"THE IMPORTANCE OF CULTURAL TRADITIONS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM AND ECONOMIC GROWTH IN UZBEKISTAN"

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Abstract This study examines the role and importance of cultural traditions in the development of tourism and thus economic growth in Uzbekistan. The history and culture of Uzbekistan are impressive and rich. Because of its numerous historical sites and distinctive traditions that are unmatched in other nations, Uzbekistan is one of the major tourist attractions. The centuries-old customs and traditions of the Uzbek people are carefully preserved and transmitted from generation to generation. To achieve the purpose of the study, we conducted face to face interview with local people, particularly, the participants and guests of Navruz festival which was held on March 19-21th in 2022. As a result of this research, cultural traditions: events, festivals, customs, rituals are found the best sustainable resource for tourism industry and it can be play an important role in growing economy in Uzbekistan.

Keywords: cultural tourism, cultural tradition, rituals, festival, event, tourism development, economic growth.

Introduction

To begin with, natural resources, demographics, transportation and communication, regional socioeconomic potential, and efficient use of these resources all play an important role in any country's overall development, including complex socioeconomic development that ensures the balance of its internal regions (Rudenko 2018). In today's world economic development, not only are the traditional primary and secondary sectors of the economy important in determining the level of development of various countries and peoples, but the role and importance of the tertiary sector, namely the services sector, which is fast-growing and rapidly expanding into the economies of regions and countries, should be emphasized (Fedyunin et al. 2018a; Fedyunin et al. 2018b).

In our modern world, tourism is important sector in developing economy of countries. We can see that there are some benefits of tourism on host countries. Tourism increases economic revenue, improves the infrastructure of a country, creates huge number of jobs and it is the best chance for cultural exchange between citizens and foreigners.

There might be issues with the industry's management, or there could be an urgent issue with political reformations, or there could be financial limits. In reality, the President of Uzbekistan highlighted various elements for the development of the Republic's economy, one of which was the tourist industry. He issued a Presidential Decree titled "Measures to Ensure the Rapid Development of Tourism in the Republic of Uzbekistan" in this regard

(World Scientific News, 2017). Tourism is a fast-growing industry that has emerged as one of the century's most important sectors (Agnew, M.D. and Viner D. 2001). The industry is defined by a large and complicated interaction of people who want a wide range of services and inputs (Price V. and Tewksbury D.) (1997). With several parts, tourism development is recognized and considered as one of the most important aspects of economic advancement and a beneficial component, particularly in developing nations.

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In recent decades, the tourist industry has persistently expanded beyond the significance of the tourism sector to the degree that it has improved the social and financial well-being of various states. In terms of commercial capacity, this industry now competes with, if not outperforms, the oil, food, and car industries. The tourist business has grown to be a significant component of the global economy, as well as a specific revenue source for several developing countries (Xu, 2013). Following the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991, the former Soviet republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan have significant potential to become prominent tourism destinations in terms of sociological, historical, archaeological, and common interests. Following their liberation, these countries' travel industry development strategy and model was primarily based on boosting the tourist business (Coulibaly, et. al., 2012). Concurrent with independence, the tourist sector evolved into a distinct element of the country's expanding and considerable fields of commerce, as well as a focal point that has grown in importance in the country's social and financial life.

Uzbekistan owned a great and rich history and culture. Therefore, Uzbekistan is one of the main center for tourism with it's a lot of historical destinations and unique traditions that we can not encounter in any other country. The Uzbek nation's centuries-old customs and traditions are carefully preserved and passed on generation to generation. Most festive Uzbek customs, like many Asian countries, are associated with major family celebration: wedding and childbirth. These events contain numerous rites and rituals involving parents, children, sisters, brothers, immediate and distant relatives, as well as neighbors and guests, each with their own role. Uzbek traditions are based on hospitality, respect of elders, and collectivism, which can be seen most visibly in makhallas-a repository of age-old national foundations.

Nowadays, cultural tourism is considerably developing as other types of tourism in Uzbekistan. There more than 130 nations live harmoniously in Uzbekistan with different culture and traditions and the majority of the population are Uzbek. There are numerous interesting and different traditions, customs, rituals of Uzbek nation which play an important role in the developing tourism.

The aim of this research is to reveal the importance and role of cultural tradition as one of main factors in the developing tourism industry in Uzbekistan. The traditions of the Uzbek people have been formed as a result of complex processes of harmonization of cultural skills and traditions of all tribes and ethnic groups that have participated in the formation of the Uzbek nation for centuries.

Research methodology

The research methodology includes qualitative research. Meanings, a concept, a definition, metaphors, symbols, and a description of things are all terms used by Berg and Howard (2012) to describe qualitative research. This definition clearly demonstrates that qualitative research includes all of the necessary instruments for eliciting recall, which aids in problem-solving. To collect data from participants in their natural contexts, qualitative data instruments such as observation, open-ended questions, in-depth interview (audio or video), and field notes are employed. The data gathering methods used provide a complete account of the study in terms of the participants. The qualitative research approach's participant observation and focused group nature produce a broader understanding of behavior. As a result, the qualitative research approach provides a wealth of information about real-life people and situations (De Vaus, 2014, p6; Leedy and Ormrod, 2014).

