



THE ROLE OF UNIVERSITY BRANDING IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATIONAL TOURISM

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Abstract

This article provides a scientific and theoretical analysis of the role of university branding in the development of educational tourism. The study considers university branding as a comprehensive strategic factor associated with the international reputation of higher education institutions, quality of education, research potential, student experience, digital communication, and regional tourism potential. Based on international experience and positive changes taking place in Uzbekistan's higher education system, the article highlights the importance of university branding in attracting international students, expanding academic mobility, developing the export of educational services, and strengthening the country's scientific and cultural image. The article also identifies existing challenges, opportunities, and practical recommendations for the development of educational tourism.

Keywords: Educational tourism, university branding, higher education, international students, academic mobility, export of educational services, international ranking, university image, regional brand, digital communication.

Introduction

Higher education institutions are increasingly becoming not only centers of learning and academic excellence, but also important "soft power" instruments that reflect a country's international image, cultural attractiveness, and tourism potential. In particular, educational tourism generates flows of intellectual visitors to a country through international students, professors, researchers, short-term academic exchange programs, summer schools, professional development courses, and international conferences. In this regard, the university brand emerges as a key factor in the development of educational tourism.

The relevance of educational tourism is primarily driven by the rapid expansion of international academic mobility. According to UNESCO data, a report published in 2025 notes that 6.9 million students worldwide are studying outside their home countries, a figure that has increased nearly threefold since 2000 [1]. This situation indicates that competition among universities in the international higher education market is intensifying, and that factors such as university branding, international rankings, quality of education, research capacity, campus environment, cultural adaptability, and graduates' success have become decisive in attracting students.

University branding in educational tourism is not merely a promotional tool; rather, it is a strategic



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management mechanism that integrates an institution's academic reputation, scholarly values, international partnerships, student experience, and the regional cultural environment into a unified concept. A strong university brand builds trust among international students and researchers, encouraging them to choose a particular country or city for their studies. It also increases demand not only for educational services, but also for accommodation, transportation, catering, cultural excursions, pilgrimage-related visits, and entertainment services. As a result, universities exert both direct and indirect influence on the development of local tourism infrastructure, the service sector, and the regional economy.

In the context of Uzbekistan, this issue is even more pressing. In recent years, particular attention has been paid to aligning the higher education system with international standards, establishing branches of foreign universities, developing joint degree programs, expanding academic mobility, and enhancing the country's tourism potential. In this context, higher education institutions located in historical and cultural centers such as Tashkent, Samarkand, Bukhara, and Khiva should be regarded not only as providers of educational services, but also as institutions that promote the country's scientific, cultural, and tourism brand on an international scale.

Literature review

The role of university branding in the development of educational tourism has, in recent years, become an active area of research within international higher education marketing, student mobility, regional branding, the export of educational services, and academic tourism. In contemporary studies, a university brand is interpreted not merely as a logo, slogan, or promotional tool, but as a strategic asset that integrates an institution's academic reputation, its position in international rankings, student experience, safety environment, campus infrastructure, and the tourism attractiveness of its location.

N.Omonova, in her study entitled "University Reputation, Support, and Security: Explaining Changes in Educational Tourism and Economic Benefits," conducts an empirical analysis of the formation of educational tourism through international student mobility. Based on data from 50 countries for the period 2019–2023, the author examines how university reputation, economic prosperity, tuition costs, safety, and accessibility influence international student flows.

The findings of the study indicate that a university's international reputation and its position in global rankings are among the most important factors attracting foreign students. This conclusion demonstrates that university branding, academic reputation, and a safe learning environment are closely interconnected in the development of educational tourism [2].

N.T.Hung and K.L.Yen, in their article "Towards Sustainable Internationalization of Higher Education: Innovative Marketing Strategies for International Student Recruitment," examine higher education institutions' strategies for attracting international students through a marketing-oriented approach. The authors conducted an empirical survey among international students studying in Taiwan and demonstrate that innovative marketing strategies, student-centered communication, service quality, and brand credibility are crucial in promoting higher education on a global scale. This study highlights the practical significance of university branding in the export of educational services and in increasing



international student inflows [3].

J.Mendoza-Jiménez, F.J.García-Rodríguez, and C.G.García-González, in their study “International Student Mobility and Its Impact on Destination Countries,” examine the impact of international student mobility on tourism in host destinations. Using the case of Erasmus students at the University of La Laguna in Tenerife, the authors demonstrate that international students are not only learners, but also economic agents who utilize accommodation, food services, transportation, cultural leisure activities, and travel services.

