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“Innovatsion iqtisodiyot” ilmiy - amaliy elektron jurnali O‘zbekiston Respublikasi Oliy ta’lim, fan va innovatsiyalar vazirligi huzuridagi **Oliy attestatsiya komissiyasi rayosatining 2025-yil 5-apreldagi 369-sonli qarori** bilan milliy ilmiy nashrlar ro‘yxatiga kiritilgan.

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Xizmat ko'rsatish va turizm sohasi

Service sector and tourism

Сфера услуг и туризм



XIZMATLAR SOHASINI RIVOJLANTIRISH VA SAMARADORLIGINI OSHIRISH (QORAQALPOG'ISTON RESPUBLIKASI MISOLIDA)

Tleumuratov Baxadir Genjemuratovich

РАЗВИТИЕ И ПОВЫШЕНИЕ ЭФФЕКТИВНОСТИ СФЕРЫ УСЛУГ (НА ПРИМЕРЕ РЕСПУБЛИКИ КАРАКАЛПАКСТАН)

Тлеумуратова Бахадира Генжемуратовича

DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVEMENT OF THE EFFICIENCY OF THE SERVICE SECTOR (A CASE STUDY OF THE REPUBLIC OF KARAKALPAKSTAN)

Tleumuratov Bakhadyr Genjemuratovich

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Abstract: in the context of the ongoing digital transformation of the economy, the service sector has become one of the key drivers of sustainable regional socio-economic development. Improving the efficiency of service-sector enterprises contributes significantly to increasing the gross regional product, generating new employment opportunities, fostering entrepreneurship, and enhancing the overall standard of living. For the Republic of Karakalpakstan, the development of the service sector is of particular strategic importance due to the region's need to diversify its economic structure, expand non-resource-based industries, and strengthen its investment attractiveness.

The primary objective of this study is to assess the current state of the service sector in the Republic of Karakalpakstan, identify the key factors affecting its operational efficiency, and develop scientifically grounded recommendations aimed at improving the mechanisms for sustainable sectoral development. The research employs comparative, systemic, economic-statistical, and structural analysis methods, complemented by grouping techniques, dynamic analysis, and the synthesis of relevant scientific findings.

The empirical foundation of the study is based on official statistical data obtained from the National Statistics Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Ministry of Economy and Finance of the Republic of Uzbekistan, official statistical sources of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, as well as academic publications by national and international scholars focusing on service-sector development and regional economic growth.

The findings indicate that the service sector of the Republic of Karakalpakstan has demonstrated stable positive growth in recent years. Nevertheless, several structural challenges remain, including insufficient digitalization of certain service industries, limited adoption of innovative technologies, uneven territorial development, relatively low labor productivity, and inadequate investment activity among small business entities. The study substantiates that the sustainable development of the service sector should be based on comprehensive digital transformation, improvements in the institutional environment, expansion of government support for entrepreneurship, and continuous enhancement of human capital quality.

The practical significance of the research lies in the development of policy recommendations aimed at increasing the operational efficiency of the service sector in the Republic of Karakalpakstan, strengthening the competitiveness of service enterprises, and ensuring sustainable regional economic development.

Keywords: service sector, Republic of Karakalpakstan, efficiency, digital economy, regional development, entrepreneurship, investment, innovation, labor productivity, digitalization.

Annotatsiya: xizmat ko'rsatish sohasi mintaqaviy iqtisodiy o'sishning asosiy drayverlaridan biri bo'lib, bandlik, tadbirkorlik va turmush darajasini oshirishga xizmat qiladi. Qoraqalpog'iston Respublikasida uni rivojlantirish iqtisodiyotni diversifikatsiya qilish va mintaqaviy raqobatbardoshlikni oshirish uchun zarurdir.

