

IRSTI 06.71.02

UDC 338.48:332.1(574)

Research Article

<https://www.jpri-kazniapk.kz><https://doi.org/10.46666/2026-3.2708-9991.05>**AGRITOURISM AS AN ALTERNATIVE FORM OF EXPANDING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE RURAL POPULATION****АГРОТУРИЗМ АУЫЛ ХАЛҚЫНЫҢ ЭКОНОМИКАЛЫҚ МҮМКІНДІКТЕРІН КЕҢЕЙТУДІҢ БАЛАМАЛЫ НЫСАНЫ РЕТІНДЕ****АГРОТУРИЗМ КАК АЛЬТЕРНАТИВНАЯ ФОРМА РАСШИРЕНИЯ ЭКОНОМИЧЕСКИХ ВОЗМОЖНОСТЕЙ СЕЛЬСКОГО НАСЕЛЕНИЯ****M. SIYEUBAYEVA^{1*}***Ph.D student***A. TLEUBAYEVA¹***Ph.D***N. YUZBASIOGLU²***Ph.D, Professor*¹*L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University, Astana, Kazakhstan*²*Akdeniz University, Antalya, Turkey*** corresponding author's e-mail: maral.siyeubayeva@mail.ru***M.C. СИЕУБАЕВА^{1*}***Ph.D докторанты***A.T. ТЛЕУБАЕВА¹***Ph.D***N. YUZBASIOGLU²***Ph.D, профессор*¹*Л.Н. Гумилев атындағы Еуразия ұлттық университеті, Астана, Қазақстан*²*Акдениз университеті, Анталия, Түркия***автордың электрондық поштасы: maral.siyeubayeva@mail.ru***M.C. СИЕУБАЕВА^{1*}***докторант Ph.D***A.T. ТЛЕУБАЕВА¹***Ph.D***N. YUZBASIOGLU²***Ph.D, профессор*¹*Евразийский национальный университет имени Л.Н. Гумилёва, Астана, Казахстан*²*Университет Акдениз, Анталия, Турция***электронная почта автора: maral.siyeubayeva@mail.ru*

Abstract. Objective – to investigate the socio-economic prerequisites and conditions for the development of rural tourism in Kazakhstan, to substantiate a cluster approach to its formation at the regional level. Statistical and economic *methods* were used: analysis of dynamics of employment, rural household income, investment in fixed assets, and local budget receipts for 2019–2025 to determine the socio-institutional factors and determinants of agritourism in creating tourism clusters; comparative method – when comparing rural areas with tourism infrastructure based on peasant (farm) holdings and guest houses with territories lacking a clearly pronounced cluster organization; cluster case method – to characterize potential cooperative associations in Karaganda, Akmola, and Turkestan regions; expert analytical method – when studying infrastructure constraints and the degree of digitalization of tourism services. **Results** – regions where tourism in rural areas functions as a local system around peasant (farm) holdings and guest estates demonstrate higher growth rates of key indicators than rural districts with comparable resource potential without a cluster complex. The decisive role of transport accessibility, roadside services, logistics facilities, and digital promotion and booking channels in the stability of demand and manageability of tourism services is shown. A comparison of promising clusters was conducted based on the product core, additional types of tourism activity, and the state of functional and technological services. A cluster diagram of rural ecotourism is proposed, reflecting the interrelationships between the structural center, accompanying services, digital tools, and socio-institutional

effects. *Conclusions* – to accelerate cluster organization, it is necessary to integrate rural tourism into programs for the transformation of rural administrative units and infrastructure policy, develop standardized road and roadside services, support cooperation between farmers and local communities, and strengthen the digital component through online platforms.

Аңдатпа. Мақсаты – Қазақстанда ауыл туризмін дамытудың әлеуметтік-экономикалық алғышарттары мен жағдайларын зерттеу, өңірлік деңгейде оны қалыптастыруға кластерлік тәсілді негіздеу. Статистикалық және экономикалық әдістер пайдаланылды: туристік кластерлерді құру кезінде агротуризмнің әлеуметтік-институционалдық факторлары мен детерминанттарын анықтау үшін 2019-2025 жж. ауылдық үй шаруашылықтарының жұмыспен қамтылу, табыс динамикасын, негізгі капиталға инвестициялар мен жергілікті бюджет түсімдерін талдау, салыстырмалы әдіс – фермерлік шаруашылықтар мен қонақ үйлері негізінде туристік инфрақұрылымы бар ауылдық аудандарды кластерлік ұйымдастырылуы айқын білінбейтін аумақтармен салыстыру кезінде, кластерлік-кейстік әдіс – Қарағанды, Ақмола және Түркістан облыстарындағы әлеуетті кооперативтік бірлестіктерді сипаттау үшін, сараптамалық-талдау әдісі – инфрақұрылымдық шектеулерді және туристік қызметтердің цифрландырылу дәрежесін зерттеу кезінде. **Нәтижелері** – ауылдық жерлердегі туризм ш(ф)қ және қонақ үйлері төңірегінде оқшау жүйе ретінде жұмыс істейтін өңірлер кластерлік кешені жоқ ресурстық әлеуеті сәйкес келетін ауылдық округтерге қарағанда негізгі көрсеткіштердің өсу қарқынын жоғарырақ көрсетеді. Көлік қолжетімділігінің, жол бойындағы қызметтер мен материалдық-техникалық базаның, сандық ілгерілету және брондау арналарының сұраныс тұрақтылығындағы және туристік қызмет көрсетудің басқарылуындағы шешуші рөлі көрсетілді. Өнімдік ядро, туристік қызметтің қосымша түрлері, функционалдық және технологиялық сервистің жай-күйі негізінде келешегі бар кластерлерді салыстыру жүргізілді. Құрылымдық орталық, ілеспе қызметтер, сандық құралдар мен әлеуметтік-институционалдық әсерлер арасындағы өзара байланыстарды көрсететін ауылдық экотуризмнің кластерлік диаграммасы ұсынылды. **Қорытынды** – кластерлерді ұйымдастыруды жеделдету үшін ауыл туризмін ауылдық әкімшілік бірліктерді түрлендіру бағдарламаларына және инфрақұрылымдық саясатқа интеграциялау, стандартталған жол және жол бойындағы қызмет көрсетуді әзірлеу, фермерлер мен жергілікті қоғамдастықтар арасындағы ынтымақтастықты қолдау, онлайн-платформалар арқылы сандық құраушыны күшейту қажет.