The study finds that, alongside academic reputation, the cultural environment of the destination, leisure opportunities, and cost of living also play a significant role in students’ choice of study location. These findings support the need to integrate university branding with destination branding [4].

D.Hernández-Torrano, A.Hajar, and K.Yessenbekova, in their bibliometric study “Mapping Research on International Student Mobilities in Higher Education: Achievements and the Agenda Ahead,” analyze the development of scholarly literature on international student mobility between 1950 and 2022. The authors emphasize that this research field has expanded significantly over recent decades, with studies focusing on issues such as educational quality, academic exchange, international cooperation, student motivation, and the competitiveness of host countries. The study demonstrates that academic research on educational tourism is developing in direct connection with international mobility in higher education [5].

A.M.Cano-Lanza, J.Casanoves-Boix, C.A.Jaimes-Velasquez, and G.M.Pipoli, in their study “How to Achieve University Brand Preference Through Building Brand Equity,” examine how university brand equity influences students’ choice of higher education institutions. Based on the Peruvian context, an empirical study involving 570 students identifies brand awareness, brand image, perceived quality, and brand loyalty as key factors affecting university selection.

The authors argue that strong university brand equity shapes trust, preference, and motivational choice in the minds of students. This approach demonstrates the necessity of systematically managing university branding to attract international students within the context of educational tourism [6].

F.Girardin and co-authors, in their study “The Role of Brand Authenticity for Higher Education Institutions,” analyze the issue of authenticity in university branding, particularly the alignment between the values promised by an institution and the actual educational experience it delivers. The study argues that a higher education brand should not be an artificial promotional image, but rather a reflection of the university’s genuine academic capacity, its relationship with students, its historical heritage, and the quality of its services. This finding is also highly relevant for educational tourism, as international students place strong value on brand credibility and the consistency between a university’s image and real-life experience when selecting a study destination [7].

S.Wilkins and J.Huisman, in their study “Country-Branded Universities: A Framework for Country Brand Authenticity in Transnational Higher Education,” investigate how universities associated with a national brand are perceived by international students within the context of transnational higher education. The authors argue that when a country’s brand and a university’s brand are effectively aligned, the institution’s credibility and attractiveness in the global higher education market are



significantly enhanced.

This perspective is particularly relevant to the context of Uzbekistan, where educational tourism can be promoted by linking university branding with the country's national culture, historic cities, pilgrimage tourism resources, and academic strengths. Such an integrated branding approach can strengthen the international appeal of Uzbek higher education institutions and contribute to the growth of educational tourism [8].

The above studies demonstrate that university branding is a multifaceted strategic factor in the development of educational tourism. A university's international reputation, quality of education, safety environment, digital communication, student experience, and the cultural and tourism potential of its location all have a direct influence on the decision-making process of international students. Therefore, to remain competitive in the global higher education market, higher education institutions in Uzbekistan need to develop their university brands in an integrated manner, aligning them with the national tourism brand, city branding initiatives, and the export of educational services.

Methodology

In this study, a comprehensive approach is employed to determine the role of university branding in the development of educational tourism. First, a comparative analysis method is used to examine and compare the university branding practices, international student recruitment strategies, and educational tourism development experiences of higher education institutions in both developed countries and Uzbekistan. This approach makes it possible to identify the impact of university branding on the export of educational services and the enhancement of international academic mobility.

In addition, statistical analysis is employed to examine the number of international students, foreign partnership programs, academic exchange indicators, universities' positions in international rankings, and the economic benefits generated by educational tourism. This method helps demonstrate that strengthening a university's brand can lead to an increase in international student enrollment, the number of international conferences, short-term educational programs, and demand for tourism-related services.

The observation method also plays an important role in the study. Through this approach, the official websites of higher education institutions, their activity on social media platforms, the information environment created for international students, campus infrastructure, and brand communication strategies are examined. Furthermore, content analysis is used to evaluate universities' promotional materials, international cooperation pages, student feedback, and their image across digital platforms. The application of these methods will make it possible to identify the key factors through which university branding contributes to the development of educational tourism. It will also reveal the interrelationship between brand image, educational quality, international rankings, safety, cultural environment, and tourism infrastructure in attracting international students.

