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Maintaining the Competitiveness of the Tourism Industry through Innovative Technologies during Wartime

Oleh Parubets ^{1*} ● Tetiana Tymoshenko ² ● Inna Shapran ³

¹ *The Kyiv Applied College of Tourism and Hospitality (Ukraine). Associate Professor at the Department of Hotel & Restaurant Business and Tourism, PhD in Economics, Associate Professor.*

² *Kyiv National Economic University named after Vadym Hetman (Ukraine). Associate Professor at the Department of Regional Studies and Tourism, PhD in Public Administration, Associate Professor.*

³ *Dnipro University of Technology (Ukraine). Postgraduate Student at the Department of Public Administration and Local Self-Government.*

* **Corresponding Author**, e-mail: parubec.oleg7@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

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In the conditions of the war and the post-war economic crisis, it is important to look for new ways of development that will support the competitiveness of the tourism industry and ensure its sustainability in difficult conditions. In this context, the use of innovative technologies can become a key factor in this process, allowing businesses to adapt to new conditions, attract tourists and provide them with safety and comfort. Therefore, studying the possibilities of using innovative technologies in the tourism industry during a military conflict is of great importance for the further development of the sector and ensuring its sustainability in unpredictable conditions. The purpose of this scientific article is to analyze the impact of military actions on the tourism industry and to identify opportunities for using innovative technologies to preserve and enhance the competitiveness of the tourism sector in these conditions. The research used literary analysis to study innovation in the hospitality industry, synthesis for post-war tourism strategies, statistical analysis for war-related disruptions' impact, and systematization to categorize digital innovations in Ukrainian tourism. The importance of attracting investments, implementing effective marketing strategies, and developing comprehensive recovery programs for the tourism sector after the war in Ukraine is underscored by the research results. The implementation of innovations is regarded as a key factor in enhancing competitiveness, including the utilization of virtual tours and digital technologies such as biometrics, blockchain, augmented reality, and the Internet of Things, which ensure security and comfort for tourists. In conclusion, Ukraine's tourism industry faces challenges due to the ongoing war, resulting in financial losses and decreased attractiveness for travelers. Embracing innovation and modernizing customer service are crucial for recovery and long-term success. However, there's a lag in innovation within the sector compared to others. Implementing technologies like biometrics and blockchain can improve security and efficiency, catering to modern tourists' demands.

KEYWORDS

tourism industry, competitiveness, innovative technologies, resilience strategies, technological innovation, economic resilience, wartime.



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Підтримання конкурентоспроможності туристичної галузі за допомогою інноваційних технологій у воєнний час

Олег В. Парубець ^{1*} ● Тетяна О. Тимошенко ² ● Інна М. Шапран ³

¹ Київський прикладний коледж туризму та гостинності (Україна). Доцент кафедри готельно-ресторанної справи та туризму, к. е. н, доцент.

² Київський національний економічний університет імені Вадима Гетьмана (Україна). Доцент кафедри регіоналістики і туризму, к. держ. упр., доцент.

³ НТУ «Дніпровська політехніка» (Україна). Аспірант кафедри державного управління і місцевого самоврядування.

* Автор-кореспондент, e-mail: parubec.oleg7@gmail.com

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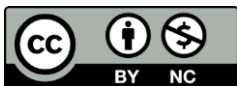
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В умовах війни та післявоєнної економічної кризи важливо шукати нові шляхи розвитку, які підтримають конкурентоспроможність туристичної галузі та забезпечать її стійкість у складних умовах. У цьому контексті використання інноваційних технологій може стати ключовим фактором цього процесу, дозволяючи бізнесу адаптуватися до нових умов, залучати туристів та забезпечувати їм безпеку і комфорт. Тому вивчення можливостей використання інноваційних технологій у туристичній галузі під час військового конфлікту має велике значення для подальшого розвитку сектору та забезпечення його стійкості в непередбачуваних умовах. Метою даної наукової статті є аналіз впливу військових дій на туристичну галузь та виявлення можливостей використання інноваційних технологій для збереження та підвищення конкурентоспроможності туристичного сектору в цих умовах. У дослідженні використано літературний аналіз для вивчення інновацій в індустрії гостинності, синтез для вивчення стратегій післявоєнного туризму, статистичний аналіз для оцінки впливу військових дій та систематизація для класифікації цифрових інновацій в українському туризмі. Результати дослідження підкреслюють важливість залучення інвестицій, впровадження ефективних маркетингових стратегій та розробки комплексних програм відновлення туристичного сектору після війни в Україні. Впровадження інновацій розглядається як ключовий фактор підвищення конкурентоспроможності, включаючи використання віртуальних турів та цифрових технологій, таких як біометрія, блокчейн, доповнена реальність та інтернет речей, які забезпечують безпеку та комфорт для туристів. Отже, туристична галузь України стикається з викликами через війну, що триває, що призводить до фінансових втрат і зниження привабливості для мандрівників. Впровадження інновацій та модернізація обслуговування клієнтів мають вирішальне значення для відновлення та довгострокового успіху. Однак, у порівнянні з іншими галузями, туристичний сектор відстає у впровадженні інновацій. Впровадження таких технологій, як біометрія та блокчейн, може підвищити безпеку та ефективність, задовольняючи потреби сучасних туристів.

