

TYPES OF BRANDS IN TOURISM AND THEIR ROLES

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Annotation: This article explores various types of brands within the tourism industry, including hotel, airline, travel agency, destination, and digital platform brands. It highlights the significance of branding in shaping tourist perception, influencing travel decisions, and enhancing a country's global image. Through analysis of international and local examples, the study examines how branding strategies can enhance competitiveness and cultural recognition in both global and regional tourism markets.

Key Words: tourism branding, destination marketing, hotel brands, airline identity, digital tourism platforms, local tourism promotion.

Kalit so'zlar: turizm brendi, destinatsiya marketingi, mehmonxona brendi, aviakompaniya identiteti, raqamli platformalar, mahalliy turizm targ'iboti.

INTRODUCTION

In the competitive landscape of global tourism, branding has emerged as a crucial tool to differentiate destinations, services, and experiences. From hotel chains and airlines to digital travel platforms and regional initiatives, brands play a key role in attracting travelers, building trust, and enhancing visitor loyalty. This paper categorizes and analyzes various tourism-related brands, focusing on both international icons and local Uzbek initiatives.

Branding in tourism not only influences commercial success but also contributes to cultural diplomacy, national image-making, and economic development. By examining specific types of tourism brands, this study highlights how strategic branding can shape tourists' expectations and experiences.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourism branding has been explored across marketing, cultural studies, and hospitality management disciplines. Scholars such as Morgan, Pritchard, and Pride (2004) emphasize the emotional and symbolic dimensions of destination brands, while Kotler (2010) outlines strategic brand positioning for tourism competitiveness. Local studies in Central Asia

(Yuldashova, 2024) suggest branding is also a vehicle for promoting national identity and heritage.

Hotel and airline brands have traditionally been leaders in shaping travel expectations through consistent service and visual identity (Kapferer, 2012). Destination brands, however, engage with deeper layers of perception — representing the “spirit” of a place through slogans, visuals, and experiences (Anholt, 2007). Digital platforms like TripAdvisor and Airbnb serve as facilitators of branded experience, emphasizing user-generated content and peer trust.

METHODOLOGY

This research adopts a comparative qualitative method. It reviews secondary data — brand websites, tourism reports, and academic literature — to analyze brand categories across five domains:

- a) Hotel brands
- b) Airline brands
- c) Travel agencies and tour operators
- d) Destination (territorial) brands
- e) Digital platforms and apps

Each category is evaluated by its global reach, local representation, and role in shaping tourist behavior.

DATA ANALYSIS

Table 1: Types of Tourism Brands – Global and Local Examples

№	Brand Type	Global Brands	Local Brands	Description
1	Hotels	Hilton, Marriott, Hyatt, Sheraton, Radisson	Silk Road by Minyoun, City Palace Hotel, Wyndham Tashkent	Hotels serve as the first point of contact for tourists. Global brands offer consistency and trust, while local ones combine heritage and luxury.
2	Airlines	Emirates, Qatar Airways, Turkish Airlines	Uzbekistan Airways	Airline branding emphasizes safety, comfort, and national pride. Uzbekistan Airways serves as both a carrier and a national symbol abroad.
3	Tour Agencies & Operators	TUI, Thomas Cook, Expedia, Booking.com	Sayohat.uz, Dolores Travel, Silk Road Destinations	These brands act as cultural translators, offering easy and immersive travel. Local brands use Silk Road themes to attract heritage tourists.

№	Brand Type	Global Brands	Local Brands	Description
4	Destination Branding	Visit Dubai, Incredible India, Amazing Thailand	Visit Uzbekistan, Discover Bukhara, Welcome to Samarkand	Destination campaigns promote entire regions through slogans, visuals, and storytelling, showcasing cultural identity and historical richness.
5	Digital Platforms	Airbnb, TripAdvisor, Trivago, Google Travel	—	These platforms build digital ecosystems that influence travel decisions through reviews, algorithms, and user experience.

