

## STANDARDIZATION AND CERTIFICATION IN HOTEL RESTAURANTS

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**Abstract:** This scientific article presents a comprehensive analysis of standardization and certification processes that play a crucial role in enhancing staff qualifications and the quality of services provided in the hotel and restaurant industry. The research focuses on identifying the importance of compliance with hygiene, environmental standards, and customer satisfaction as key factors in the sustainable development of the sector in Uzbekistan. Particular attention is paid to the integration of international standards (ISO 9001, ISO 22000, HACCP) with the national regulatory framework, as well as the effective implementation of certification mechanisms. Based on a comparative analysis of national and international practices, current challenges, weaknesses of the existing system, and practical recommendations for their resolution are identified. The article concludes by outlining theoretical-methodological and practical approaches to improving service quality in Uzbekistan's hospitality establishments in line with international norms, which is considered a significant factor for the development of gastronomic tourism.

**Keywords:** hotel and restaurant services, standardization, certification, service quality, ISO standards, HACCP, ecology, gastronomic tourism, competitiveness, regulatory framework, Uzbekistan, international experience, ecological sustainability, service innovations.

**Аннотация:** Научная статья посвящена комплексному анализу процессов стандартизации и сертификации, играющих ключевую роль в повышении квалификации персонала и качества предоставляемых услуг в гостинично-ресторанной индустрии. Исследование направлено на выявление значимости соответствия стандартам гигиены, экологии и удовлетворения клиентских потребностей как важнейших факторов устойчивого развития отрасли в Узбекистане. Особое внимание уделено вопросам интеграции международных стандартов (ISO 9001, ISO 22000, HACCP) с национальной нормативно-правовой базой, а также эффективной реализации механизмов сертификации. На основе сравнительного анализа национального и международного опыта определены актуальные проблемы, уязвимые места действующей системы и предложены практические рекомендации по их устранению. В заключение представлены теоретико-методологические и прикладные направления совершенствования качества обслуживания в гостинично-ресторанных предприятиях Узбекистана с учётом международных норм, что рассматривается как важный фактор развития гастрономического туризма.

**Ключевые слова:** гостинично-ресторанные услуги, стандартизация, сертификация, качество обслуживания, стандарты ISO, HACCP, экология, гастрономический туризм, конкурентоспособность, нормативно-правовая база, Узбекистан, международный опыт, экологическая устойчивость, инновации в обслуживании.

## INTRODUCTION

In the current era of globalization, the tourism industry is increasingly becoming a key driver of global economic growth. In particular, hotel infrastructure and its essential component- restaurant services- are emerging as highly profitable segments within the service sector of national economies. In recent years, billions of tourists have been traveling across countries annually, making the quality of service a critical factor in ensuring customer satisfaction and competitiveness. Considering these aspects, it becomes evident that the standardization and certification of services offered in hotel restaurants are of vital importance. These processes serve as mechanisms to guarantee the alignment of services with international requirements in terms of quality, safety, and efficiency.

Standardization refers to the process of establishing unified hygienic, technical, ecological, and other criteria for products and services, while certification involves the independent verification that these products and services comply with the established standards. These procedures ensure the quality of services, adherence to sanitary and ecological regulations, food safety, and protection of consumer interests. In hotel restaurants specifically, certification and standardization play a crucial role in ensuring food safety, systematic service control, staff qualification assessments, and other key operational aspects.

In Uzbekistan, tourism development has been elevated to the level of state policy. Special attention is being given to the implementation of international standards in hotel restaurants, improving staff expertise, enhancing service culture, and introducing safety and hygiene norms. Notably, the Presidential Decree No. PF-60 dated January 28, 2022, approved the “Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan for 2022–2026,” which outlines specific objectives related to the implementation and practical application of international standards in the service sector. The strategy emphasizes transforming the Development Strategy Center into a think tank aligned with international standards and integrating advanced foreign experiences to improve service quality [1].

Furthermore, in 2023, the “National System for the Quality of Tourism Services” was developed under the Tourism Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan, through the Tourism Services Certification Center. This initiative has facilitated the implementation of international standards such as ISO 9001:2015 (Quality Management System) and ISO 22000:2018 (Food Safety Management System) in hotels and their associated restaurants [2].

