COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF INBOUND TOURISTS' PREFERENCES IN GERMANY AND UZBEKISTAN

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https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20075740

Abstract.
This study provides a comparative quantitative analysis of inbound tourism performance and tourists' revealed preferences in Germany and Uzbekistan using World Bank data for the period 2018–2019. The analysis examines key indicators, including inbound tourist arrivals, tourism receipts, transport-related expenditures, and average tourism spending per tourist.

The results reveal significant differences between the two countries, reflecting Germany's position as a mature tourism destination and Uzbekistan's status as an emerging market. In addition to identifying quantitative disparities, the study highlights differences in tourism consumption patterns and spending behaviour.

The findings underscore the importance of structural and institutional factors in shaping inbound tourism outcomes and contribute to the literature by offering a comparative perspective between developed and emerging destinations.

Keywords: inbound tourism, comparative analysis, tourists' preferences, Germany, Uzbekistan.

1. Introduction

Tourism has become one of the most dynamic and influential sectors of the global economy, contributing significantly to economic growth, employment generation, and international integration. According to international organizations, tourism accounts for a substantial share of global GDP and supports millions of jobs worldwide, particularly in service-oriented economies (UNWTO, 2023). The steady growth of international travel has been driven by several interconnected factors, including globalization, improvements in transport connectivity, the digitalization of tourism services, and rising disposable incomes. As a result, inbound tourism has gained increasing importance for both developed and developing countries, serving not only as a source of foreign exchange earnings but also as a channel for cultural exchange and international cooperation (World Bank, 2022).

At the same time, recent research highlights that relying solely on aggregate indicators such as tourist arrivals and tourism receipts is no longer sufficient for understanding tourism dynamics. While these indicators provide important macro-level insights, they do not fully capture tourist behaviour or decision-making processes. In this context, scholars increasingly emphasize the importance of analysing tourist preferences, including travel motivations, accommodation choices, length of stay, spending behaviour, and preferred activities (OECD, 2021). These factors play a crucial role in shaping destination competitiveness and influence how effectively countries can respond to changing global tourism demand.

In developed countries, inbound tourism is typically characterized by diversified tourism products, advanced infrastructure, and high service quality standards. Countries with mature tourism sectors tend to place strong emphasis on understanding tourist preferences in order to improve visitor satisfaction and strengthen destination loyalty. Empirical studies conducted in developed economies demonstrate that inbound tourists' preferences are closely associated with factors such as accessibility, safety, cultural attractions, and the availability of high-quality tourism services (Buhalis and Crotts, 2013). Consequently, preference-based analysis has become an important analytical approach for tourism planners and destination managers.

Comparative analysis is widely recognized as an effective methodological approach in tourism research, as it allows researchers to identify both common patterns and structural differences across destinations (Hall and Page, 2014). In recent years, there has been a gradual shift from purely quantitative comparisons toward more behaviour-oriented studies. This shift reflects the growing

understanding that analysing tourist preferences provides deeper insights into tourism demand than aggregate indicators alone. Comparative studies involving countries at different stages of tourism development are particularly valuable, as they reveal how economic, institutional, and cultural factors shape tourist behaviour.

Uzbekistan represents an emerging tourism destination that has experienced noticeable growth in inbound tourism in recent years. Tourism reforms, visa liberalization policies, and increased investment in tourism infrastructure have contributed to the country's rising international visibility (UNWTO, 2022). Inbound tourists to Uzbekistan are primarily attracted by cultural heritage, historical cities, and traditional experiences. However, despite this progress, the tourism sector is still undergoing structural transformation and faces challenges related to service quality, product diversification, and international competitiveness (World Bank, 2023).

In contrast, Germany is a well-established tourism destination with a long history of inbound tourism development. The country benefits from a highly developed transport network, diversified tourism products, and a stable institutional environment. Germany attracts inbound tourists for various purposes, including cultural tourism, business travel, leisure tourism, and event-based tourism. Previous studies indicate that inbound tourists in Germany demonstrate diverse and complex preference patterns, reflecting the country's mature tourism market (OECD, 2020).

