

**AGRITOURISM IN THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN AND TURKEY:
POTENTIAL RESERVES****ҚАЗАҚСТАН РЕСПУБЛИКАСЫ МЕН ТҮРКІЯДАҒЫ АГРОТУРИЗМ:
ӘЛЕУЕТТІ РЕЗЕРВТЕР****АГРОТУРИЗМ В РЕСПУБЛИКЕ КАЗАХСТАН И ТУРЦИИ:
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Abstract. The *purpose* - a comprehensive study of rural tourism in Kazakhstan and Turkey was carried out, with an emphasis on identifying points and differences of institutional convergence, identifying mechanisms for improving efficiency. *Methods* - comparative and correlation analysis of official statistical data of recent years to study the dynamics of the development of the tourism sector of the two countries. National strategies, programs and regulatory acts of these states are analyzed to compare the means of state support, systems of regulation and implementation of innovations. The quality component was provided through interviews with industry experts (10 from each country), which made it possible to obtain expert assessments on digitalization, integration of ethno-cultural and environmental values, as well as identify the main drivers and barriers to expanding the scale of the tourism industry. *Results* - features of the current state, growth rates and structure of tourism in rural areas of the Republic of Kazakhstan and Turkey are shown. It was found that Turkey is distinguished by a developed system of state support, a high level of digitalization of services and widespread diversification of tourist products, including state-supported niche destinations (apitourism, gastrotourism). In Kazakhstan, there is a fragmentation of policies and limited introduction of digital platforms, but there are positive changes in the distribution of ethno-cultural and environmental forms of Tourism. The patterns of integration of local traditions into tourism activities are presented and the main factors of sustainability of the tourism industry are indicated. *Conclusions* - it is proved that the process of implementing the strategic goals and objectives of agritourism is possible through effective state support, active digital transformation, integration of local preferences and innovative proposals. Recommendations were developed to improve national strategies, taking into account modern international trends and best practices, promising innovations in rural entrepreneurship.

Аңдатпа. *Мақсаты* – институционалдық жақындасу нүктелері мен айырмашылықтарын анықтауға, тиімділікті арттыру тетіктерін айқындауға баса назар аударып, Қазақстан мен Түркиядағы ауыл туризмін кешенді зерттеу жүргізілді. Екі елдің туристік секторының даму динамикасын зерттеу үшін соңғы жылдардағы ресми статистикалық деректерді салыстырмалы және корреляциялық талдау әдістері. Мемлекеттік қолдау құралдарын, реттеу және инновацияларды енгізу жүйелерін салыстыру үшін осы мемлекеттердің ұлттық стратегиялары, бағдарламалары мен нормативтік актілері талданады. Сапалы компонент салалық сарапшылармен сұхбат есебінен қамтамасыз етілді (әр елден 10), бұл цифрландыру, этномәдени және экологиялық құндылықтарды интеграциялау мәселелері бойынша сараптамалық баға алуға, сондай-ақ туристік саланың ауқымын кеңейтудің негізгі драйверлері мен кедергілерін белгілеуге мүмкіндік берді. *Нәтижелері* - Қазақстан Республикасы мен Түркияның ауылдық жерлеріндегі туризмнің қазіргі жай-күйінің, өсу қарқыны мен құрылымының ерекшеліктері көрсетілген. Түркия дамыған мемлекеттік қолдау жүйесімен, қызметтерді цифрландырудың жоғары деңгейімен және туристік өнімдерді, соның ішінде мемлекет қолдайтын тауашалық бағыттарды (апитуризм, гастротуризм) кеңінен әртараптандырумен ерекшеленетіні анықталды. Қазақстанда саясаттың бөлшектенуі және сандық платформалардың шектеулі енгізілуі байқалады, алайда туризмнің этномәдени және экологиялық нысандарының таралуында оң өзгерістер байқалады. Жергілікті дәстүрлерді туристік қызметке интеграциялау заңдылықтары ұсынылған және туристік саланың тұрақтылығының негізгі факторлары көрсетілген. *Қорытындылар* - агротуризмнің стратегиялық мақсаттары мен міндеттерін іске асыру үдерісі пәрменді мемлекеттік қолдау, белсенді сандық трансформация, жергілікті артықшылықтар мен инновациялық ұсыныстарды интеграциялау арқылы мүмкін болатындығы дәлелденді. Заманауи халықаралық үрдістер мен озық тәжірибелерді, ауыл кәсіпкерлігіндегі келешекті инновацияларды ескере отырып, ұлттық стратегияларды жетілдіру бойынша ұсынымдар әзірленді.