ANALYSIS

In the context of today's dynamic and experience-driven tourism industry, branding plays a critical role in shaping consumer perception, decision-making, and destination loyalty. The table of tourism brand types presented above categorizes key sectors — hotels, airlines, tour operators, destinations, and digital platforms — and evaluates their function through the lens of global and local brand dynamics.

Hotels remain one of the most essential touchpoints in the tourism journey. Global hotel brands such as Hilton and Marriott offer a standardized level of service, comfort, and brand reliability, which is especially valued by international travelers seeking predictability. In contrast, local hotel brands like Silk Road by Minyoun and Wyndham Tashkent are now increasingly focusing on combining comfort with cultural authenticity, catering to the growing trend of experiential tourism, where travelers seek localized and immersive lodging experiences. This shift aligns with the global move toward glocalization — blending global standards with local flavor.

Airlines not only provide logistical mobility but also act as cultural ambassadors. Global carriers like Emirates and Qatar Airways project luxury and technological innovation, while Uzbekistan Airways operates as both a practical service provider and a representation of national image. In modern branding theory, airlines are increasingly viewed as extensions of soft power, projecting a country's values and reputation through hospitality, visual identity, and service philosophy. National carriers thus play a dual role: commercial and symbolic.

Tour agencies act as navigators and interpreters of culture. Well-known global platforms such as TUI or Expedia offer streamlined booking and planning, appealing to mass tourism. Meanwhile, Uzbek brands like Dolores Travel and Silk Road Destinations position themselves as experts in heritage and cultural immersion, especially by leveraging the Silk Road narrative. These agencies do not merely sell tours; they curate stories, and their relevance is growing in the post-pandemic era, where travelers demand customized, sustainable, and meaningful journeys.

Modern destination branding goes beyond tourism advertising — it shapes international perception, investment potential, and even geo-political visibility. Campaigns such as Visit

Dubai and Incredible India effectively use emotional branding and visual storytelling to link destinations with identity, aspiration, and memory. Similarly, Uzbekistan's Visit Uzbekistan, Discover Bukhara, and Welcome to Samarkand are not only promotional efforts but strategic narratives positioning the country as a cultural capital of Central Asia. This aligns with nation branding principles, where heritage, architecture, and hospitality serve as soft tools of influence.

In the current digital era, platforms like Airbnb, TripAdvisor, and Google Travel have fundamentally reshaped how tourists choose and experience destinations. Unlike traditional providers, these brands do not offer physical services but instead create digital trust ecosystems based on user reviews, ranking algorithms, and seamless interfaces. Their influence lies in their data-driven personalization and peer-validation systems, which increasingly determine tourist flows, local business success, and even policy shifts. The absence of a strong local counterpart in this domain highlights an opportunity for emerging tourism markets like Uzbekistan to develop domestic platforms.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Tourism branding serves both economic and symbolic purposes. Globally, brands drive customer loyalty and quality perception. Locally, they promote heritage and attract niche markets (e.g., cultural, eco, or spiritual tourism). Uzbekistan's efforts to localize branding — combining traditional narratives (e.g., Silk Road) with modern branding principles — enhance global visibility.

Each brand type also fulfills a unique function:

Table 2: Functional Role of Tourism Brand Categories

№	Brand Type	Key Functional Role
1	Hotels	Provide comfort and consistency .
2	Airlines	Enable mobility and reflect national representation .
3	Tour Agencies	Offer convenience and cultural translation .
4	Destinations	Create emotional connection and support image-making .
5	Digital Platforms	Ensure trust-building and accessibility .

By integrating all five, a holistic national tourism brand can be constructed — one that appeals emotionally, logistically, and culturally to diverse tourist profiles.

CONCLUSION

Effective tourism branding requires multi-layered strategy. From concrete services like hotels and airlines to abstract concepts like national identity and digital presence, each brand type contributes to the tourist experience. For Uzbekistan, expanding local branding efforts, investing in visual identity, and aligning services with modern tourist expectations are vital next steps.

Strengthening local brands and integrating them into global platforms can elevate the country's image, improve tourist satisfaction, and drive sustainable tourism growth.

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