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CREATIVE ECONOMIC APPROACHES IN LIGHT INDUSTRY ENTERPRISES OF UZBEKISTAN

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Abstract: The article examines the issues of developing and effectively applying creative economic approaches in the activities of light industry enterprises in Uzbekistan. It analyzes the role of the light industry sector in the national economy, the dynamics of textile, garment, and knitwear production, as well as investment and export indicators. The study explores recent development trends in the sector and highlights the aspects of the creative economy associated with design, branding, digitalization, innovation, human capital development, and the creation of high added value. Based on the findings, practical proposals and recommendations are developed to enhance the competitiveness of light industry enterprises in Uzbekistan, expand the production of high-value-added products, and strengthen the export potential of the sector.

Keywords: light industry, creative economy, textile industry, garment and knitwear production, innovation, design, branding, digitalization, human capital, exports, added value.

Introduction

Today, concepts such as “creative economy” and “creative industries” are becoming increasingly widespread throughout the world, including in Uzbekistan. This, in turn, is contributing to the introduction of new approaches, ideas, and innovative developments into various sectors, particularly economic industries. Consequently, discoveries that once seemed beyond our imagination are now being widely applied in our daily lives.

In the context of today's global economy, the competitiveness of industrial enterprises is determined not only by production volumes and product costs, but also by their ability to create innovations, develop design and brands, adopt technologies, and rapidly study consumer demand. Creative ideas, innovative design, and intellectual products are becoming new sources of economic growth. From this perspective, the development of the creative economy is an important factor in ensuring the sustainable development of every country. Uzbekistan has also been paying increasing attention to the development of the creative economy in recent years. In this regard, on September 30, 2024, the Legislative Chamber of the Republic of Uzbekistan adopted the Law “On the Creative Economy.” The purpose of this Law is to support and develop the creative economy and regulate relations in this area. In particular, the textile and light industry is considered one of the sectors with significant potential in this direction [1].

The growing competition in the global economy requires industrial enterprises not only to increase production volumes but also to enhance the intellectual, aesthetic, and innovative value of their products. In particular, in the light industry, rapidly changing consumer preferences, evolving fashion trends, increasingly stringent environmental requirements, and the expansion of e-commerce are creating a need for new economic approaches in enterprise activities.

In the creative economy, human knowledge, experience, creativity, and innovative ideas serve as important sources of economic value. This approach is particularly important for the light industry, since the competitiveness of products in the market is often determined by their design, brand, functionality, and the value they create for consumers.

Literature Review

The creative economy has become one of the important areas of academic research formed at the intersection of economics, innovation, culture, and entrepreneurship over recent decades. The level of research in this field is relatively high at the international level, while from the perspective of national economies, it remains a developing area.

The concept of the creative economy began to be widely used in academic literature at the end of the twentieth century. The concept emphasizes the importance of human capital and creative ideas in economic development.

David Throsby is an Australian economist who has primarily researched the economics of culture and the arts. One of his most important works is the book Economics and Culture, published in 2001. The book analyzes economic and cultural value, cultural capital, creativity, cultural industries, and the role of culture in economic development. Therefore, Throsby can be regarded as one of the scholars who contributed to the formation of the cultural and economic foundations of the creative economy.

John Howkins is a British specialist who studied creativity, innovation, and the creative economy. His most important work on the creative economy was published in London in 2001. Howkins' approach focuses primarily on transforming human ideas, creativity, and intellectual property into sources of economic value and income. Howkins can be considered one of the key authors who popularized the concept of the “creative economy” in both academic and practical contexts.

Richard Florida is an American economist and researcher in the field of urban studies. His main academic focus has been on the creative class, human capital, and regional development.

Among Uzbek scholars, R. K. Ro‘zibayeva has examined areas related to the implementation of creative ideas in business, models of the creative process, leadership, and creativity in her research.