Аннотация. *Цель* – проведено комплексное исследование сельского туризма в Казахстане и Турции с акцентом на выявление точек институционального сближения и различий, определение механизмов повышения эффективности. *Методы* - сравнительного и корреляционного анализа официальных статистических данных за последние годы для изучения динамики развития туристского сектора двух стран. Проанализированы национальные стратегии, программы и нормативные акты этих государств для сопоставления инструментов государственной поддержки, системы регулирования и внедрения инноваций. Качественный компонент обеспечен за счет интервью с отраслевыми экспертами (по 10 из каждой страны), что позволило получить экспертные оценки по вопросам цифровизации, интеграции этнокультурных и экологических ценностей, а также обозначить основные драйверы и барьеры расширения масштаба туристской отрасли. *Результаты* - показаны особенности современного состояния, темпов роста и структуры туризма в сельской местности Республики Казахстан и Турции. Установлено, что Турция отличается развитой системой государственной поддержки, высоким уровнем цифровизации услуг и широкой диверсификацией туристских продуктов, включая поддерживаемые государством нишевые направления (апитуризм, гастротуризм). В Казахстане наблюдается фрагментарность политики и ограниченное внедрение цифровых платформ, однако отмечается положительные изменения в распространении этнокультурных и экологических форм туризма. Представлены закономерности интеграции местных традиций в туристскую деятельность и указаны ключевые факторы устойчивости туристской сферы. *Выводы* - доказано, что процесс реализации стратегических целей и задач агротуризма возможен при действенной государственной поддержке, активной цифровой трансформации, интеграции локальных преимуществ и инновационных предложений. Разработаны рекомендации по совершенствованию национальных стратегий с учетом современных международных тенденций и передового опыта, перспективных инноваций в сельском предпринимательстве.

Key words: rural land, agrarian tourism, tourist resources, tourist infrastructure, innovative technologies, digital platforms environmental values.

Түйінді сөздер: ауылдық жер, аграрлық туризм, туристік ресурстар, туристік инфрақұрылым, инновациялық технологиялар, сандық платформалар экологиялық құндылықтар.

Ключевые слова: сельская местность, аграрный туризм, туристские ресурсы, туристская инфраструктура, инновационные технологии, цифровые платформы экологические ценности.

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Introduction

Rural tourism is increasingly recognized as a key mechanism for diversifying rural economies, stimulating employment, and preserving ethnocultural heritage in the context of sustainable development. Recent global challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic, have triggered a renewed interest in environmentally friendly, authentic, and safe tourism destinations, redirecting both domestic and international tourist flows towards rural and agro-based locations. Numerous studies underscore the strategic significance of rural tourism and agritourism as drivers of socio-economic modernization, ecosystem conservation, and social cohesion in rural areas (Omirezakova M., Wendt J.A.) [1].

In Kazakhstan, rural tourism is only beginning to acquire a structured and systemic character, with pilot projects focusing on the development of the natural recreational potential, improvement of transport and digital infrastructure, and the professionalization of local human resources. The Aktobe region serves as an illustrative case, demonstrating the need for comprehensive evaluation of territorial resources and targeted support for the institutionalization of rural tourism. Moreover, the expansion of ethnotourism-rooted in the nomadic traditions of the Kazakh people-plays a pivotal role in the preservation and promotion of intangible heritage, fostering a sense of national identity, and mobilizing rural communities for economic participation (Abdikarimova M., Imangulova T., Savanchieva A. et al.) [2].

Despite these advances, the Kazakhstani model faces several constraints, primarily linked to the fragmented nature of government support, the limited scale of digital integration, and the insufficient development of local brands and marketing strategies. These limitations hinder the international competitiveness of rural tourism and restrict its domestic multiplier effect.