Аннотация. Цель – исследовать социально-экономические предпосылки и условия развития сельского туризма в Казахстане, обосновать кластерный подход к его формированию на региональном уровне. Используются статистические и экономические методы: анализ динамики занятости, доходов сельских домохозяйств, инвестиций в основной капитал и поступлений местного бюджета за 2019-2025 гг. для определения социо-институциональных факторов и детерминантов агротуризма при создании туристских кластеров, сравнительный – при сопоставлении сельских районов с туристической инфраструктурой на основе фермерских хозяйств и гостевых домов, с территориями без четко выраженной кластерной организации, кластерно-кейсовый – для характеристики потенциальных кооперативных объединений в Карагандинской, Ақмолинской и Туркестанской областях, экспертно-аналитический – при исследовании инфраструктурных ограничений и степени цифровизации туристических услуг. **Результаты** – регионы, где туризм в сельской местности функционирует как локальная система вокруг к(ф)х и гостевых усадеб, демонстрируют более высокие темпы роста ключевых показателей, чем сельские округа с сопоставимым ресурсным потенциалом без кластерного комплекса. Показана решающая роль транспортной доступности, придорожных услуг и материально-технической базы, цифровых каналов продвижения и бронирования в стабильности спроса и управляемости туристическим обслуживанием. Проведено сравнение перспективных кластеров на основе продуктового ядра, дополнительных видов туристической деятельности, состояния функционального и технологического сервиса. Предложена кластерная диаграмма сельского экотуризма, отражающая взаимосвязи между структурным центром, сопутствующими службами, цифровыми инструментами и социально-институциональными эффектами. **Выводы** – для ускорения организации кластеров необходимо интегрировать сельский туризм в программы трансформации сельских административных единиц и инфраструктурную политику, разработать стандартизированное дорожное и придорожное обслуживание, поддерживать сотрудничество между фермерами и местными сообществами, усилить цифровую составляющую посредством онлайн-платформ.

Keywords: rural areas, agritourism, tourism clusters, infrastructure, digital technologies, rural entrepreneurship, investment activity, rural household income.

Түйінді сөздер: ауылдық аудандар, агротуризм, туристік кластерлер, инфрақұрылым, цифрлық технологиялар, ауылдық кәсіпкерлік, инвестициялық белсенділік, ауылдық үй шаруашылықтарының табыстары.

Ключевые слова: сельские районы, агротуризм, туристические кластеры, инфраструктура, цифровые технологии, сельское предпринимательство, инвестиционная активность, доходы сельских домохозяйств.

Received: 20.07.2026. Approved after Peer-reviewed: 11.09.2026. Accepted: 19.09.2026.

Introduction

Rural tourism is increasingly recognised as a means of diversifying Kazakhstan's rural economies, promoting local entrepreneurship, and enhancing community resilience. In remote areas with limited industrial activity and declining employment, tourism based on natural, cultural, and agricultural resources can create additional income, expand local services, and strengthen cooperation among farms, businesses, and communities.

Despite these advantages, Kazakhstan's rural tourism potential remains underdeveloped due to inadequate infrastructure, weak integration of farms into tourism value chains, limited digitalisation, insufficient entrepreneurial capacity, and the absence of sustainable cluster-based models. These constraints reduce the accessibility and market visibility of rural tourism products and limit their contribution to employment, household income, investment, and local revenues.

International evidence indicates that rural tourism generates stronger multiplier effects when local enterprises, service providers, cultural organisations, and public authorities operate within coordinated territorial networks. Such clusters support integrated tourism products, improve service quality, strengthen joint promotion, and stimulate demand for local goods and services. This approach is particularly relevant to Kazakhstan's rural development, infrastructure modernisation, and small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) support policies.

The purpose of the article is to assess the socio-economic role of rural tourism in the development of rural areas in Kazakhstan and to substantiate cluster-based approaches to the formation of sustainable tourism models. To achieve this purpose, the following objectives are addressed:

- to systematise theoretical approaches explaining the role of rural tourism in local development;
- to analyse the dynamics of key socio-economic indicators of rural districts over the past seven years;

- to identify the conditions for the formation of tourism clusters and existing infrastructural constraints;

- to propose practical recommendations for the development of rural tourism in the context of regional policy and cooperation among economic actors.

The study examines Kazakhstan's rural areas, focusing on the effects of rural tourism and cluster-based models on local socio-economic development. Its scientific contribution lies in clarifying the links between tourism, infrastructure, digital services, and regional growth. The novelty consists in conceptualising rural tourism as the organisational core of territorial clusters and proposing indicators to assess its effects on employment, household income, investment, and budget revenues.