Comparing inbound tourists' preferences in Germany and Uzbekistan provides an opportunity to better understand how different levels of tourism development influence tourist behaviour. Instead of focusing only on differences in tourism scale or economic capacity, a preference-based comparative approach makes it possible to examine qualitative aspects of tourism demand. This perspective helps to avoid potentially misleading conclusions based solely on quantitative indicators.

Despite the growing body of literature on inbound tourism and tourist preferences, several important gaps remain. First, many existing studies are limited to single-country analyses, which restricts the ability to capture cross-country differences in tourist behaviour. Second, comparative tourism studies often focus on developed economies, while emerging destinations receive less attention. Third, there is limited empirical research on inbound tourist preferences in Central Asian countries within a comparative framework, resulting in an incomplete understanding of regional tourism dynamics.

To address these gaps, this study aims to conduct a comparative analysis of inbound tourists' preferences in Germany and Uzbekistan. The research focuses on key dimensions such as length of stay, accommodation choices, spending patterns, and tourism activities. By applying a comparative analytical approach, the study seeks to contribute to the existing tourism literature and provide practical insights for policymakers and destination managers in aligning tourism development strategies with evolving tourist preferences.

The remainder of the paper is structured as follows. The next section reviews the relevant literature on inbound tourism and tourist preferences. This is followed by a description of the research methodology and data used in the analysis. The final sections present the results, discuss the main findings, and conclude with policy implications and directions for future research.

2.Literature review.

Academic research on inbound tourism has expanded significantly over the past decades, reflecting the growing economic and social importance of international tourism. A substantial body of literature explores inbound tourism from multiple perspectives, including tourism demand, destination competitiveness, and the contribution of tourism to national development (UNWTO, 2022; World Bank, 2021). Earlier studies mainly relied on macro-level indicators such as international tourist arrivals, tourism receipts, and contributions to gross domestic product to assess tourism performance (OECD, 2020; Song and Li, 2008). Although these indicators remain widely used, they provide only a partial view of tourism dynamics, as they do not adequately explain tourists' decision-making processes (Hall and Page, 2014).

More recent research has increasingly shifted towards behavioural and preference-based approaches. In particular, scholars emphasize that tourists' preferences—such as travel motivation, length of stay, accommodation choices, and spending behaviour—play a crucial role in shaping tourism demand and

destination attractiveness (Buhalis and Crotts, 2013; Pearce, 2014). However, while these studies highlight the importance of preferences, they often differ in terms of methodology and scope, which makes it difficult to generalize findings across different destinations.

A growing strand of literature focuses specifically on tourists' preferences as a key determinant of tourism demand. These studies argue that analysing preference patterns provides deeper insights into travel behaviour and supports more effective tourism planning (Buhalis and Crotts, 2013; Pearce, 2014). At the same time, empirical findings indicate that preference structures are not uniform and vary significantly across countries, depending on economic conditions, cultural context, and institutional factors (OECD, 2021). This suggests that preference-based analysis requires a context-sensitive approach.

Research conducted in developed tourism destinations further confirms the importance of preference-based analysis. Studies focusing on European countries demonstrate that inbound tourists' preferences are closely associated with service quality, cultural offerings, and transport accessibility (Richards, 2018; Alegre and Garau, 2010). In mature tourism markets, policymakers increasingly rely on such analyses to design targeted strategies aimed at improving visitor satisfaction and encouraging repeat visits. Nevertheless, some studies point out that even in developed destinations, tourist preferences can change rapidly due to global trends, which creates additional challenges for tourism planning.

In contrast, research on inbound tourism in developing and emerging destinations remains relatively limited. Existing studies often focus on tourism growth potential, infrastructure development, and policy challenges, rather than providing detailed analyses of tourist behaviour (World Bank, 2022). In the context of Central Asia, tourism research has mainly examined heritage tourism, tourism reforms, and institutional frameworks, while empirical studies on inbound tourists' preferences are still scarce (UNWTO, 2021). As a result, the current literature offers only a fragmented understanding of how international tourists perceive and experience emerging destinations.

Comparative tourism studies represent another important direction in the literature. Comparative approaches allow researchers to identify both similarities and structural differences across countries and regions (Hall and Page, 2014). However, many comparative studies focus on destinations with similar levels of development, particularly within developed regions. Studies comparing countries at different stages of tourism development are less common and often rely on aggregate indicators rather than behavioural measures (OECD, 2020). This limits their ability to provide deeper insights into tourist preferences.