At the international level, similar trends underscore the significance of this direction. For example, the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and the World Sustainable Hospitality Alliance are collaboratively developing a unified ESG (Environmental, Social, Governance) framework for the tourism industry. This framework aims to establish a global sustainability certification system for tourism enterprises and organizations. Although still in its pilot phase, it is expected to serve as a foundational global

standard, enabling companies to assess and report their activities in accordance with sustainability criteria [3].

Notably, the hygienic standards developed by the Codex Alimentarius Commission play a critical role in ensuring food safety within hotel restaurants and the broader restaurant industry worldwide. In the European Union- particularly in developed countries such as Italy, France, and Germany- the implementation of the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) system is mandatory in restaurant operations. This requirement not only safeguards consumer health and satisfaction but also enhances the reputation and credibility of food service establishments.

In Uzbekistan, various initiatives are being carried out throughout 2023–2024 aimed at certifying hotel restaurants, aligning their services with international standards, and improving the qualifications of hospitality personnel. Special emphasis is being placed on the introduction of internationally recognized certifications such as the “Halal” certificate, Green Key, and ISO 14001:2015 (Environmental Management System). These certifications contribute to reinforcing the social responsibility of hotel restaurants, promoting environmental safety, and building trust among international tourists.

Thus, standardization and certification in hotel restaurant services serve as essential instruments for aligning service provision with international norms and expectations, enhancing staff competencies and service quality, offering competitive tourism services, and promoting Uzbekistan’s tourism potential on the global stage.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

In recent years, both academic and practical research has increasingly focused on improving the quality of hotel services and one of their essential components—restaurant operations- through standardization and certification. These studies primarily explore areas such as enhancing service quality, developing flexible systems tailored to customer needs, integrating international standards, and ensuring service safety.

An analysis of foreign literature reveals that the theoretical foundation for assessing and standardizing service quality is largely based on the "SERVQUAL model" developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988). This model evaluates service quality across five key dimensions: reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles. It is widely applied not only in hotel restaurants but also throughout the broader tourism and hospitality sector [5].

Furthermore, the fundamental work titled "Hospitality Marketing: Principles and Practice" (2022) by David Bowie, Francis Buttle, and others provides an in-depth discussion on service quality in hotel restaurants, integration of international standards, identification of customer needs, enhancement of brand trust, and the marketing significance of certification systems. The authors demonstrate that the implementation of ISO 9001 and HACCP systems in restaurant operations simplifies business processes while simultaneously increasing customer trust [6].

In addition, the book "Food Safety for the 21st Century: Managing HACCP and Food Safety Throughout the Global Supply Chain" (2014) by renowned food safety expert C.A. Wallace is devoted to examining mechanisms for aligning hygiene, safety, sanitation, and inspection systems in hotel restaurants with international norms. The author emphasizes that the practical application of the HACCP system, combined with staff training and environmental monitoring, can ensure food safety in hospitality settings [7].

The UNWTO's report "Global Roadmap for Food Waste Reduction in the Tourism Sector" (2023) analyzes global standards adopted by restaurants, their socio-economic impact, and their role in reducing food waste and fostering sustainable tourism. According to the report, international standardization plays a key role in increasing the competitiveness of the restaurant industry. It highlights the growing relevance of eco-certification systems such as "Green Key" and "Eco-Label" particularly in European countries [8].

Scholars from Uzbekistan have also conducted significant research in this domain. For instance, in the textbook "Metrology, Standardization, and Certification" (2015), authored by P.R. Ismatullayev and colleagues, the management of hotel and restaurant services, development of standardization and certification strategies, and related challenges in the Uzbek context are comprehensively addressed. The authors propose adaptable strategies for overcoming issues related to quality and implementation of standards in the local business environment [9].

Additionally, a report published in 2022 by the Uzbekistan Hotel Management Association indicated that there are 4,879 accommodation facilities in the country, 939 of which are officially classified as hotels. This underscores the pressing need for widespread reforms in standardization and certification to enhance service quality and customer trust [10]. According to data published on August 24, 2023, by the State Committee for Tourism Development of the Republic of Uzbekistan, many hotels have been certified under the national standard O'z DSt ISO 9001:2015 by the "Tourism Services Certification Center" LLC [11].