Literature review

International studies identify rural tourism as an important mechanism for the integrated development of peripheral areas, generating economic, social, environmental, and cultural benefits. Evidence from Gorska Hrvatska shows that it can create employment, diversify household income, strengthen local identity, and support the sustainable use of natural and cultural resources [1]. Studies from Kazakhstan likewise highlight its potential to diversify rural economies, improve local livelihoods, and preserve cultural traditions, although this potential remains underdeveloped [2]. Research on green tourism further confirms its contribution to community resilience, traditional lifestyles, and sustainable resource use [3].

Research on rural and ecotourism increasingly emphasises cluster-based development. Regional tourism clusters integrate tourism businesses with infrastructure providers, agricultural producers, public institutions, and local communities [4]. The spatial coordination of accommodation, transport, leisure, and related services can enhance the competitiveness and sustainability of rural destinations [5]. Such integration also strengthens tourism's multiplier effect by distributing visitor expenditure across a broader range of local enterprises.

Rural tourism is particularly effective where small businesses, agricultural producers, and public authorities cooperate in developing integrated tourism products [6]. Such cooperation can also generate wider social benefits, including employment, population retention, community development, and improved quality of life.

The study identifies agro-industrial clusters as a mechanism for sustainable rural tourism development by integrating agricultural production with accommodation, catering, local product sales, cultural activities, transport, and related services. Effective cluster development requires coordinated cooperation among farms, tourism enterprises, infrastructure providers, local communities, and public authorities, together with the responsible use of natural and cultural resources [7].

The reviewed literature indicates that rural tourism development depends on effective stakeholder coordination, adequate infrastructure, integrated services, and professional destination management, in addition to local natural, agricultural, and cultural resources. However, the combined effects of cluster organisation, digitalisation, and socio-economic multipliers in rural Kazakhstan remain insufficiently examined. This study addresses this gap by analysing their relationships with employment, household income, investment, and local budget revenues.

Materials and methods

The empirical analysis drew on official statistics from the Bureau of National Statistics of Kazakhstan for 2019–2025, covering rural employment, household income, fixed capital investment, and local budget revenues. Additional sources included regional tourism reports, strategic documents, and publicly available data on farms and guesthouses offering rural tourism services.

A mixed-methods approach integrated quantitative and qualitative analyses. Descriptive and trend analyses assessed changes in selected socio-economic indicators relative to the 2019 baseline, while rural districts with farm- and guesthouse-based tourism were compared with districts without established cluster structures.

The cluster-case analysis examined selected districts in the Karaganda, Akmola, and Turkestan regions. Cases were compared in terms of resource potential, infrastructure, complementary tourism products, and service digitalisation. The findings were interpreted through the concepts of multiplier effects, growth poles, and cluster development and synthesised into a schematic

rural tourism cluster model. The analysis was constrained by aggregated official statistics, incomplete data on informal employment, and limited information on small-scale tourism initiatives. At the final stage, the results of the quantitative and qualitative analyses were integrated into a schematic model of rural tourism cluster functioning, illustrating the interconnections between its core, complementary services, digital tools, and the resulting socio-economic effects.

Results

Recent Kazakhstani scholarly discourse demonstrates a rapidly growing interest in rural and ecotourism. In the works of A.T. Tleubayeva devoted to rural tourism in the Akmola region, it is shown that the region possesses significant natural, recreational, and cultural potential; however, its realisation is constrained by infrastructural limitations, weak coordination among stakeholders, and insufficient institutional support [8]. Rural tourism at the national level reveals a similar picture: despite the overall increase in interest in domestic travel, rural tourism remains at an early stage of development and requires targeted government support [9]. Author considers the development of rural tourism as a priority direction for the diversification of agribusiness, emphasising its cluster-based nature and its capacity to generate multiplier and synergistic effects within the agricultural sector [10].

A substantial body of Kazakhstani research is associated with ecotourism and agritourism as factors of sustainable development of rural areas. Studies demonstrate that ecotourism and agritourism in Kazakhstan can serve as important avenues for diversifying the economic structure and enhancing the resilience of rural regions, provided that a balance is maintained between economic benefits and environmental constraints [11]. Research by focused on the socio-economic significance of tourism development along the Kazakh section of the Great Silk Road confirms that tourism projects can have a substantial impact on employment structures, local budget revenues, and the dynamics of small business in the regions [12].

A separate body of research focuses on issues of managing the sustainable development of rural tourism and digitalisation. The study by proposes a comprehensive model of sustainable rural tourism management in Kazakhstan based on PEST, stakeholder, and SNW analyses, emphasising the importance of network-based business models, partnerships, and digital marketing

for enhancing the sustainability of small tourism enterprises [13].

An important direction in the development of the national research agenda is the integration of rural tourism into the framework of state policy for rural development. This creates a regulatory and policy context in which rural tourism is regarded as one of the instruments for implementing the concept, alongside the modernisation of agricultural production and infrastructure development. The identified advanced growth of employment, household incomes, investment activity, and budget revenues in districts with developed rural tourism is consistent with the multiplier mechanism, according to which additional tourist expenditures generate a chain of subsequent spending and income in related sectors of the economy [14].

A separate body of research focuses on issues of managing the sustainable development of rural tourism and digitalisation. The study by proposes a comprehensive model of sustainable rural tourism management in Kazakhstan based on PEST, stakeholder, and SNW analyses, emphasising the importance of network-based business models, partnerships, and digital marketing for enhancing the sustainability of small tourism enterprises [13].

Overall, the literature review shows that well-developed theoretical approaches exist to explain the role of rural tourism and tourism clusters in regional development, and that a substantial body of empirical evidence has been accumulated for individual regions of Kazakhstan. At the same time, there remains a lack of studies that simultaneously take into account the cluster-based nature of rural tourism, its multiplier socio-economic effects, and the influence of digitalisation processes on the configuration of rural tourism clusters. Addressing these gaps constitutes the objective of the present study.

