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SERVICE AS A SOCIO-ECONOMIC CATEGORY IN THE MODERN SERVICE ECONOMY

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Abstract. *The article substantiates service as an independent socio-economic category of the modern service economy. It reveals its role in the formation of added value, trust and social capital. Particular attention is paid to the specifics of service activities of tourism enterprises in the context of modern challenges of the service economy.*

Keywords: *service, service economy, added value, social capital, trust, tourism enterprises.*

The article provides a comprehensive analysis of service as a socio-economic category of the modern service economy. It is argued that in the context of post-industrial development, service goes beyond the traditional interpretation as an operational function of servicing and acquires a system-forming significance in the processes of value creation. It is proven that service combines the economic and social aspects of business activities, forming intangible assets, in particular trust, consumer loyalty and social capital.

The socio-economic nature of service is revealed through the prism of its ability to generate added value not only in the short-term financial dimension, but also in the long term through the accumulation of reputational capital and reduction of transaction costs. It is substantiated that quality service is a key factor in building trust between the enterprise and consumers, which is transformed into sustainable socio-economic interactions and competitive advantages.

Particular attention is paid to the analysis of service as a factor in the formation of social capital. The mechanism of the influence of service interaction on the emergence of loyalty and long-term relationships with consumers, which ensure the economic stability of service enterprises, is identified. It is shown that social capital in this context is not a side effect, but the result of systematic service management.

The peculiarities of service manifestation as a socio-economic category in the activities of tourism enterprises have been studied. It has been substantiated that in conditions of high

information asymmetry and risk, service performs a compensatory function, reducing the uncertainty of consumption of a tourism product and forming trust in the enterprise. It has been established that service in tourism should be considered a strategic resource capable of ensuring long-term competitiveness.

It is concluded that the current challenges of the service economy, in particular digitalisation and the growing role of consumer experience, are transforming the role of service into a strategic factor in the development of enterprises. The results of the study can be used for further theoretical understanding of the service economy and improvement of the practice of managing the service activities of tourism enterprises.

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