By contrast, Turkey presents a more mature and institutionally embedded approach to rural tourism, positioning it as an integral component of the national tourism sector. The Turkish experience highlights the positive impact of comprehensive government incentives, the expansion of infrastructure, and the proactive inclusion of cooperatives, small-scale entrepreneurs, and local stakeholders in shaping innovative tourism products. Notably, Turkey's strategy prioritizes the involvement of women and youth, the promotion of gastronomic and niche agrotourism (e.g., apitourism and culinary tourism), and the use of digital platforms

to enhance market accessibility and service quality (Demirezen B.) [3].

A distinctive new trend emerging in both countries is reverse diaspora tourism, with the Kazakh diaspora in Turkey and the Turkish diaspora in Kazakhstan increasingly becoming target segments for bilateral tourism initiatives. This phenomenon contributes to the strengthening of cross-cultural and business links, the creation of joint tourism packages, and the broader promotion of Turkic cultural heritage and identity.

In summary, while Kazakhstan and Turkey share similar trends in prioritizing sustainable rural tourism, their institutional trajectories, integration of digital solutions, and engagement with local and diaspora communities reveal both commonalities and critical differences. Understanding these aspects is crucial for developing effective mechanisms to improve the sector's performance, sustainability, and international visibility.

Literature review

Contemporary foreign and domestic scientific literature demonstrates a steady growth in interest in rural tourism as a tool for sustainable development of rural areas. According to bibliometric analysis, in recent years, there has been a significant increase in the number of studies on sustainable rural tourism, with a focus on the integration of digital platforms, enhancing the role of local communities, and preserving cultural heritage. These trends are also confirmed by Kazakhstani publications, which emphasize the diversification of rural incomes and the development of ethnotourism products (Geng Y., Zhang X., Gao H. et al.; Koishinova G.K., Sarina B., Domalotov E.B.) [4, 5].

Kazakhstani studies pay particular attention to the role of digital technologies as a driver of growth and the formation of new cluster models of agritourism (Gutierriz I., Ferreira J.J., Fernandes P.O.) [6]. At the same time, analysis of existing problems, such as seasonality, infrastructure constraints, and underdeveloped marketing tools, points to the need to integrate innovative solutions and raise professional standards in the industry (Sarina B., Akimbekova G., Erkinbaeva N.) [7]. Ethnotourism and the preservation of nomadic culture are noted as unique competitive advantages of Kazakh rural tourism.

In Turkey, according to data, rural tourism is developing through comprehensive state support, the formation of local brands, and the development of niche areas such as gastronomic tourism. The analysis emphasizes the importance of the participation of women and young people in cooperatives, as well as the

introduction of modern information technologies, which contributes to the growth of the sector's sustainability (Yildiz S., Aydin S.) [8].

An analysis of international and national literature suggests that, despite the similarity of global trends, the issues of terminological and methodological uncertainty noted remain relevant for both Kazakhstan and Turkey (Rosalina P.D., Dupre K., Wang Y.; Li Y., Ismail M.A., Aminuddin A.) [9, 10].

A summary analysis of the literature shows that both countries are moving toward integrating digital and innovative tools, increasing environmental responsibility, and involving local communities. At the same time, Kazakhstan is focused on creating agritourism clusters and developing ethnic destinations, while Turkey is relying on state support and diversification of product lines.

A comparative analysis shows that both countries share the priorities of sustainable development and cultural heritage preservation, but implement them with national characteristics in mind. Turkey is dominated by a model of active state intervention and the development of niche markets, while Kazakhstan is focused on the digitalization and clustering of rural tourism.

Materials and methods

This study employs a comprehensive interdisciplinary approach combining quantitative and qualitative methods, as well as a systematic review of contemporary scientific literature. The first stage involved a systematic analysis of recent publications on sustainable development, digitalization, and ethno- and agritourism in Kazakhstan and Turkey. This ensured broad analytical coverage and comparability of topics.

The quantitative comparative analysis was based on official statistical data on the dynamics of tourist flows, the level of digitalization of rural tourism facilities, the average duration of trips, and internal demand structures. For an in-depth characterization of national development models, content analysis of strategic documents was used: state programs to support tourism Concept for the Development of the

Tourism Industry of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2023-2029 [11], Sustainable Tourism Program in Turkey (Türkiye Tourism Promotion...) [12].