Ultimately, the study will provide a basis for developing practical recommendations aimed at strengthening the brands of higher education institutions in Uzbekistan, integrating them with the national tourism brand, and promoting the sustainable development of educational tourism.



Discussion and Results

In recent years, educational tourism has become an increasingly important component of the international higher education system. While universities were once viewed primarily as institutions serving national educational needs, they have now evolved into strategic actors that generate tourism flows through international students, academic exchange programs, scientific conferences, short-term courses, and cultural-educational visits. From this perspective, university branding extends beyond the promotion of educational quality; it has emerged as a vital communication tool that showcases a country's academic potential, cultural attractiveness, safe learning environment, and international image.

Global experience demonstrates that countries with strong university brands enjoy a significant advantage in attracting international student flows. This trend reflects the continuous expansion of the global higher education market and the intensifying competition among universities for students, researchers, and academic partnerships. In such an environment, a university's international reputation, position in global rankings, academic schools of excellence, visibility on digital platforms, and student experience have become key factors in the development of educational tourism.

In the case of Uzbekistan, the relationship between higher education and educational tourism has also strengthened considerably in recent years. Positive developments have been observed in attracting international students, launching joint educational programs, expanding cooperation with foreign universities, and increasing the international visibility of higher education institutions. In particular, according to information published on the basis of data from the Statistics Agency, 12.5 thousand international students were enrolled in higher education institutions of Uzbekistan at the beginning of the 2024/2025 academic year [9]. This figure indicates the growing potential of Uzbekistan's higher education system to become a regional educational hub. An increase in the number of international students, in turn, expands demand for accommodation, food services, transportation, cultural excursions, pilgrimage-related travel, and urban tourism services.

Another important factor strengthening the impact of university branding on educational tourism in Uzbekistan is the growing level of participation in higher education. According to data from the National Statistics Committee, the gross enrollment rate in higher education among the population aged 18–23 reached 47.7% at the beginning of the 2024/2025 academic year [10]. This outcome reflects the expansion of the higher education system, the increasing number of universities, and the development of the education services market, as well as the formation of an enabling institutional environment for both domestic and international academic mobility. The growing coverage of higher education enhances the role of universities in socio-economic life, directly linking them to regional development, the innovation-driven economy, and tourism infrastructure.

University branding in the development of educational tourism produces results in several directions. First, a strong university brand increases the trust of international students and academic partners. Second, it enhances the cultural and tourism attractiveness of the city or region where the university is located. Third, it generates flows of short-term educational tourism through international conferences, summer schools, academic internships, and exchange programs. Fourth, when university branding is



aligned with the national tourism brand, it strengthens the country’s international image.

In the context of Uzbekistan, this process is particularly significant in the case of scientific and cultural centers such as Tashkent, Samarkand, Bukhara, Khiva, and Nukus. Higher education institutions located in these regions have the potential to integrate historical heritage, pilgrimage tourism, cultural diplomacy, and academic cooperation into a unified branding concept. Therefore, universities’ official websites, information services for international students, English-language communication channels, social media activity, and participation in international rankings should be regarded as important practical tools for the development of educational tourism.

Overall, university branding is emerging as an independent strategic factor in the development of educational tourism. The growing international student mobility worldwide, the increasing number of foreign students in Uzbekistan, and the expansion of higher education coverage all substantiate the need to view universities not only as educational institutions, but also as important actors contributing to tourism development, the economy, and the national brand. Therefore, for higher education institutions in Uzbekistan, aligning university branding with the needs of international students, regional tourism potential, and the national image strategy represents one of the most promising directions for the development of educational tourism.

In the educational tourism market, university branding often functions as a “signal of trust.” When selecting a study destination, international students or participants in short-term academic programs consider not only the cost or duration of study programs, but also the university’s international reputation, academic environment, campus experience, alumni network, and the tourism attractiveness of the host city.

For this reason, leading universities around the world, through their stable positions in global rankings, promote not only the export of educational services but also academic mobility, scientific conferences, internships, and urban tourism. To illustrate this point more clearly, the following section presents the QS World University Rankings performance of globally recognized brand universities over the past five years.