The existing literature therefore reveals several important research gaps. First, there is a lack of comparative studies analysing inbound tourists' preferences across developed and emerging destinations within a unified analytical framework. Second, empirical research on tourist preferences in Central Asian countries remains insufficient. Third, previous studies increasingly recommend focusing on behavioural aspects of tourism, yet such approaches are still underdeveloped in comparative research (Pearce, 2014; Richards, 2018).

In response to these gaps, the present study conducts a comparative analysis of inbound tourists' preferences in Germany and Uzbekistan. By focusing on preference-based indicators rather than aggregate tourism measures, the study aims to provide a more nuanced understanding of tourism demand. In addition, comparing a mature tourism destination with an emerging one allows for a better understanding of how different levels of tourism development influence tourist behaviour.

3. Research methodology

This study adopts a comparative quantitative research design to analyse differences in inbound tourism performance and spending patterns between Germany and Uzbekistan. A comparative approach is particularly relevant in this context, as it allows for the identification of structural differences between countries at different stages of tourism development, while maintaining a consistent analytical framework. Given the limitations related to data availability and cross-country comparability, the analysis relies on aggregated country-level indicators rather than individual-level or survey-based data. Although this approach does not capture individual tourist behaviour directly, it enables a consistent and transparent comparison across countries. In addition, the use of aggregated indicators helps to reduce potential biases associated with missing observations and irregular time-series coverage.

3.1 Data sources and data collection.

The empirical analysis is based on secondary data obtained from the World Bank database, which provides internationally comparable tourism statistics. The use of official international data sources ensures a high level of data reliability and consistency, which is essential for cross-country analysis. The World Bank database is widely used in tourism research due to its methodological consistency and cross-country comparability.

The following indicators were selected for Germany and Uzbekistan:

- International tourism, number of arrivals
- International tourism, travel items receipts (TVLR)
- International tourism, expenditures for passenger transport items (TRNX)

Due to incomplete and uneven data availability across countries and years, the analysis focuses on the period 2018–2019, for which comparable data are available for all selected indicators. This time frame allows for a balanced comparison, while minimizing distortions caused by missing values. Where relevant, additional descriptive observations for Uzbekistan over a longer period are considered to provide contextual background, although they are not included in the core comparative analysis.

3.2 Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework of this study is based on the assumption that inbound tourism performance and tourists' preferences can be indirectly observed through measurable economic indicators. Since direct survey-based measures of preferences are not available, the analysis relies on observable outcomes of tourism activity as proxy indicators.

Inbound tourist arrivals are used to represent the scale of tourism demand, while tourism receipts and transport-related expenditures reflect the structure and intensity of tourism consumption. In addition, average tourism spending per tourist is included as an indicator of spending behaviour and consumption patterns across destinations.

Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual framework, showing the relationship between destination characteristics and observed tourism outcomes. This framework serves as a basis for variable selection and supports the interpretation of empirical results.

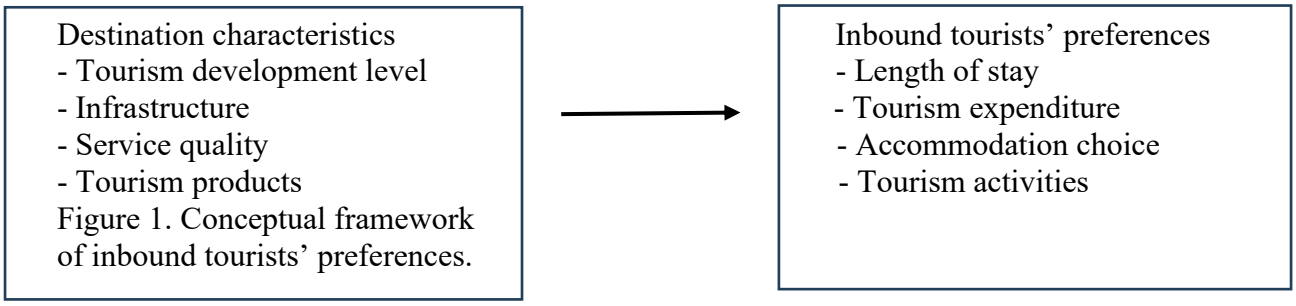


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of inbound tourists' preferences.