КЛЮЧОВІ СЛОВА

туристична галузь, конкурентоспроможність, інноваційні технології, стратегії стійкості, технологічні інновації, економічна стійкість, воєнний час.

1. Introduction

During wartime, maintaining the competitiveness of the tourism industry becomes not only an important task, but also requires extreme flexibility and creativity from industry and government agencies. Global crises and military conflicts bring significant changes to the traditional mechanisms of tourism development, but it is precisely in these extremely difficult conditions that innovation becomes a key factor in solving problems. The introduction of innovative technologies is aimed at increasing the efficiency, safety and attractiveness of tourist services, as well as ensuring the sustainable development of the industry.

In this context, innovations in tourism are found to have significant potential for the formation of new tourism products, the provision of unique services, and the implementation of advanced marketing strategies, which will contribute to the attraction of new tourist segments and the enhancement of the attractiveness of the tourism product in various markets. The recovery of Ukraine after the war involves the utilization of innovations and new products or services to enhance the competitiveness of the tourism sector. In turn, the implementation of innovations in the tourism sector requires new planning, management, and organizational strategies, as well as joint efforts aimed at the development of the industry.

2. Literature Review

In their scientific work, Zarubina et al. [1] identified that, as a result of the Russian invasion in the sphere of Ukrainian domestic tourism, certain negative trends have emerged. Specifically, an increase in the popularity of sanatorium tours, a reduction in the duration of trips, changes in requirements for tourist facilities, a new profile of Ukrainian travelers, a rise in the popularity of solo tourism, and tourist programs aimed at supporting the Armed Forces of Ukraine have been observed. The analysis of these trends indicates that even during wartime, people continue to travel, contributing to the development of the domestic tourism market. However, the development of domestic tourism is complicated by issues such as military actions, the loss of tourist resources, infrastructure destruction, logistical barriers, the presence of occupying forces, and the loss of labor resources. To address these issues, the authors propose a series of measures, including enhancing security levels, restoring cultural and tourist sites, developing alternative routes, rebuilding infrastructure, and supporting the industry by the government, and employees.

In turn, Zamula et al. [2] identified that ecotourism is an important direction for tourism development in Ukraine, as the country possesses significant natural heritage that attracts tourists from around the world. However, before the onset of the war, ecotourism in the country did not receive sufficient attention from the government and businesses, which hindered its development. To ensure the further development of ecotourism after the war, it is necessary to create new and develop existing tourist infrastructure in areas with high potential for this direction. It is important to focus on the development of tourist services that contribute to the ecological development of regions, such as organic food and the use of eco-friendly materials in construction. One of the key ways to develop ecotourism is through the preservation and protection of natural areas with high ecological value. The authors also note that the post-war development of ecotourism in Ukraine requires the creation and development of tourist infrastructure, support for ecological services, protection of natural areas, cooperation with international organizations, and attracting investments.

In their research, Vasylyeva et al. [3] focused on studying the main problems that arise in the tourism industry of Ukraine and the world due to global crises such as the pandemic and the full-scale invasion of Russia into Ukrainian territory. Based on the analysis of international post-war recovery and tourism development experience, the authors proposed a series of priority measures for the development of the tourism sector, including the restoration of the image as a safe country for comfortable tourist stays, creating economic conditions to stimulate tourism development, fiscal policy liberalization, attracting foreign investments, and implementing innovative projects in the field of marketing and organizing tourism activities.