An analysis of statistical data for rural districts of Kazakhstan over the past seven years reveals a stable, though heterogeneous, dynamic of key socio-economic indicators. Overall, the country has experienced a gradual increase in rural employment, growth in per capita monetary incomes of rural households, and an expansion of investment activity in fixed capital within rural areas. At the same time, a positive trend in local budget revenues can be observed, reflecting an expansion of the tax base and increased economic activity in rural areas (Table 1).

Of particular interest is the comparison between average indicators for the total set of rural districts and data for those areas where rural tourism is developing and farms offer tourism products. In such districts, a more pronounced increase in employment is observed due to the creation of additional jobs in accommodation, catering, transport, and excursion services, as well as in related activities. The growth of rural household incomes in these areas occurs at a faster pace, which is associated both with direct revenues from tourism activities and with multiplier effects in related sectors.

Fixed capital investment in rural districts oriented towards the development of rural tourism demonstrates a more advanced dynamic compared to average values. This is driven by the modernisation of rural infrastructure, the upgrading of the material and technical base of farms, the creation of tourism service facilities, and improvements in transport accessibility. Growth in local budget revenues in such districts is also more substantial: the expansion of entrepreneurial activity and the formalisation of services contribute to increased tax receipts, creating additional resources for municipal investment and social programmes (table 1).

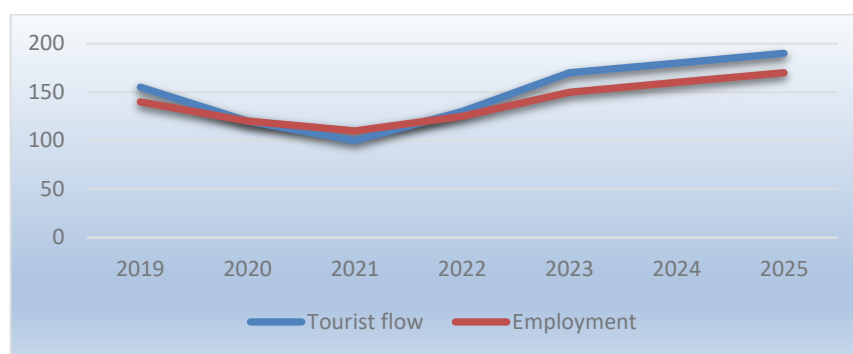
Table 1 — Dynamics of Key Socio-Economic Indicators of Rural Districts in Kazakhstan, 2019–2025

Year	Rural employment, thousands of people	Per capita income of rural households, tenge	Fixed capital investment in rural areas, billion tenge	Local budget revenues in rural areas, billion tenge	Index of indicators in areas with developed rural tourism, % compared to 2019
2019	3 800	65 000	480	210	100
2020	3 750	68 000	500	220	104
2021	3 820	74 000	540	240	111
2022	3 900	82 000	590	265	119
2023	3 980	90 000	650	295	128
2024	4 050	98 000	710	325	135
2025	4 085	103 400	743	342	142

Note: compiled by the authors based on a literature source [15]

As shown in table 1, even with an overall positive trend across rural areas as a whole, rural districts where rural tourism is developing demonstrate higher growth rates in employment, household incomes, investment activity, and local budget revenues. This allows the conclusion that rural tourism creates additional “growth points” within rural economies, strengthening multiplier effects in related sectors and expanding the resource base for local development. Taken together, the results confirm the hypothesis regarding the significant socio-economic role of rural tourism and provide a rationale for its more active inclusion in the toolkit of regional policy.

An analysis of statistical data for rural districts of Kazakhstan over the past five years reveals a stable positive dynamic of key socio-economic indicators. Overall, the country has experienced a gradual increase in rural employment, growth in per capita household incomes, and an expansion of investment activity in fixed capital across rural areas. At the same time, an increase in local budget revenues is observed, reflecting the expansion of the tax base and the deepening of economic activity in rural areas. The aggregated dynamics of these indicators are presented in figure 1, which allows a visual assessment of the direction and pace of changes.



Note: compiled by the authors based on a literature source [15]

Figure 1 – Changes in Tourist Flows and Employment in Rural Tourism in Kazakhstan, 2019–2025

A comparison of average values for the total set of rural districts with indicators for those areas where rural tourism is developing and tourism products based on farms have been formed or are in the process of formation reveals more pronounced growth rates in the latter group of districts. As shown in Figure 1, the curves representing employment and incomes in rural areas with developed rural tourism are positioned higher and display a steeper upward trend compared to average rural districts. This indicates the presence of additional sources of employment and income generated through accommodation, catering, transport, excursion, and related services associated with servicing tourist flows.

Figure 1 also makes it possible to trace the relationship between the dynamics of fixed capital investment and changes in local budget revenues. In rural areas oriented towards the development of rural tourism, growth in investment activity is more pronounced, with increased investment in accommodation facilities, improvements in transport and engineering infrastructure, territorial landscaping, and the development of roadside services. The corresponding lines on the graph show a more advanced trajectory compared to similar

indicators in rural districts without a pronounced tourism specialisation. This is also reflected in the trajectory of local budget revenues, indicating a strengthening of the fiscal base and the emergence of additional resources for local authorities to implement social and infrastructure projects.

Taken together, the data presented in Figure 1 allow the conclusion that the development of rural tourism contributes to the formation of sustainable “growth points” in rural areas, strengthening multiplier effects for related activities and enhancing the overall socio-economic resilience of rural districts. The visualised dynamics confirm that districts with developed rural tourism demonstrate higher growth rates in employment, population incomes, investment, and budget revenues, thereby substantiating the expediency of including rural tourism among the key directions of regional policy and rural development programmes.