Ushbu tadqiqot xizmat ko'rsatish sohasining hozirgi holatini baholaydi, uning samaradorligiga ta'sir etuvchi asosiy omillarni aniqlaydi va barqaror rivojlanish bo'yicha tavsiyalar beradi. Tadqiqotda O'zbekiston Respublikasi



Milliy statistika qo'mitasi, Iqtisodiyot va moliya vazirligi rasmiy ma'lumotlari hamda hududiy statistik manbalardan foydalangan holda qiyosiy, iqtisodiy-statistik, tizimli va tarkibiy tahlil usullaridan foydalanilgan.

Natijalar shuni ko'rsatadiki, xizmat ko'rsatish sohasi so'nggi yillarda barqaror o'sishni ko'rsatmoqda. Biroq, raqamlashtirishning cheklanganligi, hududlarning notekis rivojlanishi, mehnat unumdorligining pastligi va investitsiyalarning yetarli emasligi kabi muammolar uning faoliyatini cheklashda davom etmoqda. Tadqiqot xulosasiga ko'ra, xizmat ko'rsatish sohasi samaradorligini oshirish uchun raqamli transformatsiyani jadallashtirish, institutsional qo'llab-quvvatlashni kuchaytirish, tadbirkorlikni rivojlantirish va inson kapitalini rivojlantirish talab etiladi. Taklif etilgan tavsiyalar xizmat ko'rsatish korxonalarining raqobatbardoshligini oshirish va Qoraqalpog'iston Respublikasining barqaror ijtimoiy-iqtisodiy rivojlanishini qo'llab-quvvatlashga xizmat qilishi mumkin.

Kalit so'zlar: xizmat ko'rsatish sohasi, Qoraqalpog'iston Respublikasi, samaradorlik, raqamli iqtisodiyot, mintaqaviy rivojlanish, tadbirkorlik, investitsiyalar, innovatsiyalar, mehnat unumdorligi, raqamlashtirish.

Аннотация: сектор услуг является одним из основных драйверов регионального экономического роста, способствуя занятости, предпринимательству и повышению уровня жизни. В Республике Каракалпакстан его развитие необходимо для диверсификации экономики и повышения конкурентоспособности регионов.

В данном исследовании оценивается текущее состояние сферы услуг, выявляются основные факторы, влияющие на ее эффективность, и предлагаются рекомендации по устойчивому развитию. В исследовании использовались сравнительный, экономико-статистический, системный и структурный анализы с использованием официальных данных Национального комитета статистики Республики Узбекистан, Министерства экономики и финансов, а также региональных статистических источников.

Результаты показывают, что сектор услуг в последние годы демонстрирует стабильный рост. Однако такие проблемы, как ограниченная цифровизация, неравномерное развитие регионов, низкая производительность труда и недостаточное количество инвестиций, продолжают сдерживать его деятельность. Исследование приходит к выводу, что повышение эффективности сектора услуг требует ускорения цифровой трансформации, усиления институциональной поддержки, содействия предпринимательству и повышения человеческого капитала. Предложенные рекомендации могут способствовать повышению конкурентоспособности предприятий сферы услуг и поддержке устойчивого социально-экономического развития Республики Каракалпакстан.

Ключевые слова: сфера услуг, Республика Каракалпакстан, эффективность, цифровая экономика, региональное развитие, предпринимательство, инвестиции, инновации, производительность труда, цифровизация.

■ INTRODUCTION

The service sector has become one of the most dynamic components of the global economy, playing a pivotal role in stimulating economic growth, increasing employment, and enhancing the competitiveness of national economies. According to the World Bank and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the service sector accounts for more than 70% of gross domestic product (GDP) and a substantial share of total employment in most developed countries. In the context of globalization, digital transformation, and rapid technological innovation, the strategic importance of the service sector continues to expand, positioning it as a fundamental pillar of the knowledge-based economy and sustainable economic development.

In the Republic of Uzbekistan, the development of the service sector has been identified as one of the key priorities of the country's economic policy. In recent years, comprehensive structural reforms have been implemented to liberalize the economy, strengthen private entrepreneurship, expand digital services, and improve the quality and accessibility of public and commercial services. Particular emphasis has been placed on regional economic development, where the service sector is regarded as a critical instrument for creating employment opportunities, increasing household incomes, supporting small businesses, and diversifying the economic structure of the regions.