The work by Dyakonova et al. [4] is dedicated to the analysis of the development of innovative processes in the hotel and restaurant business and the identification of key directions for innovative

innovations to improve the efficiency of enterprise operations. The study examines the impact of innovative technologies on service quality and their application in the conditions of modern economic instability in Ukraine. It is noted that enterprises in the hotel and restaurant industry have management strategies aimed at enhancing competitiveness through innovation. Furthermore, the significance of innovative development in the hotel and restaurant sector in Ukraine is questioned by the authors, who consider it advisable to pay separate attention to this direction to ensure the competitiveness of enterprises at the national and international levels.

3. Problem Statement

The objective of this scientific article is to investigate the repercussions of military conflicts on the tourism sector and explore the potential of employing innovative technologies to sustain and enhance the competitiveness of the tourism industry amidst such circumstances.

4. Methods and Materials

The following methods were used in the research process:

The analysis of literary sources was used to examine innovation in the hotel and restaurant industry. This research highlights the impact of innovative technologies on service quality in Ukraine's unstable economy. It also questions the significance of innovation in this sector, recommending special attention for competitiveness.

The method of synthesis was employed to consideration strategies for post-war tourism recovery in Ukraine, focusing on attracting investments, implementing effective marketing, and devising comprehensive government programs.

Statistical data analysis was utilized to assess the impact of war-related disruptions on the hospitality sector in Ukraine, focusing on changes in business dynamics and revenue streams.

Systematization method was applied to categorize and analyze the various digital technologies contributing to the advancement of the tourism sector in Ukraine. The systematic approach enabled the identification of key areas of digital innovation, including virtual tours, live interactive experiences, digitalization of museums and exhibitions, etc.

5. Results and Discussion

During wartime, maintaining the competitiveness of the tourism industry becomes an important task, requiring extraordinary flexibility from both the industry and governmental bodies. Global crises and military conflicts disrupt traditional mechanisms of tourism development, but it is precisely in these conditions that innovation becomes crucial. Specifically, the implementation of innovative technologies is aimed at enhancing the efficiency, safety, and attractiveness of tourism services, as well as supporting the sustainable development of the industry [5–7]. In light of these challenges, innovation in tourism holds great potential for shaping new tourist products, providing unique services, and employing advanced marketing strategies, which will contribute to enhancing the attractiveness of the tourism product in various markets and attracting new segments of tourists [8].

In the context of the war in Ukraine, the tourism industry has become one of the most vulnerable sectors of the economy. The hostilities have led to significant financial losses, which are felt at the level of individual enterprises and at the national level. The decrease in the safety and reliability of the infrastructure, which previously attracted tourists, has sharply diminished its appeal due to increased risks for tourists. As a result, mass tourism has ceased to be a popular option for recreation for many citizens. Instead, population migration to safe regions has become not only a strategic decision for personal safety but also a form of economic adaptation to new conditions. Internal migration, although a forced step, plays an important role in maintaining a certain level of stability and functioning in the tourism industry. Additionally, tourism development has become a matter of security, not only for travelers but also for industry workers. The decrease in demand for tourism services, as well as restrictions on movement, has reflected on the incomes of tourism enterprises and industry workers [9].

Significant aspects of the Ukrainian tourism industry's recovery in the post-war period include attracting both direct and indirect investments, implementing an effective marketing strategy, and

developing a comprehensive state program for tourism industry restoration. This program, comprising support measures, is aimed at investors willing to invest in the affected tourist destinations and is expected to provide special incentives and benefits. Investment mechanisms will involve investors' own resources as well as the possibility of obtaining various grants and, in some cases, investment from the government in the form of venture lending. Additionally, it is necessary to engage in dialogue with international hotel chains and create attractive conditions for their entry into the Ukrainian market. Equally important is the development of a post-war tourism development strategy [10].

It should be noted that supporting the competitiveness of the tourism industry through innovative technologies is currently gaining particular relevance and importance in the context of the country's post-war recovery. The Law of Ukraine "On Innovation Activity," which regulates innovation activity in all sectors of the country's economy, defines innovation as innovative technologies, products, or services that improve the structure and quality of production and the social sphere [11]. In turn, innovative activity is aimed at commercializing the results of scientific research and developments, which contributes to the introduction of new technologies and competitive goods or services to the market. In the context of the tourism industry, innovations encompass various technological solutions that enhance services for tourists, increase convenience and safety of travel, and integrate with modern information technologies to enhance the accessibility and attractiveness of tourist destinations [12]. For example, the implementation of online booking and travel management systems, the use of virtual reality to promote tourist attractions, or the development of innovative, environmentally friendly transportation for travel. Such an approach contributes to maintaining the competitiveness of the tourism industry during armed conflict, helping to sustain interest in travel, attract new tourists, and support the industry's development in challenging circumstances [13; 14]. Moreover, in the context of rapid scientific and technological progress, innovation becomes a key component of successful functioning in a competitive environment. Digital technologies encompass a wide range of electronic tools and resources, including social networks, games, multimedia, and mobile applications, which contribute to enhancing the tourist experience and communication processes with clients [15].