3.3. Variables and measurement

All variables included in the analysis are measured at the country level. To improve comparability and reduce the influence of short-term fluctuations, average values for the period 2018–2019 are calculated for each indicator.

Inbound tourist arrivals are measured as the average number of international arrivals and serve as a proxy for tourism demand. Tourism receipts related to travel items (TVLR) capture tourists' expenditures on accommodation, food, and leisure services. Transport-related tourism expenditures (TRNX) reflect spending associated with international passenger transport. These variables are selected as they capture both the scale and the structure of inbound tourism activity, allowing for a more comprehensive comparative analysis.

To provide additional insight into tourism consumption patterns, a ratio variable representing average tourism spending per tourist is calculated by dividing travel-related tourism receipts by inbound tourist arrivals. This indicator is used as a proxy for spending intensity and helps to reveal differences in

tourism behaviour across countries. Table 1 presents a detailed overview of the variables, their definitions, measurement approaches, and data sources.

Table 1. Variables and measurement.

Source: processed by the author

Variable	Description	Measurement	Source
Inbound tourist arrivals	Average number of international tourist arrivals	Mean value (2018–2019)	World Bank
Tourism receipts (TVLR)	Tourism receipts related to travel items	Mean value, current USD (2018–2019)	World Bank
Transport-related tourism expenditure (TRNX)	Expenditure on passenger transport services	Mean value, current USD (2018–2019)	World Bank
Tourism spending per tourist	Average tourism receipts per inbound tourist	TVLR / Arrivals	Author's calculation based on World Bank data
Country dummy	Country identifier	Germany = 1, Uzbekistan = 0	Author's coding

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A country dummy variable is included to distinguish between Germany and Uzbekistan in the comparative analysis.

3.4. Hypotheses development.

Based on the conceptual framework and previous literature, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Germany is expected to demonstrate a higher level of inbound tourism performance compared to Uzbekistan, reflecting its more developed tourism sector.

H2: Tourism receipts related to travel items are expected to be positively associated with inbound tourist arrivals.

H3: Transport-related tourism expenditures are expected to be higher in countries with more developed inbound tourism sectors.

H4: Average tourism spending per tourist is expected to be higher in Germany than in Uzbekistan, reflecting differences in tourism market structure and service quality.

3.5. Model specification.

In this study, the relationship between inbound tourism performance and tourism-related indicators is examined using a descriptive and comparative approach rather than formal econometric modelling. The analysis focuses on identifying patterns and differences between countries based on selected tourism indicators.

For illustrative purposes, the relationship between tourism performance and selected variables can be expressed in a simplified conceptual form:

$$TourismPerformance = f(Arrivals, TVLR, TRNX)$$

Where TourismPerformance reflects the overall level of inbound tourism activity; Arrivals represent the scale of tourism demand; TVLR (travel-related receipts) captures tourism-related spending on accommodation, food, and leisure services; and TRNX represents expenditures related to international passenger transport.

This formulation is used for analytical interpretation only and does not imply causal relationships. Instead, it provides a conceptual basis for understanding how different tourism indicators are associated within a comparative framework.

3.6. Data processing and analytical procedure

Data preparation and analysis were conducted using Microsoft Excel and IBM SPSS Statistics (version 27). Prior to analysis, all variables were checked for consistency and completeness.

Given the limited and uneven time-series coverage across countries, the data were aggregated by country using mean values for the period 2018–2019. This aggregation approach allows for a balanced and transparent comparison between the two countries while minimizing potential distortions arising from missing observations.

The empirical analysis consists of descriptive statistics, comparative analysis of mean values by country, and ratio-based assessment of tourism spending per tourist. The results are presented using tables and graphical illustrations to support interpretation.

3.7. Ethical considerations and limitations

The study adheres to research ethics standards by relying exclusively on secondary data from a reputable international source. No personal or sensitive data are used, and no primary data collection involving human participants is conducted.

Several limitations should be acknowledged. The analysis is constrained by the availability of comparable data across countries and years, which necessitated the use of aggregated averages over a limited time period. Additionally, the use of proxy indicators limits the ability to capture individual tourists' motivations and preferences directly. Despite these limitations, the methodology provides a consistent and ethically sound framework for comparative tourism analysis.