For the Republic of Karakalpakstan, the development of the service sector has acquired strategic significance due to the region's unique socio-economic and environmental conditions. The region continues to face numerous development challenges associated with the long-term consequences of the Aral Sea ecological crisis, a relatively limited industrial base, and the urgent need to identify new sources of sustainable economic growth. Under these circumstances, the expansion of the service sector contributes to the development of small and medium-sized enterprises, enhances investment activity, increases fiscal revenues, and improves the overall quality of life of the population. Consequently, strengthening the service sector has become one of the most important directions for ensuring regional economic resilience and sustainable development.

Despite the positive growth trends observed in recent years, several structural constraints continue to limit the efficiency and competitiveness of the service sector. These include the insufficient integration of digital technologies across various service industries, limited access to financial resources for entrepreneurial entities, disparities in service development between urban and rural areas, shortages of qualified human capital, and relatively low labor productivity in certain segments of the service market. Addressing these challenges requires the formulation of scientifically grounded policy approaches aimed at improving institutional and organizational mechanisms while taking into account the socio-economic characteristics of the Republic of Karakalpakstan.



The issues of improving service-sector efficiency have been extensively examined in the works of internationally recognized scholars, including Michael Porter, Peter Drucker, Philip Kotler, James Fitzsimmons, Christopher Lovelock, and Valarie Zeithaml, whose studies have significantly contributed to the theories of competitiveness, strategic management, service quality, and innovation. Furthermore, numerous studies conducted by Uzbek researchers have addressed regional economic development, digital transformation, entrepreneurship, and the enhancement of competitiveness within the national service sector. Nevertheless, the specific characteristics of service-sector development in the Republic of Karakalpakstan under the conditions of ongoing digital transformation remain insufficiently explored and require further comprehensive scientific investigation.

The primary objective of this study is to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the current state of the service sector in the Republic of Karakalpakstan, identify the principal determinants influencing its operational efficiency, and develop practical recommendations for improving sectoral development mechanisms through the application of contemporary economic analysis methods.

The scientific novelty of this research lies in its comprehensive evaluation of recent development trends in the service sector of the Republic of Karakalpakstan based on modern statistical indicators, the identification of key determinants influencing sectoral efficiency, and the formulation of evidence-based proposals aimed at improving organizational and economic mechanisms for sustainable service-sector development within the framework of the digital economy.

The research hypothesis assumes that the accelerated adoption of digital technologies, increased investment activity, continuous improvement of the institutional environment, and the expansion of small business and entrepreneurship will significantly enhance the efficiency of the service sector and strengthen its contribution to the sustainable socio-economic development of the Republic of Karakalpakstan.

■ LITERATURE REVIEW

The development of the service sector is widely recognized as one of the principal drivers of sustainable economic growth and improvements in the standard of living. In the era of digital transformation, the service economy accounts for a substantial share of gross domestic product (GDP) in most countries, generates employment opportunities, stimulates entrepreneurship, and enhances national competitiveness. According to the World Bank and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), improvements in service-sector efficiency are closely associated with innovation, digital transformation, technological modernization, and the continuous improvement of enterprise management systems.

The theoretical foundations of service-sector development have been extensively explored in the works of leading international scholars. Michael Porter argues that enterprise competitiveness largely depends on innovation capacity, efficient resource utilization, and the quality of services provided. Peter Drucker considers the

service sector to be the cornerstone of the knowledge-based economy, emphasizing that productivity growth is primarily achieved through technological innovation, workforce development, and improvements in managerial practices. Likewise, Philip Kotler, Christopher Lovelock, and Valarie Zeithaml highlight customer orientation, service quality, relationship management, and the digitalization of service processes as fundamental determinants of organizational performance and long-term competitiveness.