In Ukraine, the hospitality industry thrives amidst fierce competition, relying on exemplary service standards, customer satisfaction, and the adeptness to fulfill a myriad of guest needs across domestic, economic, and cultural dimensions for successful business operation. High service standards contribute not only to strengthening the industry's reputation, but also to ensuring its stability by attracting and retaining customers [16]. However, the current state of the industry is made complex by the aftermath of military engagements on Ukrainian soil. These conflicts have brought about notable shifts in the supply dynamics within the hospitality sector: certain establishments have had to halt their operations due to safety apprehensions, diminished demand, or logistical challenges, while others have incurred damages amid the hostilities (Figure 1).

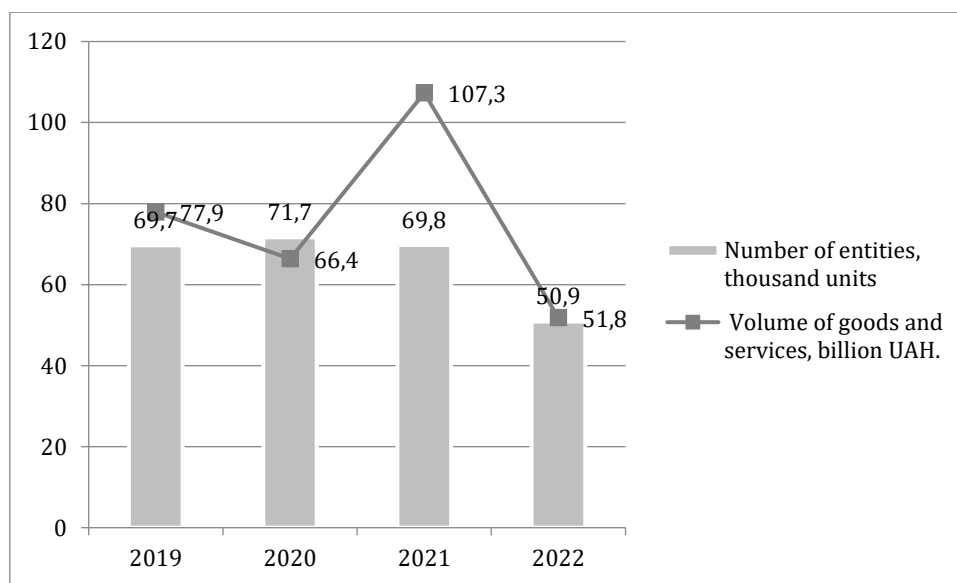


Figure 1. Indicators of business entities in the field of tourism

Source: Compiled by the author based on data from the [17]

Based on statistics provided by the State Tourism Development Agency (STDA), the tourism sector experienced a notable decline in income of nearly 26% as a direct result of military engagements. It is also emphasized that the hotel and resort business is an important source of tax revenue, contributing nearly 461 million UAH in the first half of the year. However, revenues from boarding houses and hostels, which were used for accommodating military and political organizations, increased by 39%, while tax contributions from campsites, tourist bases, and children’s camps decreased by 59% [18].

Even in the context of economically unstable conditions and armed conflict, the hotel sector remains of interest to potential investors. Particularly, this applies to real estate properties associated with logistics and storage, which are noted for the relocation of businesses from unstable regions to safer ones. The projected profitability of such investments is estimated at 9% per year. At the same time, the overall investment return in the country has decreased from 11% to 8% due to significant challenges caused by the military conflict. In the conditions of a complex economic and political environment, as well as intense competition in the hospitality industry, traditional business strategies cease to ensure profitability growth, necessitating a transition to a new level of customer service that adapts to modern realities [19].

In the reconstruction of Ukraine after the war, innovations and the creation of new products or services were found to be key factors in enhancing competitiveness in the modern tourism sector. Research indicates a lack of innovation in Ukrainian tourism compared to other sectors of the economy, where innovative technologies are widely used. Implementing innovations in the tourism sector requires new planning, management, and organizational strategies, as well as joint efforts aimed at industry development. The modern tourism industry must be at the forefront of technological innovations, and the expansion of the tourism sector in Ukraine can make it a priority for the implementation of cutting-edge technologies [20]. Specifically, this concerns digital innovations, which open up new opportunities for business development in the Ukrainian tourism industry (Table 1).