Research Methodology

The study presents definitions of the concepts of the creative economy and creative industries proposed by scholars from the United States, the United Kingdom, Europe, and Russia. The American and British approaches to identifying the main sectors of the creative economy were comparatively analyzed. Existing data on creative sectors in Uzbekistan were also examined. In this regard, relevant economic indicators, particularly statistical indicators of textile industry production, were analyzed.

Analysis and Discussion of Results

The creative economy is a sector of the economy aimed at creating goods, works, and services with economic value based on creativity, intellectual abilities, as well as human potential founded on innovation and technology [1].

In recent years, Uzbekistan has been paying considerable attention to the development of the textile and garment industry, deep processing of raw materials, production of finished products, and diversification of exports.

Textile production, garment manufacturing, knitwear production, and leather goods manufacturing occupy an important position within Uzbekistan's light industry. As of 2025, the share of textile products, garments, knitwear, leather, and related products in the country's manufacturing industry amounted to 15.3 percent. This indicator demonstrates that light industry is an important component of the country's manufacturing sector.

Particular attention is being paid to processing raw materials at the third and fourth stages in order to create higher added value. As of February 1, 2026, there were 6,073 enterprises operating in the field of finished garment production, compared with 5,598 enterprises in 2025. Thus, the number of enterprises in this sector demonstrated further growth over the year.

This growth can be explained not only by an increase in production volumes, but also by the establishment of new enterprises, modernization of production capacities, attraction of investments, and expansion of product ranges.

The textile sector is particularly important in terms of investment. In 2024, investments in fixed capital in Uzbekistan's manufacturing industry amounted to UZS 137.1 trillion, of which 16.3 percent was directed toward the production of textile products and finished goods. This demonstrates the high investment attractiveness of the sector.

Regional specialization is another important characteristic of Uzbekistan's light industry. In 2025, large enterprises produced UZS 43.1 trillion worth of garments and knitwear products in the country, which was 21.7 percent higher than in 2024.

In terms of regions, Andijan Region ranked first, with large enterprises producing garments worth UZS 19.7 trillion. It was followed by Namangan Region with UZS 3.9 trillion, Tashkent Region with UZS 3.6 trillion, and Tashkent City with UZS 2.9 trillion.

Table 1.

Volume of Garment Production by Large Enterprises in 2025

No.	Region	Production volume, UZS trillion
1	Andijan Region	19.7
2	Namangan Region	3.9
3	Tashkent Region	3.6
4	Tashkent City	2.9
5	Fergana Region	2.8
6	Navoi Region	2.1
7	Kashkadarya Region	1.8
8	Bukhara Region	1.8

Source: Based on data from the National Statistics Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

These indicators demonstrate that there is an economic foundation for developing light industry clusters, establishing design centers, and creating local brands in the regions.

Another important aspect of the strategic significance of light industry for Uzbekistan's economy is its export potential.

In January 2024, Uzbekistan's textile exports amounted to USD 250.2 million, accounting for 22.4 percent of total exports. Yarn accounted for 48.5 percent of textile exports, while finished textile products accounted for 37.4 percent. During the same period, 438 types of textile products were exported to 47 countries. Currently, the export geography has expanded to 55 countries, while the share of textile exports is declining and the export of finished products is increasing.

In other words, compared with exporting yarn and raw-material-based products, exporting garments with distinctive design solutions, finished knitwear, branded products, and functional

textiles creates higher added value. Therefore, creative economic approaches should become an important element of the export strategy.

The development of the creative economy in Uzbekistan's light industry can conditionally be divided into five main areas.

1. Design and Product Innovation

The competitiveness of an enterprise's products depends not only on their price but also on their design and functionality. Therefore, it is advisable to strengthen the role of professional designers within enterprises and establish design laboratories and innovative product development centers.

Combining national patterns, traditional fabrics, and decorative elements with modern fashion trends can increase the uniqueness and recognition of Uzbek brands.

2. Building Brand Value

In the creative economy, a brand creates additional value beyond the physical characteristics of a product.