The statistical analysis included the calculation of correlations between the level of digitalization and changes in tourist flows using SPSS Statistics 28 and Excel. That is, correlation analysis was used to quantitatively assess the relationship between the level of digitalization of rural tourism facilities and changes in the volume of tourist flows.

As part of the analysis, Pearson's correlation coefficients (R) were calculated, reflecting the strength and direction of the relationship between the share of digitized tourist facilities (introduction of online booking, digital marketing) and the dynamics of tourist flows for the period 2022–2024. Statistically significant positive correlations were identified for both countries (R=0.62 for Kazakhstan, R=0.73 for Turkey, with a significance level of $p < 0.01$), which indicates a significant impact of digital transformations on the growth of rural tourism indicators.

To identify hidden factors determining the development of the sector, semi-structured interviews were conducted with experts, industry representatives, and administrations (10 interviews per country), which provided qualitative data. The interviews were thematically coded using the Creswell methodology to identify key drivers and barriers (Creswell J.W., Creswell J.D.) [13].

Results

Let us consider the key empirical results of comparing the trends, structure, and dynamics of rural tourism development in Kazakhstan and Turkey in recent years. The quantitative and qualitative data obtained allow us to objectively assess the scale and effectiveness of the implementation of innovative solutions, as well as to identify specific factors of growth in the sector in each country. The analysis is based on official statistics, data from specialized studies, and expert interviews, which provides a comprehensive and representative approach to assessing the issues under consideration (table 1).

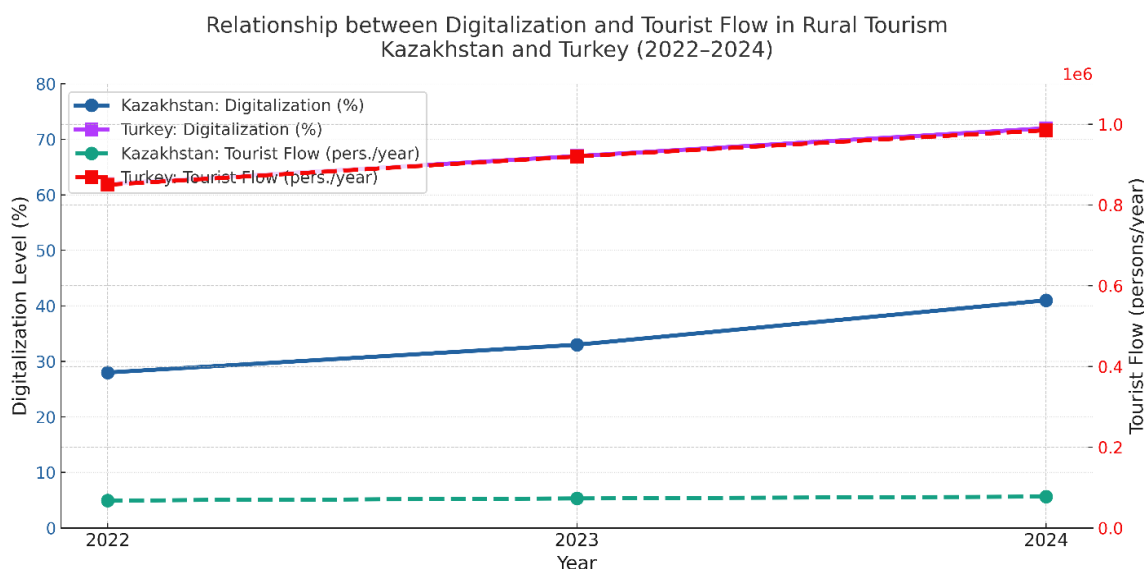
Table 1 - Comparative indicators of rural tourism development

Indicator	Kazakhstan, 2022	Kazakhstan, 2023	Kazakhstan, 2024	Turkey, 2022	Turkey, 2023	Turkey, 2024
Number of tourism facilities	196	210	224	920	995	1025
Tourist flow, persons/year	68.0	73.0	77.5	850.0	920.0	985.0
Level of digitalization, %	28	33	41	62	67	72
Average tour duration, days	4.3	4.6	4.8	5.8	6.0	6.3
Share in domestic tourism, %	9.0	9.5	10.2	13.2	14.1	14.8
Note: compiled by the authors based on data from (Official Tourism Statistics...; Turkish Statistical Institute ...) [14, 15]						

A comparative analysis of table 1 shows that both countries have demonstrated positive dynamics in key indicators of rural tourism development in recent years, with Turkey's growth rates remaining significantly higher.

