ASSESSING THE STRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP ACROSS REGIONS OF UZBEKISTAN

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Abstract. This conference thesis examines whether regional entrepreneurship development in Uzbekistan can be judged adequately by the number of small firms alone. Drawing on the author's doctoral dissertation abstract, it presents a multidimensional assessment and illustrates the marked difference between Jizzakh and Navoiy in the 2025 regional ranking. The evidence supports region-specific measures that address sectoral balance and the composition of economic activity.

Keywords. entrepreneurship; small business; regional development; structural diversification; TOPSIS; Uzbekistan.

In the global economy, the entrepreneurship sector is emerging as a vital institutional system that drives economic growth, employment, and innovation while fostering regional balance and social stability. Data from the World Bank and the IFC indicate that small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) account for approximately 90 percent of businesses worldwide and provide more than 50 percent of global employment. Similarly, UN data notes that micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises constitute 90 percent of global business entities, generate 60–70 percent of employment, and contribute nearly 50 percent of global GDP. This underscores the strategic importance of the entrepreneurship sector not only as a driver of economic activity but also as a key factor in reducing poverty, increasing household incomes, and narrowing regional development disparities.The economic role of entrepreneurship depends on where firms operate and what they produce, as well as how many enterprises exist. A region with numerous small firms concentrated in low-value activities can face different development constraints from a region in which small firms participate in exports, construction, manufacturing and services. The dissertation abstract by Xaitova [1] therefore treats structural improvement as a process of rebalancing the sectoral, territorial and functional composition of entrepreneurship. This thesis extracts the regional assessment from that broader study and discusses its policy implications.

The analysis uses the 2025 national and regional indicators reported in the dissertation abstract, which attributes its underlying series to the National Statistics Committee of Uzbekistan. The source combines measures of small-business participation in output, employment, exports and sectors with indicators of concentration and diversification. Its composite framework uses indicator normalization, weighting and the technique for order preference by similarity to an ideal solution (TOPSIS) to express regional structural performance on a scale from 0 to 1. The coefficients below are reproduced from the author's analysis; the underlying microdata and weight-sensitivity results are not supplied with the abstract. The index should consequently be read as a comparative assessment within the specified indicator set, rather than as a causal estimate of policy effects.

In 2025, small business accounted for 52.2% of gross domestic product and 74.7% of employment in Uzbekistan, according to the dissertation abstract [1]. Its share of exports rose from 13.7% in 2010 to 36.6% in 2025, while its 2025 import share was 53.6%. Sectoral participation was particularly high in agriculture (91.9%), retail trade (83.0%) and passenger transport (90.6%); the industrial share was 34.9%. These values show why employment intensity or firm numbers alone cannot summarize the contribution of small business to structural change.

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These are relative composite scores, not growth rates or percentages. The abstract interprets Jizzakh's position as evidence of comparatively balanced small-business participation across several activities. It links Navoiy's lower score partly to the prominence of large, capital-intensive industrial enterprises in the regional economy. This distinction matters: a low small-business share in a mining-intensive economy does not, by itself, establish weak overall regional performance. Inference about causes would require additional firm-level and sectoral evidence.

Regional entrepreneurship policy should be based on the composition of activity alongside the aggregate scale of small business. For regions with narrow sectoral participation, practical priorities include supplier linkages with major producers, entry into processing and tradable services, and support for export readiness. Composite rankings can help identify where to investigate, provided that indicator definitions, weights and data sources are made available for replication. Future work should test ranking stability under alternative weights and evaluate whether changes in the index predict subsequent productivity, employment quality and export diversification.

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