In a number of rural areas of Kazakhstan, it is already possible to identify zones exhibiting the characteristics of emerging tourism clusters, where a concentration of natural, cultural, and agricultural resources is combined with a certain level of infrastructural and institutional readiness.

These include selected districts of the Karaganda, Akmola, and Turkestan regions, where rural tourism is developing on the basis of farms, guesthouses, ethno-cultural sites, and natural recreational resources. The cluster approach makes it possible to view such territories not as a set of fragmented facilities, but as an interconnected

system comprising the core rural tourism product, complementary types of tourism, transport, engineering and service infrastructure, as well as digital channels for promotion and booking. A comparative characterisation of the potential of several typical rural tourism clusters is presented in table 2.

Table 2 — Comparative Characteristics of Potential Rural Tourism Clusters in Kazakhstan

Region / district	Cluster core (main tourism product)	Complementary types of tourism	Infrastructure advantages / constraints	Availability / level of digital services
Karaganda Region, Karkaraly District	Agrotourism and ecotourism based on farm households and guesthouses, horse-riding and hiking routes	Gastronomic tourism, ethnographic tourism, elements of industrial tourism	Paved access roads to the district centre, part of rural roads are gravel, limited roadside services, shortage of equipped parking areas and sanitary facilities	Websites and social media pages of individual guesthouses, online booking mainly via messaging applications
Akmola Region, Burabay District	Recreational and rural tourism (farm stays, guesthouses near the resort area)	Wellness tourism, sports tourism, event tourism	Good condition of main highways, developed accommodation network, availability of catering and leisure facilities, high load during peak season, local traffic congestion	High level of presence on tourism platforms, own websites and online booking systems, promotion through national tourism portals
Turkestan Region, Otyrar and neighbouring districts	Ethnotourism and agrotourism (traditional lifestyle, crafts, rural households), pilgrimage routes	Nostalgic tourism, gastronomic tourism, ecotourism	Transport accessibility ensured by major highways, intra-district roads of uneven quality, lack of standardised accommodation facilities and well-equipped roadside services	Fragmented digital promotion: individual websites and social media pages, absence of a unified online catalogue and stable booking channels

Note: compiled by the authors based on a literature source [4]

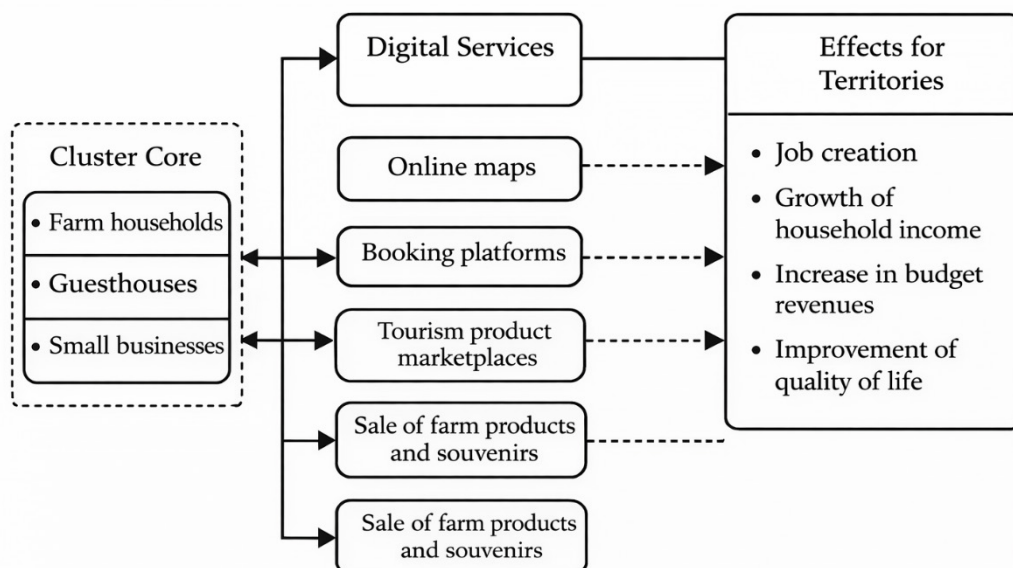
As shown in table 2, the core of tourism clusters in the regions under consideration is formed primarily on the basis of agritourism, ecotourism, and ethnocultural tourism, integrating agriculture, natural resources, and cultural heritage. At the same time, complementary types of tourism – gastronomic, nostalgic, event-based, wellness, and industrial tourism – broaden the range of services and enhance demand resilience by smoothing seasonal fluctuations. Infrastructural conditions differ significantly: while the Burabay District has a relatively developed road network, a diverse accommodation base, and catering facilities, some rural areas of the Karaganda and Turkestan regions face constraints related to the quality of intra-district roads, shortages of equipped parking areas, sanitary infrastructure, and standardised accommodation facilities.

An important element of the competitiveness of the clusters under consideration is the level of service digitalisation. The Akmola cluster is oriented towards the use of multi-level digital channels, ranging from proprietary websites and online booking systems to national tourism platforms. In the Karaganda and Turkestan regions, digital presence is more often fragmented and limited to social media pages of individual farms and guesthouses, which hampers the formation of an integrated destination image and restricts outreach to target audiences. Digital services thus act as a linking element between the cluster core, complementary services, and the end tourist, ensuring product visibility, convenience of trip planning, and feedback.