In today's world, digitalization is becoming one of the key drivers of rural tourism development, directly influencing the attractiveness of destinations, service quality, and tourist flows. In order to identify the nature and strength of

this relationship, a correlation analysis was conducted between the level of digitalization of rural tourism facilities and the dynamics of tourist flows in Kazakhstan and Turkey in recent years. The analytical approach made it possible to quantitatively assess the contribution of digital technologies to the growth of tourist activity and to identify differences in the effectiveness of digital transformation between countries (figure 1).



Note: compiled by the authors based on research

Figure 1 – Dynamics of digitalization and tourist flow in rural tourism

Figure 1 illustrates the positive correlation between the growth of digitalization and the increase in tourist traffic in both countries. In Kazakhstan, the correlation coefficient is $R = 0.62$ ($p < 0.01$), which indicates a significant positive relationship between digitalization and the growth of tourist traffic. In Turkey, the correlation is higher - $R = 0.73$ ($p < 0.01$), reflecting the greater effectiveness of digitalization as a driver of the industry.

Next, we will consider a comprehensive comparative analysis of the key factors determining the success of rural tourism development in Kazakhstan and Turkey in 2024. The comparison is based on a number of objective indicators: the level of digitalization, government support measures, the share of ethno-

and agritourism, the state of infrastructure, the degree of implementation of online booking, and the development of niche areas. The use of a scoring and percentage assessment allows us to clearly identify the differences in the institutional and market approaches of both countries to the modernization of the rural tourism sector. This analysis reveals the strengths and weaknesses of national strategies and develops recommendations for further improving the efficiency, competitiveness, and sustainability of rural tourism. Comparing these factors also helps to determine which tools and solutions may be most effective for integration into national policy and industry development practices (table 2, figure 2).

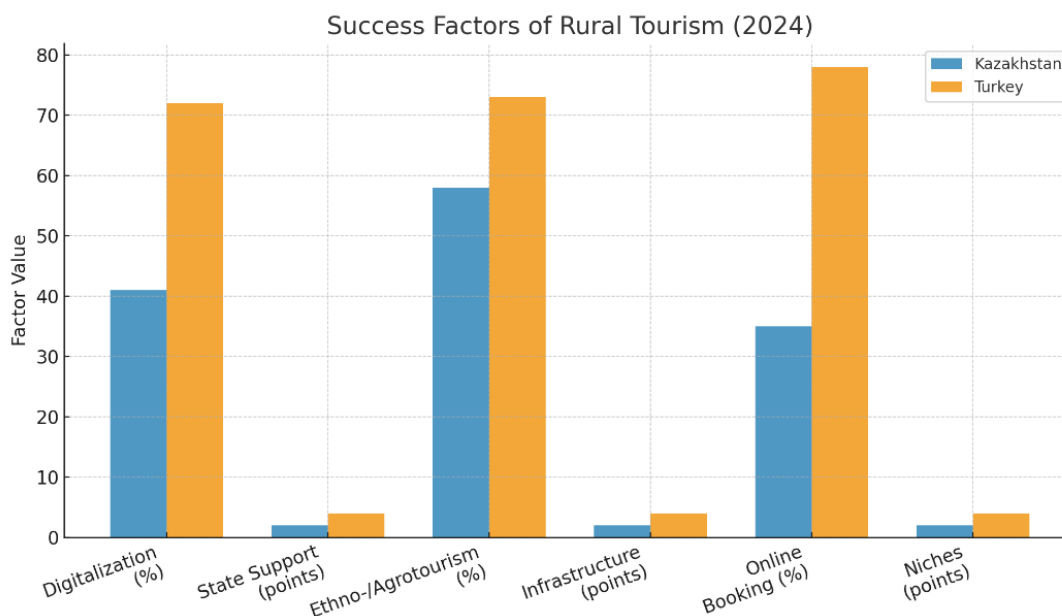
Table 2 - Assessment of factors contributing to the success of rural tourism (2024)