Dynamics of QS Rankings of International Brand Universities in the Development of Educational Tourism [11], 2022–2026

University branding	Country	Years					Five-year trend
		2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	
Massachusetts Institute of Technology – MIT	USA	1	1	1	1	1	Stable leadership
Imperial College London	United Kingdom	7	6	6	2	2	Sharp growth
Stanford University	USA	3	3	5	6	3	Restored high position
University of Oxford	United Kingdom	2	4	3	3	4	Consistent top-5 position
Harvard University	USA	5	5	4	4	5	Consistently ranked in the top 5
University of Cambridge	United Kingdom	3	2	2	5	6	High but slightly declining
ETH Zurich	Switzerland	8	9	7	7	7	Consistently ranked in the top 10
National University of Singapore – NUS	Singapore	11	11	8	8	8	Rising into the top 10
University College London – UCL	United Kingdom	8	8	9	9	9	Stable top-10 position



The table shows that internationally recognized university brands consistently function as “attractive hubs” in the development of educational tourism. In particular, MIT’s uninterrupted retention of the 1st position throughout 2022–2026 demonstrates that the stability of a university’s brand has a strong influence on international students’ decision-making. Such universities not only export educational services but also contribute to the development of surrounding cities, innovation ecosystems, the conference market, and scientific tourism infrastructure.

The strengthening of brand positioning is clearly illustrated in the case of Imperial College London: the university rose from 7th place in 2022 to 2nd place in the 2025–2026 rankings. This advancement, aligned with London’s status as a global hub for education, contributes to an increased flow of international students, academic staff, and short-term academic visitors.

Although universities such as Oxford, Harvard, and Cambridge experience minor fluctuations in rankings in certain years, their consistent presence within the top 10 demonstrates the effectiveness of the “historical brand + academic quality + city image” model in educational tourism. This model is also highly relevant for Uzbekistan: if universities located in historical and cultural centers such as Samarkand, Bukhara, Tashkent, and Khiva integrate their institutional branding with the cultural and touristic potential of their respective regions, it will significantly expand opportunities for attracting international students and academic tourists.

The development of educational tourism in Uzbekistan is directly linked to the international openness of the higher education system, the inflow of foreign students, the participation of universities in global rankings, and the regional tourism potential. In recent years, the growing number of higher education institutions in the country, the operation of foreign university branches, the expansion of international cooperation programs, and the inclusion of several national universities in global rankings have collectively created a strong institutional foundation for educational tourism.

“Main Indicators of Educational Tourism and University Branding in Uzbekistan [12]”

Category	Indicator	Period
Number of Higher Education Institutions	A total of 212 higher education institutions, comprising 112 state institutions, 70 private institutions, and 30 branches of foreign universities	2024-yil oktabr
Number of Students in Higher Education	1,553,552 students at bachelor’s and master’s levels	2024-yil oktabr
Number of International Students	13,771 foreign students	2024-yil oktabr
TIIAME – National Research University	Ranked 469th in the QS World University Rankings 2026	2026
National University of Uzbekistan	Ranked within the 721–730 range in the QS World University Rankings 2026	2026
Tashkent State Technical University	Ranked within the 901–950 range in the QS World University Rankings 2026	2026
Samarkand State University	Ranked within the 1001–1200 range in the QS World University Rankings 2026	2026
Tashkent State University of Economics	Ranked within the 1001–1200 range in the QS World University Rankings 2026	2026
Tashkent State Transport University	Ranked within the 1201–1400 range in the QS World University Rankings 2026	2026
Tashkent University of Information Technologies (TUIT) named after Muhammad al-Khwarizmi	Ranked 1401+ in the QS World University Rankings 2026	2026



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As can be seen from the table, the higher education infrastructure necessary for the development of educational tourism in Uzbekistan is gradually expanding. As of October 2024, the country has 212 higher education institutions in operation, 30 of which are branches of foreign universities, indicating a growing integration into the international education services market. At the same time, more than 1.55 million students enrolled in the higher education system demonstrate the formation of a large-scale academic environment in the country.

The increase in the number of international students to 13,771 demonstrates that educational tourism is becoming a tangible reality in Uzbekistan. This is because international students are not only individuals engaged in classroom-based education, but also economic agents who utilize accommodation, food services, transport, cultural leisure, pilgrimage, and excursion services within the country. Therefore, their growing numbers have a direct impact not only on the development of educational tourism, but also on the service sector and urban tourism.