Recent studies conducted by international organizations further demonstrate the transformative impact of digital technologies on the service sector. Analytical reports published by the OECD and the World Bank indicate that digitalization contributes to higher labor productivity, lower operational costs, expanded accessibility of services, improved customer satisfaction, and increased regional investment attractiveness. Consequently, the development of digital infrastructure has become one of the most significant prerequisites for sustainable economic growth and the modernization of service industries worldwide.

Within the national academic literature, the development of the service sector has primarily been examined in the context of regional economic modernization, support for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), investment promotion, and the implementation of advanced information technologies. Existing studies indicate that the economic reforms implemented in the Republic of Uzbekistan have significantly expanded the volume of services provided, strengthened private entrepreneurship, and accelerated the adoption of digital service platforms. At the same time, researchers emphasize the necessity of further improving enterprise efficiency through enhanced management mechanisms, increased market competition, technological innovation, and higher service quality standards.

Despite the considerable body of existing research, the factors influencing the efficiency of the service sector in the Republic of Karakalpakstan remain insufficiently investigated. Most previous studies have focused on nationwide trends, whereas the unique regional characteristics associated with socio-economic conditions, environmental challenges resulting from the Aral Sea crisis, and territorial disparities require more comprehensive scientific analysis. Furthermore, limited attention has been devoted to assessing the impact of digital transformation on service-sector productivity, the role of investment and entrepreneurship in regional development, and institutional mechanisms for strengthening the competitiveness of service enterprises under contemporary economic reforms.

Overall, the existing literature suggests that sustainable development of the service sector should be supported by continuous technological innovation, digital transformation of business processes, modernization of management systems, and the creation of a favorable entrepreneurial environment. Nevertheless, the limited availability of region-specific empirical studies on the Republic of Karakalpakstan highlights an important research gap. Addressing this gap requires a comprehensive assessment of the current state



of the regional service sector, identification of the principal factors influencing its efficiency, and the development of evidence-based recommendations aimed at ensuring its sustainable and competitive development within the framework of the digital economy.

■ RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodological framework of this study is based on contemporary scientific approaches to analyzing the development of the service sector and regional economic systems. The empirical foundation of the research consists of official statistical data obtained from the National Statistics Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, the Ministry of Economy and Finance of the Republic of Uzbekistan, as well as analytical reports published by the World Bank and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). In addition, the study incorporates findings from relevant academic publications by both domestic and international researchers specializing in service-sector development, regional economics, and digital transformation.

To achieve the research objectives, a combination of quantitative and qualitative analytical methods was employed. A **systematic analysis** was applied to examine the interrelationships among the key components influencing service-sector development. A **comparative analysis** was conducted to evaluate recent trends in the development of the service sector in the Republic of Karakalpakstan and to compare its performance across different periods. Furthermore, **economic and statistical analysis** was utilized to assess the volume of services provided, sectoral composition, investment activity, employment dynamics, and the overall performance of the regional service economy.

The research also employed **grouping techniques, dynamic time-series analysis, and data generalization methods** to identify structural changes and long-term development patterns within the sector. To improve the clarity and interpretability of the findings, statistical results were systematically presented using tables and graphical illustrations.

The collected data were subsequently synthesized and interpreted in accordance with current theoretical and empirical developments in regional economics and service-sector research. This methodological approach enabled the identification of the principal constraints affecting service-sector efficiency in the Republic of Karakalpakstan and provided a scientific basis for developing practical recommendations aimed at enhancing productivity, strengthening competitiveness, accelerating digital transformation, and ensuring the sustainable development of the regional service economy.

■ RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the study indicate that the service sector of the Republic of Karakalpakstan has experienced steady and sustainable growth in recent years, gradually becoming one of the principal drivers of the region's socio-economic development. The implementation of government programs supporting entrepreneurship, improvements in the investment climate, the expansion

of the digital economy, and the strengthening of market-oriented economic mechanisms have contributed significantly to the growth of service output, the increase in the number of business entities, and higher employment levels across the region. These developments have enhanced the role of the service sector as an essential component of regional economic modernization.