Factor	Kazakhstan	Turkey
Digitalization (%)	41	72
State support (0-5)	2	4
Ethno-Agrotourism (%)	58	73
Infrastructure (0-5)	2	4
Online booking (%)	35	78
Niche segments (0-5)	2	4

Note: compiled by the authors based on research results: expert surveys (scored indicators) and statistical data (percentage indicators) (Official Tourism Statistics...; Turkish Statistical Institute ...) [14, 15]

As can be seen from table 2, the percentage values are based on official statistics, and the scores (on a scale from 0 to 5) were formed on the basis of expert interviews with representatives of the industry, administrations, and the scientific community, conducted by the authors of the study using a semi-structured interview methodology followed by thematic coding.

This approach made it possible to objectively rank the level of development of key factors ensuring the success of rural tourism in each country. The expert assessments obtained reflect the integrated perception of the professional community and are based on a comparative analysis of current practices and infrastructure capabilities in 2024.



Note: compiled by the authors based on research (based on table 2)

Figure 2 – Comparative model of factors for success in rural tourism, 2024

Figure 2 presents a comparative analysis of the success factors for rural tourism in Kazakhstan and Turkey based on the results of 2024. It can be seen that Turkey outperforms Kazakhstan in all key parameters (digitalization, government support, development of ethno-agritourism, infrastructure, introduction of online booking, and development of niche areas). Turkey demonstrates higher indicators compared to Kazakhstan. The differences in the level of digitalization and online services are particularly significant, indicating the important role of innovation and systematic state support in the Turkish sector.

In addition to general trends in rural tourism, it is essential to examine the specifics and dynamics of key types of rural tourism in Kazakhstan and Turkey, including gastronomic tourism, agritourism, ethnotourism, ecotourism, and historical-cultural tourism (table 3).

Rural Gastronomic Tourism. In Turkey, rural gastronomic tourism has shown significant growth, driven by the active incorporation of traditional regional cuisines into tourist routes and festivals. Gastronomic routes in the Aegean and Mediterranean regions, characterized by the use of organic products and cultural heritage, are particularly noteworthy. Govern-

ment support and marketing efforts have contributed to the development of branded gastronomic destinations, boosting visitor numbers and stimulating local communities' growth.

In Kazakhstan, gastronomic tourism is at a stage but is gaining increasing interest, especially within ethnotourism projects that highlight national dishes and beverages such as «kymyz» and «Kazakh meat». The development prospects lie in integrating gastronomy into ethno- and ecotourism routes, thereby enhancing the authenticity of the tourism product.

Rural Agritourism. Agritourism in Turkey is characterized by a high level of professionalization and developed infrastructure. Farmsteads are actively integrated into the tourism system, offering visitors hands-on agricultural activities, product tastings, and workshops. In Kazakhstan, agritourism develops through pilot projects primarily in agriculturally rich regions such as Karaganda, Aktobe, East Kazakhstan and other regions, focusing on ecological purity and traditional farming methods.

Rural Ethnotourism. Ethnotourism plays a pivotal role in both countries. In Turkey, it includes a broad range of activities such as national festivals, craft fairs, and ethnographic museums, supported by government programs

aimed at preserving cultural heritage and making it accessible to tourists.

Kazakhstan's ethnotourism is grounded in the promotion of nomadic culture, yurts, and traditional crafts. Importantly, local communities are actively involved in developing tourism products, which aids in preserving cultural identity and regional development.

Rural Ecotourism. Ecotourism in Turkey is well-established, focusing on national parks and protected natural areas with emphasis on sustainable resource use and environmental education. In Kazakhstan, ecotourism is gradually expanding, particularly in the regions of southern Kazakhstan, Almaty region, around

Lake Balkhash, Burabay territory and other regions where eco-trails and nature-based tourism facilities are being developed with minimal environmental impact.

Rural Historical-Cultural Tourism. Historical-cultural tourism in Turkey is represented by numerous UNESCO World Heritage sites, ancient cities, and archaeological monuments, making it a significant segment of the national tourism offer. Kazakhstan promotes this tourism type by preserving and popularizing the archaeological sites of the Great Silk Road and nomadic heritage through museums and historical reenactments.