4. Results

4.1. Descriptive statistics

This section presents the empirical results of the comparative analysis of inbound tourism indicators in Germany and Uzbekistan. The quantitative assessment is based on aggregated average values for the period 2018–2019 in order to ensure cross-country comparability and to mitigate the impact of annual fluctuations.

Table 1 reports the descriptive statistics for the main tourism indicators, including average inbound tourist arrivals, international tourism receipts related to travel items (TVLR), and international tourism expenditures for passenger transport items (TRNX). The results demonstrate substantial differences in the scale and structure of inbound tourism between the two countries.

Germany exhibits significantly higher average values across all indicators compared to Uzbekistan. In particular, the average number of inbound tourist arrivals in Germany considerably exceeds that of Uzbekistan during the observed period. Similarly, tourism-related receipts and transport-related expenditures are markedly higher in Germany, reflecting a substantially larger tourism market size.

Uzbekistan, while displaying lower absolute values, shows consistent inbound tourism activity as captured by the aggregated indicators. The descriptive statistics provide an initial overview of the quantitative disparities between the two countries and serve as a foundation for further comparative assessment.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of aggregated tourism indicators (2018–2019).

Descriptive statistics

	N	Min	Max	Mean
Arrivals_mean	2	6047500,00	39222000,00	22634750,0000
TRNX_mean	2	459500000,00	8218500000,00	4339000000,0000
TVLR_mean	2	1312500000,00	42337000000,00	21824750000,0000

Source: processed by the author in SPSS 27.

4.2. Comparative analysis of inbound tourism indicators

To further examine cross-country differences, mean values of the aggregated indicators were compared between Germany and Uzbekistan. Table 2 presents the comparative results by country. The findings confirm that Germany outperforms Uzbekistan in terms of average inbound tourist arrivals as well as tourism-related financial indicators. The gap between the two countries is particularly pronounced in tourism receipts related to travel items, indicating a significantly higher volume of tourism-generated revenue in Germany.

Transport-related tourism expenditures (TRNX) also differ substantially between the two countries. Germany records notably higher average values, suggesting more intensive use of international passenger transport services by inbound tourists. In contrast, Uzbekistan's transport-related expenditures remain relatively limited in absolute terms. The comparative results highlight pronounced quantitative differences in inbound tourism performance between the two economies. These differences are consistently observed across all selected indicators, reinforcing the robustness of the comparative findings.

Table 3. Comparative mean values of inbound tourism indicators by country.

Arrivals mean * Country	2	100,0%	0,0%	2	100,0%
TRNX_mean * Country	2	100,0%	0,0%	2	100,0%
TVLR_mean * Country	2	100,0%	0,0%	2	100,0%

Source: created by the author in SPSS 27.0.

4.3. Tourism spending per tourist

In order to provide an additional perspective on tourism patterns, a ratio indicator measuring average tourism spending per tourist was calculated. This indicator was obtained by dividing average tourism receipts related to travel items (TVLR) by average inbound tourist arrivals.

The results reveal a clear divergence in spending patterns between the two countries. Germany records a substantially higher average tourism spending per tourist compared to Uzbekistan. This suggests differences in the structure of tourism demand and the composition of tourism services consumed by inbound visitors.

Although Uzbekistan attracts a growing number of international tourists, the average spending per visitor remains considerably lower. The ratio-based indicator complements the descriptive and comparative analyses by providing insight into qualitative differences in tourism activity beyond absolute arrival numbers.

4.4. Graphical representation of results

To enhance the interpretability of the empirical findings, graphical illustrations were constructed for the main tourism indicators. Figure 1 depicts the comparison of average inbound tourist arrivals between Germany and Uzbekistan, while Figure 2 presents the comparison of transport-related tourism expenditures.

The graphical results visually confirm the patterns observed in the tabular analysis. Germany consistently demonstrates higher values across the selected indicators, whereas Uzbekistan exhibits lower but stable levels of inbound tourism activity.