Statistical analysis demonstrates a consistent upward trend in the volume of services provided across almost all major economic activities during the study period. The highest growth rates have been observed in wholesale and retail trade, transportation and logistics, financial services, information and communication technologies (ICT), education, and tourism. This positive performance can be attributed to the rapid expansion of small and medium-sized enterprises, increasing adoption of digital technologies, wider implementation of innovative business solutions, and growing consumer demand for high-quality services. Consequently, the service sector has strengthened its contribution to the regional economy and has become an increasingly important source of gross regional product (GRP) growth.

The structural analysis reveals that trade services, transportation and logistics, financial services, education, and communication services account for the largest shares of total service output in the Republic of Karakalpakstan. In contrast, household services, consulting activities, innovation-based services, and tourism continue to represent relatively small proportions of the regional service economy. This distribution indicates substantial untapped potential for diversification and expansion in these high-value-added segments. In particular, the development of digital services in rural areas remains a strategic priority, as their accessibility and level of technological integration continue to lag behind those of urban centers.

The empirical results further demonstrate that the expansion of the service sector has made a significant contribution to employment generation and the development of small-scale entrepreneurship. The establishment of new service enterprises has created additional employment opportunities, increased household incomes, and stimulated business activity throughout the region. At the same time, the growing participation of the private sector in service provision has strengthened its role in regional economic development, reflecting the broader objectives of the ongoing market-oriented economic reforms implemented in the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Despite these positive developments, the study identifies several structural constraints that continue to limit improvements in the efficiency and competitiveness of the service sector in the Republic of Karakalpakstan. Among the most significant challenges are the insufficient digitalization of certain service industries, limited opportunities for attracting private and foreign investment, inadequate development of modern infrastructure in several districts of the region, and a shortage of highly qualified human resources. Furthermore, labor productivity in certain service segments remains below its potential level, negatively



affecting enterprise competitiveness, operational efficiency, and the overall quality of services delivered to consumers.

Digital transformation has emerged as one of the most influential determinants of service-sector development under contemporary economic conditions. The expansion of electronic payment systems, online service platforms, digital public services, cloud-based technologies, and automated management systems enables enterprises to improve operational efficiency, reduce transaction and administrative costs, enhance decision-making processes, and deliver higher-quality services to customers. Therefore, digitalization should be regarded as a strategic instrument for strengthening the long-term competitiveness and sustainability of the service sector in the Republic of Karakalpakstan.

Overall, the research findings confirm that the future development of the regional service sector requires the implementation of a comprehensive and integrated policy framework. Such a framework should combine enhanced government support for entrepreneurship, increased investment activity, accelerated development of digital infrastructure, continuous improvement of workforce skills and professional competencies, and broader adoption of innovative technologies. The effective implementation of these strategic priorities will increase the productivity and competitiveness of service-sector enterprises, expand their contribution to gross regional product, generate new employment opportunities, and create favorable conditions for the sustainable socio-economic development of the Republic of Karakalpakstan.