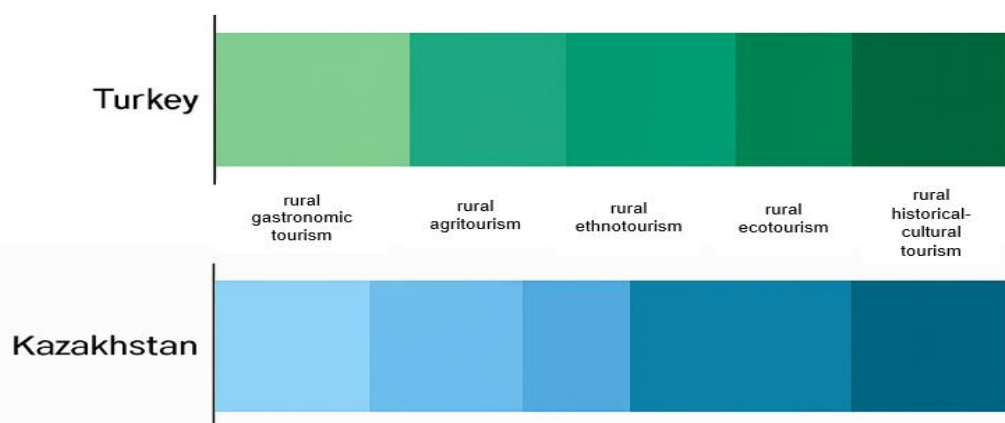
Table 3 - Comparative Overview of Key Rural Tourism Types Development in Kazakhstan and Turkey

Tourism Type	Kazakhstan	Turkey
Rural gastronomic tourism	Early stage, focus on national cuisine	Rapid development, regional branding
Rural agritourism	Pilot projects, cluster formation	Developed infrastructure, workshops
Rural ethnotourism	Nomadic culture, local community involvement	Wide-ranging activities, festivals
Rural ecotourism	Emerging, eco-trails in natural areas	National parks, sustainable resource use
Rural historical-cultural tourism	Great Silk Road sites, museums	UNESCO sites, ancient monuments
Note: compiled by the authors based on research		

In recent years, the development of rural tourism in Kazakhstan and Turkey has been characterized by significant growth in several key areas. In Turkey, there is a high level of institutionalization and support for such types as gastronomic tourism and agrotourism, which is associated with active government policy and infrastructure development. Kazakhstan, in turn, is demonstrating significant progress in ethnotourism, reflecting its unique cultural traditions and nomadic history, as well

as a growing interest in agrotourism, which is gradually forming new local clusters and initiatives. Ecological and historical and cultural tourism are still developing more fragmentarily in both countries, but they retain the potential for future expansion.

A radial graph (figure 3) is presented to visually compare the levels of development and institutional support for key types of rural tourism in Kazakhstan and Turkey.



Note: compiled by the authors based on research

Figure 3 - Main Directions of Rural Tourism Development in Kazakhstan and Turkey

These visualizations confirm that institutional support and active promotion of innovation in Turkey contribute to a more balanced and integrated rural tourism development. In Kazakhstan, the key driver remains the ethno-cultural heritage and the formation of new agrotourism clusters, but further progress requires investments in infrastructure and increased government support.

These results are consistent with recent research highlighting the importance of integrating digital technologies, supporting local initiatives, and creating sustainable tourism models focused on the unique cultural and natural resources of the regions.

In summary, Turkey exhibits a more systematic and diversified approach to rural tourism development, supported by comprehensive state programs and emphasis on niche market sustainability and marketing. Kazakhstan demonstrates active growth particularly in ethnotourism and agritourism but requires further development in gastronomic and ecotourism segments, alongside strengthening institutional support and digital transformation to integrate all tourism types into a cohesive sectoral strategy.

The comparative analysis revealed significant differences and similarities in the development of rural tourism in Kazakhstan and Turkey. Based on statistical data and expert assessments, the factors that have the greatest impact on the success of the sector have been identified. Of particular importance are digitalization, state support, and diversification of tourism products, which shape the competitiveness and sustainability of the industry. The results obtained allow us to propose specific areas for improving policy and practice in both countries.