From the perspective of university branding, one of the most significant positive developments is the growing visibility of Uzbek universities in the QS World University Rankings 2026. In particular, the inclusion of TIIAME – National Research University in the top 500, with a 469th position, represents an important branding signal for higher education in Uzbekistan. Furthermore, the presence of the National University of Uzbekistan, Tashkent State Technical University, Samarkand State University, Tashkent State University of Economics, Tashkent State Transport University, and TUIT in international rankings is enhancing the global recognition of the country's universities.

Overall, the situation in Uzbekistan indicates that two main directions are crucial for the development of educational tourism. The first is the creation of a comfortable academic and tourism environment for international students, and the second is the integration of university branding with the branding of cities and the country as a whole. In particular, universities located in scientific and cultural centers such as Tashkent, Samarkand, Bukhara, Khiva, and Nukus have the potential to position Uzbekistan as one of the educational tourism hubs of Central Asia by developing a “education + culture + tourism” model for international students.

Although the role of university branding in the development of educational tourism is increasing, a number of systemic challenges still persist in this area. First of all, in some higher education institutions, the university brand has not yet been fully established as a strategic management tool. In practice, branding is often limited to a logo, official website, promotional materials, or social media outreach. In reality, however, a university brand should be closely and comprehensively linked to educational quality, research capacity, international cooperation, faculty composition, student experience, graduate success, and regional image.

The insufficient development of the information environment for international students is also one of the key challenges. On the official foreign-language websites of many universities, information regarding admission procedures, academic programs, tuition fees, accommodation, visa processes, insurance, campus life, and cultural adaptation is not adequately or comprehensively presented. In the international education market, however, clear, reliable, and timely information has a direct impact on the decision-making process of prospective students. Therefore, the quality of universities' digital



communication is considered one of the key factors determining their brand attractiveness.

The weak integration between university branding and regional tourism branding is also one of the factors hindering the development of educational tourism. Although Uzbekistan possesses significant potential in historical, cultural, and pilgrimage tourism, these opportunities are not sufficiently reflected in the international promotion of universities. If higher education institutions located in cities such as Samarkand, Bukhara, Khiva, Tashkent, and Nukus were to align their branding with the cultural heritage, academic traditions, and tourism attractiveness of these cities, a strong “education + culture + travel” model could be formed for international students.

There are also certain limitations in terms of participation in international rankings, increasing research publication activity, attracting foreign faculty members, expanding joint academic programs, and strengthening academic exchange. The strength of a university’s brand is largely dependent on its academic reputation and international visibility. Therefore, publications in internationally indexed journals, research grants, academic collaboration projects, international conferences, and real partnerships with foreign universities should be regarded as key benchmarks for strengthening the university brand.

Despite existing challenges, broad opportunities are emerging for the development of educational tourism in Uzbekistan. The expansion of the higher education system, the operation of foreign university branches, the growing number of joint academic programs, and the gradual increase in the inflow of international students are creating an important institutional foundation for this field. This process encourages universities to take a more active role in the international education services market, reconsider their brand strategies, and strengthen communication targeted at foreign audiences.

Uzbekistan’s rich historical and cultural heritage, together with its favorable geographical location, represents a significant advantage for the development of educational tourism. As one of the scientific, cultural, and civilizational crossroads of Central Asia, the country offers international students not only opportunities for education but also access to historical cities, pilgrimage sites, national culture, and local lifestyles. If universities integrate their academic programs with cultural excursions, summer schools, short-term certificate courses, international scientific forums, and practical study visits, the attractiveness of educational tourism will be further enhanced.

Digital marketing and social media also create significant opportunities for promoting university brands to a global audience. Today, when selecting a university, international students rely not only on official rankings but also on student reviews, video content, virtual campus tours, graduate experiences, and brand engagement on social media platforms. Therefore, it is crucial for universities to produce high-quality content in English, Russian, and other foreign languages, develop dedicated digital platforms for international students, and strengthen their global communication strategies.

The effectiveness of educational tourism can also be enhanced through the development of cooperation between universities and tourism sector stakeholders. Higher education institutions, in collaboration with tourism companies, hotels, museums, transport organizations, and local authorities, can develop special education-tourism programs for international students. Such programs may include academic



courses, language learning, cultural excursions, visits to pilgrimage sites, practical seminars, and immersion in local culture.