The logic of the functioning of a rural tourism cluster can be presented in the form of a schematic model (figure 2). At its core are farms,

guesthouses, and small family enterprises offering the basic rural tourism product. Surrounding the core are complementary services, including transport and transfer services, retail facilities, catering outlets, craft workshops, and the sale of agricultural products and souvenirs. At the next level are the effects generated by the cluster for the territory: job creation, growth of household incomes, expansion of the taxable base and,

consequently, increases in local budget revenues, as well as indirect improvements in quality of life through the development of infrastructure and the social sphere. Digital services (online maps, booking platforms, tourism product marketplaces, and social media pages) permeate all levels of the scheme, linking local producers with consumers and partners and enhancing the transparency and manageability of the cluster.



Note: compiled by the authors based on a literature source [5]
Figure 2 — Schematic model of a rural tourism cluster

The alignment of the development of such clusters with the National Infrastructure Plan of the Republic of Kazakhstan until 2029 is manifested primarily through the modernisation of transport and engineering infrastructure, including the reconstruction of highways, the development of water supply and wastewater systems, power grids, and digital communication networks, as well as the creation of roadside service facilities. In districts where investment projects under the plan coincide with areas of concentration of rural tourism, conditions are created for the accelerated formation of fully developed tourism clusters. Conversely, in areas where infrastructural measures are postponed or implemented in a fragmented manner, the potential of rural tourism is realised much more slowly.

Taken together, the data in table 2 and the logic presented in figure 2 make it possible to conclude that the prospects for the development of rural tourism in Kazakhstan are largely determined not only by the resource endowment of territories, but also by the quality of infrastructural “bundling” and the level of digitalisation. Regions where

natural and cultural potential is supported by a developed road network, roadside services, and a set of digital tools have a significantly higher likelihood of moving from fragmented initiatives to sustainable tourism clusters that generate tangible socio-economic effects for rural areas.

Discussion

The obtained results confirm the applicability of classical theoretical approaches to analysing the socio-economic role of rural tourism in the context of Kazakhstan. The observed formation of “growth points” around rural tourism clusters correlates with the growth pole concept, within which the territorial concentration of economic activity and innovation leads to the diffusion of positive effects to surrounding areas.

The empirical analysis data refine and extend the Kazakhstani research agenda on rural, ecological, and agritourism. Studies by domestic researchers point to the significant, yet only partially realised, potential of rural tourism in the development of rural regions. Our findings demonstrate that where stable cluster configurations are formed – featuring

a core of farms and guesthouses, a network of complementary services, and integration into regional infrastructure and programme frameworks — the socio-economic effects are considerably stronger than in areas characterised by isolated, uncoordinated initiatives.

At the same time, the research results also point to the reverse side of intensive tourism development, which is consistent with the conclusions of studies on ecotourism and sustainable rural development. Growth in tourist flows and investment activity may be accompanied by increased pressure on natural ecosystems, water and land resources, as well as risks of the commercialisation of cultural heritage and changes in the traditional way of life of local communities. In this article, these aspects are only outlined as an important contextual factor in interpreting socio-economic effects; a systematic analysis of environmental impacts and mechanisms for their mitigation requires a separate comprehensive study integrating tools of environmental assessment, spatial analysis, and community participation.

Conclusion

1. Rural tourism promotes the socio-economic development of Kazakhstan's rural areas by generating employment, raising household incomes, attracting investment, and increasing local budget revenues.

2. The greatest development effects occur where farms and guesthouses are integrated into coordinated clusters combining transport, accommodation, catering, cultural activities, and complementary services.

3. Natural, agricultural, and cultural resources provide the foundation for rural tourism, but their effective utilisation requires adequate transport and engineering infrastructure, roadside services, institutional coordination, and sustained public support.

4. The sustainability and competitiveness of rural tourism clusters depend on stakeholder cooperation and the diversification of agritourism, ecotourism, ethnographic, gastronomic, and cultural products.

5. Digital infrastructure, including online booking, payment, marketing, and national tourism platforms, should be expanded alongside systematic monitoring of environmental and sociocultural impacts. Future research should use disaggregated regional data, cover a broader range of rural tourism clusters, and evaluate the long-term effects of infrastructural, institutional, and digital support.

Authors' contribution: Siyeubayeva Maral: selection and organization of statistical and empirical data on rural areas and rural tourism initiatives; preparation of the key sections of the article (introduction, methodology, results) and finalization of conclusions and practical recommendations; Tleubayeva Aitolkyn: theoretical justification for the use of the cluster approach and the chosen framework for interpreting the results; editing the manuscript and approving the final version of the article; Yuzbasioglu Nedim: participating in the development of a scheme (model) for the functioning of a rural tourism cluster and summarizing its effects; structural improvement of the discussion sections and the list of sources.

Conflict of interest: the authors declare no conflict of interest.