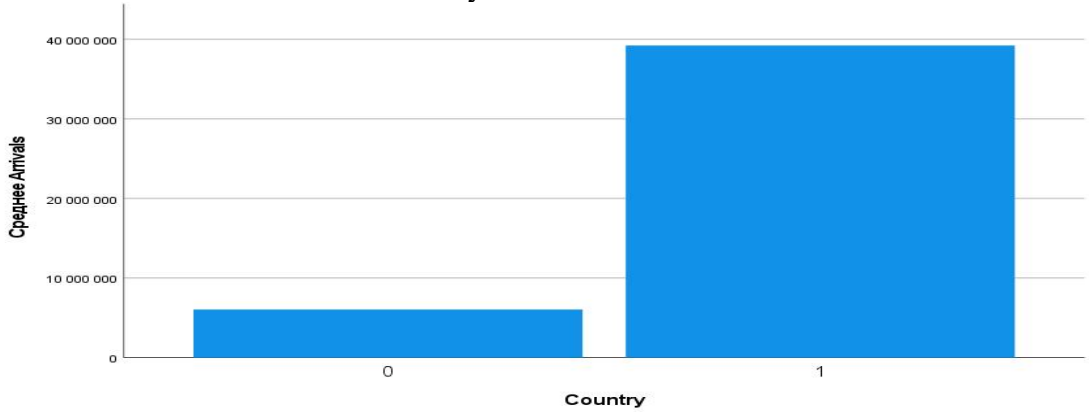


Figure 2. Average inbound tourist arrivals by country (2018–2019).
Source: created by the author in SPSS 27.0.

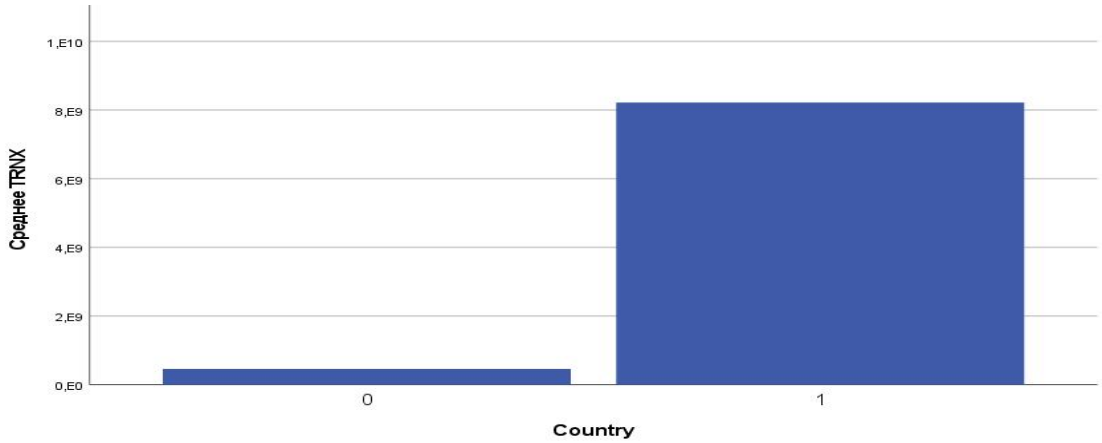


Figure 3. Average transport-related tourism expenditures by country (2018–2019).
Source: created by the author in SPSS 27.0.

5. Discussion

5.1. Interpretation of comparative inbound tourism performance

The empirical results reveal clear and consistent differences in inbound tourism performance between Germany and Uzbekistan. Germany records higher average values across all analysed indicators, including inbound tourist arrivals, tourism receipts, and transport-related expenditures. These findings are consistent with the characteristics of Germany as a mature and highly developed tourism destination with advanced infrastructure, diversified tourism products, and strong integration into international travel networks.

In contrast, Uzbekistan shows lower absolute values across the selected indicators. However, this should not be interpreted as weak tourism performance. Rather, it reflects the country's stage of tourism development and the scale of its tourism market. As an emerging destination, Uzbekistan continues to undergo structural transformation, with ongoing improvements in infrastructure, service quality, and international accessibility.

From a broader perspective, the results suggest that differences in inbound tourism performance are closely associated with structural and institutional factors. These include the level of economic development, quality of tourism infrastructure, and the ability of destinations to attract and accommodate international visitors.

5.2. Tourism spending patterns and tourists' preferences

The analysis of tourism spending patterns provides additional insight into tourists' behaviour and preferences. The ratio of tourism receipts per inbound tourist reveals a substantial gap between Germany and Uzbekistan, with significantly higher spending levels observed in Germany.