Overall, the development of educational tourism through university branding represents a promising strategic direction for Uzbekistan. The existing challenges are mainly associated with the insufficient systematization of branding strategies, weak international communication, limited participation in global rankings, and the weak integration between university branding and regional tourism branding. At the same time, the expansion of the higher education system, rich historical and cultural heritage, increasing inflow of international students, growing international cooperation opportunities, and digital marketing tools create substantial potential for the development of this sector. To ensure the effective development of educational tourism, it is necessary to align university branding with educational quality, international reputation, student experience, and national tourism potential.

Conclusions and recommendations

University branding in the development of educational tourism is a key strategic factor in enhancing the international competitiveness of higher education institutions, expanding the inflow of international students, and strengthening the country's scientific and cultural image. The study has demonstrated that a university brand is not merely an external marketing tool or visual identity element, but rather a comprehensive concept that integrates educational quality, research capacity, international cooperation, student experience, campus environment, graduate success, and regional tourism potential.

International experience shows that strong global university brands not only export educational services but also enhance the tourism attractiveness of their host cities and countries. The cases of institutions such as MIT, Oxford, Harvard, Cambridge, Imperial College London, and the National University of Singapore demonstrate that academic reputation, stable positions in international rankings, an innovative environment, and effective communication strategies have a direct impact on the development of educational tourism. Around such universities, a system of scientific conferences, summer schools, academic exchange programs, short-term courses, and cultural-educational visits has been established.

In the context of Uzbekistan, important institutional foundations for the development of educational tourism are also emerging. The increasing number of higher education institutions, the operation of foreign university branches, the expansion of joint academic programs, the inclusion of several national universities in international rankings, and the gradual growth in the number of international students all indicate the promising nature of this field. In particular, universities located in scientific and cultural centers such as Tashkent, Samarkand, Bukhara, Khiva, and Nukus have the potential to increase the inflow of international students and academic tourists by developing specialized branding strategies that integrate education, culture, and tourism.

At the same time, an analysis of the current situation indicates that the relationship between university branding and educational tourism has not yet been sufficiently systematized. In some higher education institutions, brand strategies oriented toward international audiences, high-quality English-language



information platforms, student-friendly services for international students, international marketing communications, and programs integrated with regional tourism branding remain underdeveloped. Therefore, in the development of educational tourism, university branding should not be viewed as an isolated direction, but rather as a comprehensive mechanism linked to higher education policy, tourism development, cultural diplomacy, and regional development strategies.

In our view, it is appropriate to put forward the following recommendations. First, it is advisable for higher education institutions in Uzbekistan to develop clear university branding strategies aimed at attracting international students. These strategies should present the university's academic priorities, competitive advantages, international partnerships, campus environment, graduate success, and the tourism potential of its location within a unified conceptual framework.

It is necessary to strengthen the quality of international communication on universities' official websites and social media platforms. For international students, comprehensive, accurate, and regularly updated information should be provided in English, Russian, and other languages regarding admission procedures, academic programs, tuition fees, accommodation, visa requirements, insurance, campus life, safety, cultural adaptation, and tourism opportunities. This will enhance trust in the university brand and facilitate the decision-making process of prospective international students.

In the development of educational tourism, it is essential to integrate university branding with regional tourism branding. Higher education institutions located in cities such as Samarkand, Bukhara, Khiva, Tashkent, and Nukus may connect their international programs with historical monuments, museums, pilgrimage sites, cultural events, and local tourism routes. As a result, a "education + culture + travel" model can be formed for international students.

It is also necessary to strengthen specialized units within universities responsible for working with international students, developing educational tourism programs, and managing brand communication. These units should systematically engage with international applicants, students, faculty members, and academic partners, as well as organize international exhibitions, online presentations, summer schools, and short-term courses.

It is also advisable to establish institutionalized cooperation between universities and tourism sector stakeholders. Higher education institutions, in collaboration with tourism companies, hotels, transport organizations, museums, and local authorities, may develop comprehensive education-tourism packages for international students. Such programs not only increase the number of international students but also have a positive impact on the regional services market and the local economy.

Participation in international rankings, improving the quality of research publications, attracting foreign faculty members, expanding joint degree programs, and strengthening academic exchange should become key directions in reinforcing university branding. This is because a strong academic reputation and international visibility ensure the long-term sustainable development of educational tourism.

To develop educational tourism in Uzbekistan, it is essential to effectively utilize university branding. For this purpose, higher education institutions should align their branding with the needs of international students, modern digital communication, regional tourism potential, and the national



image strategy. This approach will contribute to positioning Uzbekistan as one of the competitive educational tourism hubs in Central Asia.

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