References

- [1] Baković, N. Regional Development of Rural Tourism: The Case of the Gorska Hrvatska Region / N.Baković // Ngoc Economic Review. -2020.- Vol. 66.- No. 2. -P. 28–41.
- [2] Tleubayeva, A. Features of Rural Tourism as an Element of Kazakh Culture during the Pandemic Syndrome / A.Tleubayeva, A.Zhakupov, R. Shokhan, A. Nurgazina, Z.Karipbayev, M.Siyeubayeva, M. Dossova //Journal of Environmental Management and Tourism. -2023. -Vol. 14.- No. 2(66).- P. 398–416. [https://doi.org/10.14505/jemt.v14.2\(66\).10](https://doi.org/10.14505/jemt.v14.2(66).10)
- [3] Wijijayanti, T. Green tourism development in rural areas – A new way to create sustainable economic resilience for locals / T. Wijijayanti, N.H.M. Salleh, Y. Agustina, N. Salim // New Countryside.- 2025. -Vol.4.- No.2.- P.20–27. <https://doi.org/10.55121/nc.v4i2.445>
- [4] Sabalenka, I. Regional Tourism Clusters Sustainability Modeling Taking into Account Sociocultural Factors / I. Sabalenka, Y.Krupenka, U.Ganski, W.Zhou // Management Theory and Studies for Rural Business and Infrastructure Development. -2021. -Vol. 43-No. 4. - P. 457–467. <https://doi.org/10.15544/mts.2021.41>
- [5] Shpak, N. Clusterization in Tourism Development Level's Assessment of Regions: Example of Ukraine / N. Shpak, I. Kulyniak, I. Novakivskyi, I. Oleksiv //Journal of Tourism and Services.-2023. - Vol.14 - No.26. - P.45-56. <https://doi.org/10.29036/jots.v14i26.444>
- [6] Строева, А.Г. Сельский туризм как перспективное направление развития сельских территорий регионов России / А.Г. Строева, А.Г. Иволга, Ю.М. Елфимова // Сервис в России и за рубежом. -2021. -Т. 15.- № 2(94).-С. 110–120. <https://doi.org/10.24412/1995-042X-2021-2-110-120>

[7] Рябчикова, Н.Н. Агропромышленный кластер как драйвер устойчивого развития сельского туризма / Н. Н. Рябчикова // Экономика, предпринимательство и право. - 2025. - 15(8). - С. 5531–5552. <https://doi.org/10.18334/epp.15.8.123318>

[8] Тлеубаева, А.Т. Сельский туризм в Акмолинской области Казахстана / А.Т. Тлеубаева // Проблемы агорынка. - 2022. - № 2. - С. 135–142.

[9] Tleubayeva, A. Rural Tourism in the Republic of Kazakhstan / A. Tleubayeva // Problems of AgriMarket. - 2024. - Vol. 16. - No. 2. - P. 112–123.

[10] Berdibekova, A. Development of Rural Tourism in Kazakhstan as a Priority Direction of Agribusiness Diversification / A. Berdibekova // Bulletin of L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University. Economics Series. - 2024. - No. 3. - P. 45–54.

[11] Тлеубердинова, А.Т. Экологический туризм как фактор развития сельских регионов Казахстана / А.Т. Тлеубердинова // Вестник Туран-Университета. - 2021. - № 4. - С. 90–98.

[12] Moldagaliyeva, A. Socio-economic Significance of Tourism Development on the Great Silk Road (Kazakhstan Section) / A. Moldagaliyeva, A. Aktymbayeva, Y. Issakov, A. Assylbekova, K. Kenzhalin, A. Beisembinova, G. Begimova, L.D. David // GeoJournal of Tourism and Geosites. - 2024. - Vol. 52. - No. 1. - P. 116–124. <https://doi.org/10.30892/gtg.52111-1188>

[13] Nametova, G. Sustainable Development Strategies for Rural Tourism in the Republic of Kazakhstan / G. Nametova, A. Kuralbayev, Y. Serikbay // International Journal of Sustainable Development and Planning. - 2025. - Vol. 20. - No. 5. - P. 1951–1962.

[14] Frick, S.A. Lessons-learned from growth pole strategies in the developing world / S.A. Frick, A. Rodríguez-Pose // Progress in Planning. - 2025. - Vol. 195. - Article 100958. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.progress.2025.100958>

[15] Official Tourism Statistics of the Republic of Kazakhstan [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - Available at: <https://www.stat.gov.kz/> (date of access: 17.06.2026).

References

[1] Baković, N. (2020). Regional Development of Rural Tourism: The Case of the Gorska Hrvatska Region. *Ngoc Economic Review*, 66 (2), 28–41 [in English].

[2] Tleubayeva, A., Zhakupov, A., Shokhan, R., Nurgazina, A., Karipbayev, Z., Siyeubayeva, M. & Dossova, M. (2023). Features of Rural Tourism as an Element of Kazakh Culture during the Pandemic Syndrome. *Journal of Environmental Management and Tourism*, 14 (2), 398–416. [https://doi.org/10.14505/jemt.v14.2\(66\).10](https://doi.org/10.14505/jemt.v14.2(66).10) [in English].

[3] Wijijayanti, T., Salleh, N.H.M., Agustina, Y. & Salim, N. (2025). Green tourism development in rural areas – A new way to create sustainable economic

resilience for locals. *New Countryside*, 4 (2), 20–27. <https://doi.org/10.55121/nc.v4i2.445> [in English].

[4] Sabalenka, I., Krupenka, Y., Ganski, U. & Zhou, W. (2021). Regional Tourism Clusters Sustainability Modeling Taking into Account Sociocultural Factors. *Management Theory and Studies for Rural Business and Infrastructure Development*, 43 (4), 457–467. <https://doi.org/10.15544/mts.2021.41> [in English].

[5] Shpak, N., Kulyniak, I., Novakivskyi, I. & Oleksiv, I. (2023). Clusterization in Tourism Development Level's Assessment of Regions: Example of Ukraine. *Journal of Tourism and Services*, 14 (26), 45–56. <https://doi.org/10.29036/jots.v14i26.444> [in English].

[6] Stroeve, A.G., Ivolga, A.G. & Elfimova, Yu.M. (2021). Sel'skij turizm kak perspektivnoe napravlenie razvitiya sel'skih territorij regionov Rossii [Rural tourism as a promising direction of rural areas development in Russian regions]. *Servis v Rossii i za rubezhom - Service in Russia and Abroad*, 15 (2), 110–120. <https://doi.org/10.24412/1995-042X-2021-2-110-120> [in Russian].