Thus, the following key conclusions can be drawn from the analysis:

- during the period under review, both countries increased their digitalization and infrastructure indicators, but the pace in Turkey is higher, which directly correlates with the growth in tourist flows;
- state support and the development of online services play a key role in Turkey, while in Kazakhstan these mechanisms are implemented less systematically;
- both markets are betting on ethno- and agritourism, but in Turkey this direction is more deeply integrated into national and regional tourism strategies;
- the development of niche areas is evident in Turkey and virtually absent in Kazakhstan;

- correlation analysis confirms the effectiveness of digitalization as the main driver of growth in the sector in both countries.

A comparative analysis of rural tourism in Kazakhstan and Turkey revealed both similar development trajectories and systemic differences related to institutional mechanisms, innovative solutions, and the depth of integration of cultural traditions.

Institutional differences and the role of state support - Turkey has built a sustainable system of state support - national subsidies, tax incentives, and multi-level programs covering not only infrastructure but also training, promotion of local brands, and innovation. In Kazakhstan, support measures are mainly pilot projects, but there is a trend towards institutionalization of the sector.

Transformation of traditions into tourism products - both countries are integrating ethnocultural and gastronomic features into tourism products. However, in Turkey, these processes are comprehensive, supported at all levels, and accompanied by systematic marketing. Kazakhstan demonstrates potential in ethnotourism, but implementation is sporadic, without coverage at the national level.

Digitalization and innovation - digitalization is becoming a key driver of the sector's development. In Turkey, the introduction of online booking and promotion through digital platforms has covered most agritourism facilities. In Kazakhstan, the pace of digital solution implementation is slower, but the trend is consistently positive.

Kazakhstan faces fragmented government policy, inadequate infrastructure, and low diversification of tourism products. In Turkey, there is a risk of commercialization and loss of authenticity caused by mass tourism.

Discussion

Based on the data obtained and international best practices, the following mechanisms are proposed to improve the efficiency and sustainability of rural tourism development in Kazakhstan and Turkey:

- * strengthening state policy and intersectoral coordination (developing comprehensive national programs integrating agricultural, environmental, and cultural aspects; expanding the system of financial incentives - targeted subsidies, tax breaks, preferential loans) for rural tourism entities, including support for digital transformation;
- * promoting innovation and digital transformation (developing digital infrastructure - broadband Internet, creation of national online platforms, digital marketing for rural entrepreneurs); improving staff competencies through

educational and consulting programs on digital tools, service, and marketing;

*diversification of products and development of local value chains (creation of niche and thematic products - apitourism, saumal and kymyz tourism, gastronomic tourism, ethnic festivals, craft workshops);

*integration of local value chains - cooperation between rural tourist sites, local farmers, artisans, and transport companies; strengthening cooperation with local communities and diasporas, attracting ethnic, gastronomic, and diaspora initiatives to expand the international market and strengthen cultural ties;

* preserving authenticity and ensuring sustainability (introducing quality standards and certification mechanisms to protect cultural heritage and ensure the sustainable use of natural resources; monitoring social and environmental impacts, taking into account the involvement of the local population and sustainability).

Prospects for further research - in-depth monitoring of post-pandemic recovery, analysis of regional differences and a broader cross-country comparative approach involving Central Asia, the Caucasus and the Eastern Mediterranean are recommended. Further growth in rural tourism is impossible without the integration of institutional, digital, and cultural development mechanisms. This will create a sustainable competitive environment, increase employment, and preserve national heritage.

Conclusions

The comparative analysis of rural tourism in Kazakhstan and Turkey highlights similar development trends but also critical institutional and practical differences. Key conclusions are as follows:

1. State Support - Turkey's rural tourism benefits from comprehensive state support, while Kazakhstan's policy measures are less coordinated.

2. Digital Transformation - advanced digitalization in Turkey enhances service delivery and marketing, whereas Kazakhstan is at an early stage of adopting digital tools.

3. Heritage Integration - both countries emphasize cultural heritage, yet Turkey implements this more systematically at the national level.

4. Diversification - Turkey demonstrates broader diversification of rural tourism products and market segments; Kazakhstan's focus remains on ethno- and agrotourism.

5. Future Directions - improving intersectoral collaboration, digital infrastructure, and formalizing quality standards are essential for

enhancing sectoral sustainability and competitiveness in both countries.

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