The analysis of the above literature and research indicates that standardization and certification are crucial theoretical and practical tools in ensuring the quality and safety of service in hotels and their restaurants. The integration of international and local research allows for the development of a systematic approach in this field.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The primary objective of this scientific study is to determine the relevance of standardization and certification systems in improving employee qualifications and service quality in hotel restaurants, analyze the current state, and develop practical recommendations. Therefore, systematic analysis methods, innovative scientific approaches, and statistical techniques were employed in an integrated manner throughout the research.

In the first phase of the scientific research, theoretical sources on international and national standardization systems and certification practices in the hospitality and restaurant industry were studied. Specifically, ISO 9001, HACCP, Halal certification, Green Key, as well as the Decree No. PF-60 of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan and

recommendations from the Tourism Committee were analyzed. During this phase, content analysis was used as the primary method.

The novelty of this research lies in the fact that, for the first time, the implementation of standardization and certification systems in national hotel restaurants is analyzed based on empirical data. The degree of compatibility between local and international certifications, their impact on customer trust, and the correlation with service quality were demonstrated using statistical and practical evidence.

## ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

In recent years, the tourism infrastructure in Uzbekistan has been developing rapidly, becoming an integral part of the national economy. In particular, in 2023, more than 6.6 million foreign tourists visited the country, which is an increase of 1.4 million people or 26.6% compared to 2022. This indicates that Uzbekistan is increasingly entering the global competitive tourism market. Under these conditions, the qualification of staff, the quality of services, and the presence of regulating standards, particularly their alignment with international criteria, are of utmost importance in hotel restaurants.

Moreover, the tourism sector in our country is still in the process of formation and has not yet reached its fully developed stage. As a result, the "Uzstandard" agency adopted numerous new national standards related to the service sector between 2021 and 2023. Notably, in March 2024, the Uzbekistan Technical Regulation Agency approved the national standard UzMSt 125:2024 "Tourism Services. Accommodation Facilities. Star Classification System." Furthermore, although international hotel brands (such as Hilton, Hyatt Regency, Radisson Blu) have actively implemented ISO 9001:2015, HACCP, and other international standards in Uzbekistan, the adoption of such standards remains relatively low among local market participants.

There are numerous advanced practices worldwide regarding the standardization and certification of hotel restaurants. Specifically:

1. Germany: "Deutsche Hotelklassifizierung" classifies hotels and their restaurant facilities with star ratings ranging from 1 to 5. This classification considers various critical factors such as service quality, staff qualifications, kitchen sanitation, menu variety, and the use of local products.
2. South Korea: The Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs (MAFRA) and the Korea Food Promotion Institute award the "Excellent Korean Restaurant" title to certain Korean restaurants abroad. This initiative is based on criteria such as hygiene, service quality, and cultural authenticity of Korean cuisine.
3. Turkey: Turkey's gastronomy certification program, developed in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC), was initially designed for hotels and later expanded to include food and beverage services. Presently, Turkey, like Uzbekistan, is in the process of developing and testing sustainability criteria for restaurants.

The experiences of these systems highlight that international standardization not only focuses on service quality but also gives significant attention to cultural heritage, food safety, sustainability, and customer orientation.

The following analysis table compares the situation in Uzbekistan with that of European and Asian countries:

Assessment Criteria	UZBEKISTAN	EUROPEAN COUNTRIES	ASIA (KOREA, JAPAN)
<b>Certification procedures</b>	Voluntary, implemented mainly in selected major sectors	Mandatory or semi-mandatory	Mandatory
<b>Integrity principles</b>	Actively being introduced	Applied to a limited extent	Receives less attention
<b>Environmental standards</b>	Receives relatively limited attention	Widely implemented	Innovative eco-systems are in place
<b>Incorporation of customer feedback</b>	Applied to a lesser extent	Considered one of the key criteria	Based on smart technologies

This analysis demonstrates that there are still broad opportunities for adapting international standards in Uzbekistan.