[7] Rjabchikova, N.N. (2025). Agropromyshlennyy klaster kak drayver ustojchivogo razvitiya sel'skogo turizma [Agro-industrial cluster as a driver of sustainable rural tourism development]. *Jekonomika, predprinimatel'stvo i pravo - Journal of Economics, Entrepreneurship and Law*, 15 (8), 5531–5552. <https://doi.org/10.18334/epp.15.8.123318> [in Russian].

[8] Tleubaeva, A.T. (2022). Sel'skij turizm v Akmolinskoj oblasti Kazahstana [Rural tourism in Akmola region of Kazakhstan]. *Problemy agrorynka - Problems of AgriMarket*, (2), 135–142 [in Russian].

[9] Tleubayeva, A. (2024). Rural Tourism in the Republic of Kazakhstan. *Problemy agrorynka - Problems of AgriMarket*, 16 (2), 112–123 [in English].

[10] Berdibekova, A. (2024). Development of Rural Tourism in Kazakhstan as a Priority Direction of Agribusiness Diversification. *Vestnik Evrazijskogo nacional'nogo universiteta imeni L.N. Gumileva. Seriya Jekonomika - Bulletin of L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University Economics Series*, (3), 45–54 [in English].

[11] Tleuberdinova, A.T. (2021). Jekologicheskij turizm kak faktor razvitiya sel'skih regionov Kazahstana [Ecological tourism as a factor in the development of Kazakhstan's rural regions]. *Vestnik universiteta «Turan» - Bulletin of Turan University*, (4), 90–98 [in Russian].

[12] Moldagaliyeva, A., Aktymbayeva, A., Issakov, Y., Assylbekova, A., Kenzhalin, K., Beisembinova, A., Begimova, G. & David, L.D. (2024). Socio-economic Significance of Tourism Development on the Great Silk Road (Kazakhstan Section). *GeoJournal of Tourism and Geosites*, 52 (1), 116–124. <https://doi.org/10.30892/gtg.52111-1188> [in English].

[13] Nametova, G., Kuralbayev, A. & Serikbay, Y. (2025). Sustainable Development Strategies for Rural Tourism in the Republic of Kazakhstan. *International Journal of Sustainable Development and Planning*, 20 (5), 1951–1962 [in English].

[14] Frick, S.A. & Rodríguez-Pose, A. (2025). Lessons-learned from growth pole strategies in the developing world. *Progress in Planning*, 195, 100958. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.progress.2025.100958> [in English].

[15] Official Tourism Statistics of the Republic of Kazakhstan (2024). Available at: <https://www.stat.gov.kz/> (date of access: 17.06.2026) [in English].

Information about the authors:

Siyeubayeva Maral — **The main author**; Ph.D student of the Department of Tourism; L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University; 010008 Satpayev str., 2, Astana, Kazakhstan; e-mail: maral.siyeubayeva@mail.ru; <https://orcid.org/0009-0001-8816-2594>

Tleubayeva Aitolkyn; Ph.D; Acting Associate Professor of the Department of Tourism; L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University; 0100082 Satpayev str., 2, Astana, Kazakhstan; e-mail: aitolkyn.t@mail.ru; <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5749-4289>

Yuzbasioglu Nedim; Ph.D, Professor; Professor of the Faculty of Tourism; Akdeniz University; 07070 Pynarbashy str., 1, Dumlupinar Boulevard, Antalya, Turkey; e-mail: Nedimy@akdeniz.edu.tr; <https://orcid.org/0009-0007-8554-2712>

Авторлар туралы ақпарат:

Сиеубаева Марал Сержановна — **негізгі автор**; Ph.D докторанты «Туризм» кафедрасы; Л.Н. Гумилев атындағы Еуразия ұлттық университеті; 010008 Сәтпаев көш., 2, Астана қ., Қазақстан; e-mail: maral.siyeubayeva@mail.ru; <https://orcid.org/0009-0001-8816-2594>

Тлеубаева Айтолкын Тлеубайқызы; Ph.D; доцент м.а. «Туризм» кафедрасының; Л.Н. Гумилев атындағы Еуразия ұлттық университеті; 010008 Сәтпаев көш., 2, Астана қ., Қазақстан; e-mail: aitolkyn.t@mail.ru; <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5749-4289>

Yuzbasioglu Nedim; Ph.D, профессор; «Туризм» факультетінің профессоры; Акдениз университеті; 07070 Пынарбашы көш., 1, Думлупынар бульвары, Анталия қ., Түркия; e-mail: Nedimy@akdeniz.edu.tr; <https://orcid.org/0009-0007-8554-2712>

Информация об авторах:

Сиеубаева Марал Сержановна — **основной автор**; докторант Ph.D кафедры «Туризм»; Евразийский национальный университет имени Л.Н. Гумилёва; 010008 ул. Сатпаева, 2, г.Астана, Казахстан; e-mail: maral.siyeubayeva@mail.ru; <https://orcid.org/0009-0001-8816-2594>

Тлеубаева Айтолкын Тлеубайқызы; Ph.D; и.о. доцента, кафедры «Туризм»; Евразийский национальный университет имени Л.Н. Гумилёва; 010008 ул. Сатпаева, 2, г.Астана, Казахстан; e-mail: aitolkyn.t@mail.ru; <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5749-4289>

Yuzbasioglu Nedim; Ph.D, профессор; профессор факультета «Туризм»; Университет Акдениз; 07070 ул. Пынарбаши, 1, бульвар Думлупынар, г.Анталия, Турция; e-mail: Nedimy@akdeniz.edu.tr; <https://orcid.org/0009-0007-8554-2712>