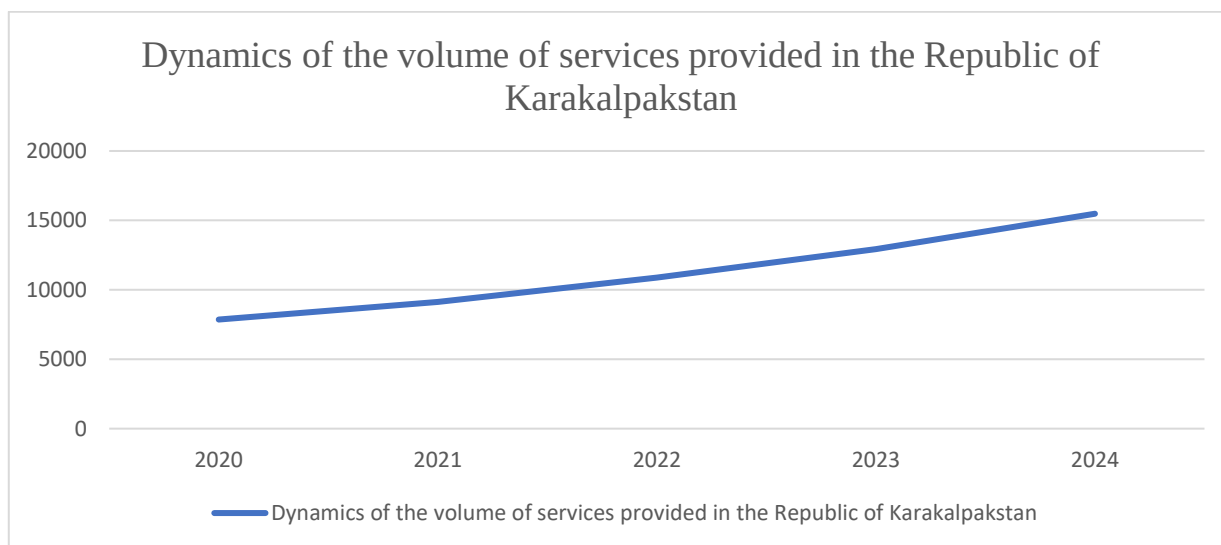


Fig.1. Dynamics of the volume of services provided in the Republic of Karakalpakstan

The graph demonstrates stable positive dynamics in the development of the service sector. The highest growth is observed in 2023–2024, which is linked to the

active development of entrepreneurship, the digitalization of the economy, and an increase in investment volumes in the service sector.

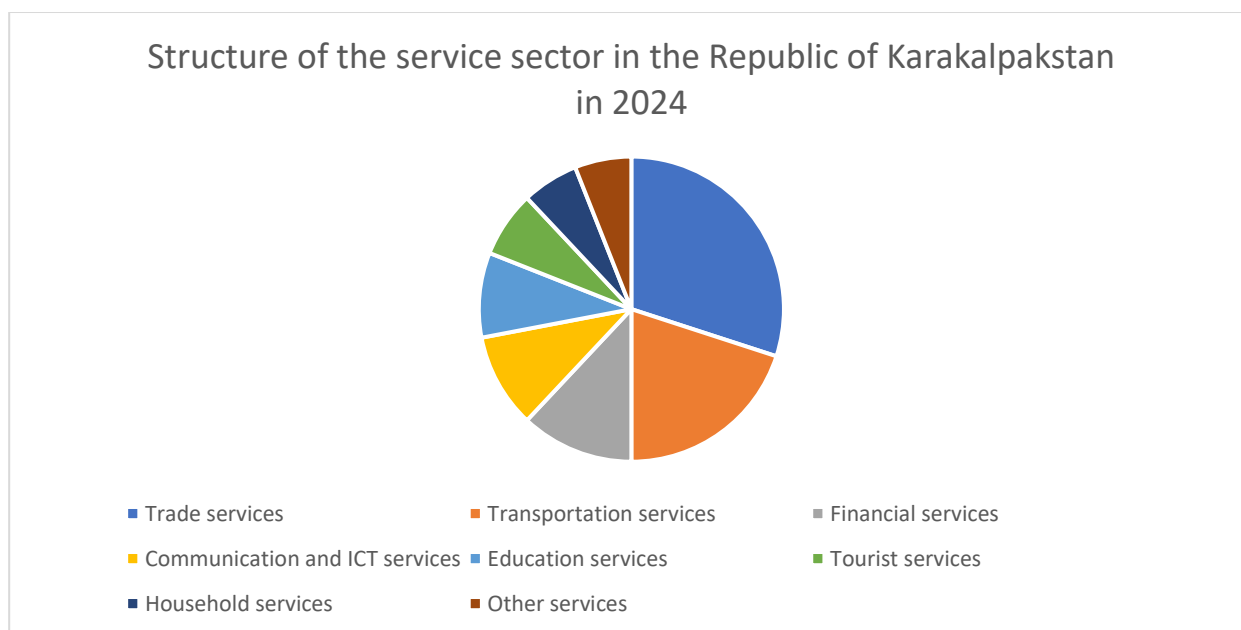


Fig.2. Structure of the service sector in the Republic of Karakalpakstan in 2024



Trade services (30%) and transport services (20%) account for the largest share in the service sector structure, driven by the development of the region's domestic market and logistical infrastructure. In recent

years, there has also been an increase in financial, information, communication, and educational services, reflecting the processes of economic digitalization and the increasing demand for modern services.