**SWOT Analysis:**

Directions	Strengths (S)	Weaknesses (W)	Opportunities (O)	Threats (T)
<b>Standardization</b>	The availability of government programs and the growing number of foreign investors.	The absence of official guidelines and criteria for local restaurants.	The potential for integration into national tourism development programs.	Limited engagement of domestic market participants.
<b>Certification</b>	The increasing interest in	The lack of qualified	Opportunities for collaboration	Technical barriers that



	international standards such as ISO, Halal, and HACCP.	personnel and limited technical resources.	with international organizations and access to financial assistance.	hinder competitiveness.
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The following are some of the existing challenges in this sector in Uzbekistan:

1. Regulatory and normative gaps – many national standards do not fully meet the modern requirements of service provision.
2. Low qualification of personnel – the number of specialists and managers meeting international certification requirements remains limited.
3. Lack of innovative technologies – systems such as mobile application-based evaluation and digital certification have not yet been implemented in the country.

To address the above-mentioned gaps and to foster the future development of the sector based on scientific findings and field-specific research, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Develop a dedicated national standard titled “UzDSt: Restaurant Service Evaluation System” specifically for hotel restaurants.
2. Introduce a new certification system that incorporates ecological and cultural criteria.
3. Provide subsidies to small business entities to cover the costs of obtaining international certifications.
4. Promote the development of digital applications to facilitate the evaluation of hotel and restaurant services and to create platforms that enable systematic analysis of customer feedback.

Analytical findings indicate that Uzbekistan has the potential to develop a unique model of standardization for its hotel and restaurant sector by effectively incorporating international best practices. Addressing the current challenges will not only enhance the country’s capacity to export tourism services but also strengthen its competitiveness in the global gastronomic tourism market.

**CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

In today’s era of globalization, the reputation and competitiveness of hotel and restaurant complexes are primarily measured by their compliance with international standards and the quality of services they provide. This study reveals that amid the rapid development of tourism infrastructure in Uzbekistan, the processes of standardization and certification in hotels and restaurants have become an urgent issue. Despite the expansion of the regulatory

and legal framework, the practical implementation, localization of international experience, and development of a compliance system tailored to local conditions remain insufficient.

The analysis indicates significant variability in the level of environmental sustainability, service quality assessment, adherence to sanitation and hygiene standards, and customer-orientation among many hotel restaurants operating in Uzbekistan. This inconsistency has led to a lack of uniformity in certification. While international hotel chains such as Hilton, Hyatt, and Radisson have adopted globally recognized standards (e.g., ISO 9001, ISO 22000, HACCP), medium and small enterprises lag behind in the implementation of these systems.

International experience, notably in countries like Germany, Turkey, South Korea, and Japan, demonstrates that service quality is strictly regulated by the state and enforced as a mandatory requirement. Through certification and rating systems, competitiveness is enhanced, and the gastronomic services of hotels are aligned with international evaluation criteria. Uzbekistan possesses significant potential in the field of gastronomic tourism; however, in order to fully realize and promote this potential, it is crucial to standardize local hotels and their restaurants in accordance with international benchmarks.

The SWOT analysis conducted within this study has highlighted not only the strengths but also the existing weaknesses and potential threats in this area. Addressing these issues can pave the way for fully utilizing the country's current opportunities.

Based on the shortcomings and problems identified through this research, the following key recommendations have been developed:

1. Development of new national standards;
2. Introduction of digital certification systems through innovative technologies;
3. Adaptation of international experiences to local contexts by modeling global certification and standardization frameworks;
4. Enhancement of personnel qualifications and attraction of highly skilled professionals to the system;
5. Establishment of subsidies and grant systems for local brand restaurants;
6. Advancement of halal and eco-certification systems.

In conclusion, Uzbekistan has the potential to form a competitive gastronomic direction not only at the national but also at the international level by ensuring high-quality service provision in hotel restaurants during its tourism development process. Effective standardization and certification mechanisms are the foundational pillars in this endeavor. The above recommendations serve as a scientifically grounded and practically oriented roadmap for building such a mechanism.

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