Table 1. Digital technologies contributing to the development of the tourism

Sections	Virtual tours
Interactive virtual real-time tours	This technology allows tour guides to travel to selected tourist attractions in real-time, presenting them on behalf of visitors, which is achieved using video and audio recording equipment that provides feedback.
Live webcasts	Webcams located in popular locations provide live webcasts, allowing visitors to watch these locations in real time.
Digitization of museums and exhibitions	Museums and exhibitions are being digitized through photography and videography, allowing online visitors to participate in virtual tours and interactive sessions.
Video show demonstration	Video shows are shown on the “Virtual Ukraine” platform, and they can be viewed online for an audience from any corner of the world.
Live exhibition broadcasts	The technology gives visitors access to live broadcasts of special events through paid content, expanding their ability to interact with performances and events.

Source: Compiled by the authors based on [21].

Impressive achievements in the field of virtual travel are noted as a result of studying modern digital technologies in tourism. The variety of their applications, ranging from virtual tours to online museum and exhibition visits, reveals endless possibilities for engaging with the world of culture, famous landmarks, and entertainment. Interactivity and instant access to this content creates an immersive experience available to audiences worldwide, expanding the horizons of their journeys. The profound impact of digital technologies on the development of tourism becomes evident, attracting new enthusiasts of cultural heritage and entertainment [22].

Currently, virtual tours are actively being implemented in Ukraine for various purposes. Such tours provide tourists with the opportunity to familiarize themselves with exhibitions and collections that were previously distant from a global audience. They also allow for expanding the visual perception of touristic sites and enriching the cultural experience of the viewer, contributing to the enhancement of cultural education and the broadening of citizens’ cultural horizons [23]. The digital transformation has created a new phenomenon – “digital tourist.” The modern digital tourist expects personalized

services and demands quality digital solutions. Thus, technologies such as biometrics, blockchain, and augmented reality are already impacting the tourism industry and contributing to its development. Thanks to biometric identification technology, biometric boarding on airplanes is widely implemented, providing quick and secure passport control for passengers [24].

It should be noted that the technology of biometric identification, such as personality scanning, is currently quite popular, allowing passengers to pass through airport security quickly and efficiently, reducing queues and delays. Security and identification accuracy are ensured, providing a high level of comfort for travelers [25]. Blockchain technology is used to create a reliable luggage tracking system, where each stage of the journey can be accurately traced. It also allows for instant and secure financial transactions in the tourism industry [26]. Big Data technology helps personalize routes and services for each tourist, taking into account their preferences and individual needs [27]. As for the Internet of Things (IoT), it transforms the hotel experience by providing convenient and secure accommodation conditions for guests and using modern solutions for equipment management and communication [28].

Thus, tourism is being transformed by digital technologies, providing innovative products, improving service, and accelerating industry development. Currently, these technologies are being actively implemented in Ukraine to make tourism more modern and appealing. Furthermore, such digital solutions will aid in post-war recovery and ensure sustainable development of the tourism sector.

6. Conclusions

In the context of the ongoing war in Ukraine, the tourism industry has become one of the most vulnerable sectors of the economy. The hostilities have resulted in significant financial losses, affecting both individual businesses and the overall state economy. The decrease in safety and reliability of the infrastructure, which previously attracted tourists, has sharply diminished its appeal due to increased risks for travelers.

Moreover, the reduced demand for tourism services and travel restrictions have reflected on the incomes of tourism-related businesses and industry employees. Even in the context of economic and political instability and intense competition in the hospitality industry, traditional business strategies are no longer ensuring profitability growth, necessitating a transition to a new level of customer service that adapts to modern realities. In the post-war recovery of Ukraine, innovation and the creation of new products or services are key factors in enhancing competitiveness in the modern tourism sector. Research indicates a lack of innovation in Ukrainian tourism compared to other sectors of the economy, where innovative technologies are widely used. Implementing innovations in the tourism sector requires new planning, management, and organizational strategies, as well as joint efforts aimed at industry development.

Digital transformation has created a new phenomenon – the “digital tourist.” The modern digital tourist expects personalized services and demands quality digital solutions. Thus, technologies such as biometrics, blockchain, and augmented reality are already impacting the tourism industry and contributing to its development. Thanks to biometric identification technology, biometric boarding on airplanes is widely implemented, providing quick and secure passport control for passengers.

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