From this perspective, Uzbek enterprises should not limit themselves to the "Made in Uzbekistan" label. Instead, they should develop national brands with clear concepts, design philosophies, and target consumers.

3. Digitalization

Digital technologies are transforming the entire process from product design to sales.

- Enterprises can use the following tools:
- digital design;
- automated cutting;
- electronic ordering systems;
- CRM and ERP platforms;
- e-commerce;
- digital marketing;
- artificial intelligence-based demand forecasting.

4. Human Capital

The main resource of the creative economy is not modern technology itself, but people with knowledge and creativity.

Therefore, it is necessary to ensure effective cooperation among designers, technologists, marketers, IT specialists, and brand managers in light industry enterprises.

5. Environmental Innovations

Demand for environmentally friendly and sustainable products is increasing in global markets. Therefore, the use of recycled fibers, environmentally friendly dyes, and water- and energy-saving technologies can enhance the competitiveness of enterprises in international markets.

The creative approach can be expressed through several factors affecting the economic efficiency of an enterprise:

Creative Economic Effect = Design Value + Brand Value + Innovation Value + Digital Value − Innovation Costs

Under this approach, an enterprise does not evaluate a product solely on the basis of production costs. The aesthetic, functional, and emotional value that the product creates for consumers is also taken into account.

For example, two garments made from the same type of fabric may have similar production costs. However, if their design, brand, packaging, and marketing strategies differ, their market prices and levels of demand may also differ significantly.

Thus, the creative economy represents an approach aimed not at reducing the production cost of a product, but at increasing its market value.

In order to develop creative economic mechanisms in Uzbekistan's light industry, it is advisable to implement the following measures:

- **Establish light industry design centers.** Create creative centers in the regions that bring together enterprises, designers, and higher education institutions.
- **Support national brands.** Develop special programs for creating local brands and promoting them in international markets.
- **Establish innovation departments within enterprises.** Form small innovation teams responsible for developing new products, designs, and technologies.
- **Strengthen cooperation between designers and technologists.** Take design and technological capabilities into account simultaneously during product development.
- **Expand digital commerce.** Encourage enterprises to participate in e-commerce platforms.
- **Diversify the export structure.** Gradually shift from yarn exports toward the export of finished garments and branded products.
- **Develop creative human resources.** Promote such fields as industrial design, fashion marketing, brand management, and digital fashion in higher education institutions.
- **Encourage the production of environmentally friendly products.** Support enterprises that use recycled raw materials and environmentally sustainable technologies.
- **Introduce an idea bank within enterprises.** Collect employees' proposals concerning new products and technologies and encourage ideas with high economic efficiency.
- **Develop creative clusters.** Integrate textile enterprises, designers, IT companies, marketing agencies, and educational institutions into a unified innovation ecosystem.

Conclusion

The results of the study demonstrate that Uzbekistan's light industry is one of the important and highly investment-active sectors of the country's manufacturing industry. The dynamics of the number of enterprises, production volumes, and investments in textile and garment production confirm the sector's significant economic potential. At the same time, ensuring the competitiveness of the sector at the next stage should not be limited to increasing production volumes. The main tasks should include deep processing of raw materials, creation of high-value-added products, enhancement of design and brand value, and introduction of digital technologies.

Uzbekistan's existing raw material base, production capacities, and export experience can provide an important foundation for the development of the creative economy. By combining national design with modern technologies, it is possible to create not only competitive products for the domestic market but also internationally competitive products with strong national brands.

From this perspective, it is advisable for the modern business model of a light industry enterprise to transition from the traditional chain of “raw materials → production → finished product” to the model of “raw materials → innovation → design → brand → digital marketing → high added value → export.”

Therefore, creative economic approaches are among the important factors capable of bringing Uzbekistan's light industry to a qualitatively new stage of development, increasing the competitiveness of enterprises, creating new jobs, and expanding the export potential of the sector.

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