Table-1.

Main indicators of service sector development in the Republic of Karakalpakstan (2020–2024)

Indicators	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Number of service sector enterprises (units)	8 540	9 120	9 860	10 780	11 650
Number of people employed in the service sector (thousand people)	164,2	169,5	175,8	182,6	190,4
Investments in the service sector (billion soums)	1 280	1 520	1 860	2 240	2 690
Share of the service sector in GRP (%)	38,6	39,4	40,8	41,9	43,2

The table illustrates the key development trends of the service sector in the Republic of Karakalpakstan over the period **2020–2024**. During the study period, the number of service-sector enterprises increased from **8,540** to **11,650**, indicating the rapid expansion of entrepreneurial activity and the growing importance of private businesses within the regional economy. Employment in the service sector also increased significantly, rising from **164.2 thousand** to **190.4 thousand** people, thereby confirming the sector's increasing contribution to job creation and labor market development. At the same time, investment in the service industry demonstrated a steady upward trend, while the share of the service sector in the gross regional product (GRP) increased from **38.6%** to **43.2%**. These indicators collectively reflect the strengthening role of the service sector as a major contributor to economic growth, structural transformation, and sustainable regional development in the Republic of Karakalpakstan.

■ CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this study demonstrate that the service sector of the Republic of Karakalpakstan has become one of the most dynamic components of the regional economy and plays an increasingly important role in promoting sustainable socio-economic development. The statistical analysis confirms consistent growth in the volume of services provided, the number of service enterprises, employment, and investment throughout the study period. These positive trends indicate the effectiveness of the economic reforms implemented in the Republic of Uzbekistan and the government's policies aimed at promoting entrepreneurship, improving the business environment, and accelerating the development of the service economy.

Despite these achievements, the research identifies several persistent challenges that continue to constrain the efficiency and competitiveness of the regional service sector. These challenges include the insufficient digitalization of certain service industries, disparities in the development of urban and rural infrastructure, limited investment opportunities for small and medium-sized enterprises, and shortages of qualified human resources. Collectively, these factors reduce

enterprise productivity, weaken competitiveness, and limit the sector's capacity for sustainable long-term growth.

The study concludes that the future development of the service sector in the Republic of Karakalpakstan should be guided by an integrated development strategy focused on accelerating digital transformation, expanding investment activity, strengthening government support mechanisms for entrepreneurship, and improving the quality of human capital. The implementation of these strategic priorities will increase enterprise productivity, enhance service quality, strengthen regional competitiveness, and expand the contribution of the service sector to gross regional product and overall economic growth.

Policy Recommendations

- **Accelerate the digital transformation** of service-sector enterprises through the widespread adoption of advanced information technologies, digital platforms, artificial intelligence solutions, and electronic service systems.

- **Strengthen government support for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)** by improving preferential financing mechanisms, facilitating access to investment resources, and creating a more favorable business environment.

- **Expand transport, logistics, and digital infrastructure**, particularly in rural areas of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, in order to improve service accessibility and reduce regional development disparities.

- **Enhance workforce competencies** through the introduction of modern educational and vocational training programs, while promoting stronger collaboration between higher education institutions, vocational training centers, and service-sector enterprises.

- **Promote the development of high-value-added service industries**, particularly tourism, financial services, information and communication technologies (ICT), and knowledge-intensive services, as strategic drivers of regional economic diversification and sustainable growth.



The implementation of these recommendations is expected to significantly improve the operational efficiency and competitiveness of the service sector, increase the investment attractiveness of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, generate new employment opportunities, and strengthen the foundations for sustainable and inclusive socio-economic development over the long term.

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