of the regional economy: socio-cultural prerequisites, new directions and methods of implementation", implemented by the Institute of Economics of the National Academy of Economics of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

**The structure and scope of the dissertation.** The dissertation consists of an introduction, 3 parts, a conclusion, a list of references and appendices. The main text of the dissertation is presented on 151 pages, the work contains the used literature containing 28 tables, 29 figures, 5 appendices and 267 titles.

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