This pattern indicates that inbound tourism in Germany is associated with higher-value consumption and a more diversified range of tourism services. Tourists in Germany are more likely to engage in longer stays and higher levels of expenditure across accommodation, cultural services, and leisure activities.

In contrast, lower average spending per tourist in Uzbekistan may reflect differences in price levels, tourism product composition, and visitor profiles. It may also indicate a higher share of short-term or regionally oriented travel.

These findings suggest that tourist's revealed preferences differ not only in terms of destination choice, but also in terms of spending behaviour and consumption intensity. Compared to Germany, Uzbekistan appears to have a more price-sensitive and less consumption-intensive tourism structure.

5.3. Comparison with previous studies

The results of this study are broadly consistent with existing literature on comparative tourism performance between developed and emerging destinations. Previous studies emphasize that advanced

tourism economies tend to demonstrate higher levels of tourism receipts and spending per tourist due to better infrastructure, higher service quality, and stronger destination branding.

The findings for Germany support this view, confirming its position as a high-value tourism destination. At the same time, the results for Uzbekistan are consistent with earlier research highlighting the growth potential of emerging tourism markets alongside existing structural constraints.

5.4. Data limitations and methodological considerations

Several limitations of the present study should be acknowledged. First, the empirical analysis is based on aggregated average values for a limited time period, which constrains the ability to capture short-term fluctuations and long-run dynamics in inbound tourism. Second, the use of aggregate country-level data does not allow for the analysis of individual tourist characteristics, such as motivation, length of stay, or socio-demographic attributes.

Additionally, due to data availability constraints, the analysis relies on proxy indicators to capture tourists' preferences and spending behaviour. While such proxies are commonly used in tourism research, they may not fully reflect the complexity of individual tourist decision-making processes. Future research could address these limitations by incorporating survey-based data, longer time series, or destination-level microdata.

Despite these limitations, the adopted approach provides a transparent and methodologically sound framework for comparative analysis, ensuring consistency and reliability of the results. The discussion highlights significant differences in inbound tourism performance and spending patterns between Germany and Uzbekistan. Germany's higher arrivals, receipts, and spending per tourist reflect its status as a mature tourism destination with high-value tourism offerings. Uzbekistan, while exhibiting lower absolute indicators, demonstrates growing tourism activity consistent with its position as an emerging destination. These findings underscore the importance of structural and institutional factors in shaping inbound tourism outcomes and tourists revealed preferences.

6. Conclusion

This paper presents a comparative quantitative analysis of inbound tourism performance and spending patterns in Germany and Uzbekistan based on aggregated macro-level data. The analysis focuses on key indicators of inbound tourism activity, including international tourist arrivals, tourism receipts related to travel items, transport-related tourism expenditures, and average tourism spending per tourist.

The results reveal clear and consistent differences between the two countries. Germany demonstrates significantly higher levels across all indicators, confirming its position as a mature and highly developed tourism destination. In contrast, Uzbekistan records lower absolute values, which reflects its status as an emerging tourism market undergoing ongoing structural transformation. Further insight is provided by the analysis of average tourism spending per tourist. Higher spending levels in Germany point to a tourism model characterized by higher value-added services and a more diversified tourism offer. By comparison, lower spending levels in Uzbekistan suggest a more price-sensitive and volume-oriented tourism structure, indicating differences in tourist's revealed preferences and consumption patterns.

From a methodological perspective, the use of aggregated average values for the period 2018–2019 ensures a consistent and transparent basis for cross-country comparison, despite data limitations. Although the reliance on proxy indicators and a relatively short time frame constrains the depth of analysis, the adopted approach provides a reliable framework within the boundaries of available data. The findings contribute to the existing literature by offering a comparative perspective on inbound tourism performance between a developed European destination and an emerging Central Asian destination. In particular, the results highlight the importance of structural and institutional factors in shaping tourism outcomes and spending behaviour.

Future research could build on this analysis by incorporating longer time series, more disaggregated data, or micro-level survey evidence to better capture tourists' preferences and decision-making processes. The study demonstrates that differences in inbound tourism performance are not determined

solely by the volume of tourist arrivals, but are closely linked to the structure of tourism demand and the capacity of destinations to generate higher tourism-related value.

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