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Qualitative research is well-suited for delivering factual and descriptive information since it is based on the gathering of non-numerical primary data such as words and pictures by the researcher, who also acts as an instrument (Johnson and Christensen, 2012, p29-37). For the purpose of this study, a qualitative research design, focusing on semi-structured face-to-face interviews with the attendees and guests of the Navruz festival was adopted for two main reasons. Firstly, we investigated the role of cultural traditions in the development of tourism in Uzbekistan which relatively little data is available and in-depth investigation is pivotal for fully understanding how importance of traditions. Secondly, research included questions about barriers and problems of the cultural tourism development in Uzbekistan which all potential answers could related to opinions and perceptions. Therefore, qualitative research was more appropriate in finding important information and highlighting issues through comprehensive and deep interview with local people. In order to achieve this goal, eight research questions were made with some autobiographic questions.

Data collection and study sampling

We collected data through interview with participants and guests of Navruz festival which held in the Ankhor-Locomotive garden located in Tashkent on March 19-21th in 2022. We decided to conduct an interview on Navruz festival because this festival includes a lot of Uzbek traditions and its participants also are interested in participating different traditions. In total, 20 respondents took part in this research. Simple random sampling was employed to create equal chance to research population. Verbatim transcriptions and translations into English were done for all interview recordings and notes before they were analyzed. With the aid of two experienced English translators, the transcripts' translation correctness was double-checked.

Profile of the respondents

| Name | | Age | Gender | Region | Occupation |
|------|---|---------|--------|--------|------------|
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| | 21 | | | |
|---------------|----|--------|--------------|---------------|
| Dilmurod | 28 | Male | Surkhandarya | Lawyer |
| Feruza | 27 | Female | Navai | Teacher |
| Safarmurod | 23 | Male | Karshi | Student |
| Umidjon | 25 | Male | Bukhara | Teacher |
| Mirmahmud | 26 | Male | Namangan | Businessman |
| Qudratillo | 35 | Male | Tashkent | Driver |
| Abdulatif | 32 | Male | Sirdarya | Dentist |
| Farruxbek | 23 | Male | Fergana | Student |
| Muhammadyusuf | 27 | Male | Andijan | Dispatcher |
| Behzod | 26 | Male | Andijon | Architect |
| Alisher | 46 | Male | Bukhara | Dispatcher |
| Mushtariy | 35 | Female | Samarkand | Teacher |
| Oydina | 38 | Female | Samarkand | Nurse |
| Mirsayid | 25 | Male | Namangan | IT specialist |
| Davron | 38 | Male | Namangan | Teacher |
| Nozima | 35 | Female | Tashkent | Housewife |
| Shaxnoza | 31 | Female | Jizzakh | Teacher |
| Ilyosxon | 34 | Male | Namangan | Businessman |
| Ixtiyor | 22 | Male | Andijan | Student |
| Shoxista | 43 | Female | Samarqand | Teacher |

Research findings

Theme 1. The influence of traditions on tourist's opinion and outlooks about Uzbekistan

Uzbekistan pays considerable attention to the development of tourism as one of the leading countries in the world. Tourist-reaction services are gaining importance in this regard. The analysis of the study shows that the potential of the cultural and historical traditions plays a substantial role when attracting tourists. Shokhista (aged 43) stated "I think most travelers like our national foods saying they are delicious, however, sometimes they can be fatty for them, since many people in abroad follow eutrophy". Behzod (aged 26) expresses his ideas like this "tourists really appreciate Uzbek culture and traditions. They are interested in this. Traditions can show our mentality and hospitality. Dilmurod (aged 28) stated:" I think our tradition is what attracts tourists. Our culture, especially our hospitality and friendliness are of special importance when it comes to tourists 'attraction. Also, our traditionally described monuments give super impressions on foreigners". Feruza (aged 27) mentioned: "Tourists really appreciate Uzbek culture and traditions. They are interested in this". Umidjon (aged 25) emphasized: "Traditions can show our mentality and our hospitality"

Theme 2. The kinds of traditions they have witnessed in Uzbekistan

Like many countries in the world, Uzbekistan has its own traditions. From ancient times, the holidays were celebrated in agricultural oases with festivals, bazaars. Uzbeks celebrate whenever possible, and parties usually consist of a large meal ending with palov. According to Dilmurod (aged 28): "The number one tradition is when our Uzbek people welcome anyone no matter what their nationality or origins are. Another interesting custom we have and what surprises a lot of tourists is to eat palov at "nahor osh". This is due to the condition that most of the cultures do not organize such kind of ceremony, where hundreds of people are served filling breakfast free of charge". Feruza (aged 27) count the traditions: "I took part in kelinsalom, tóy, sunnat tóyi, beshik tóyi, muchal tóyi, circumcision wedding, Navruz, chimildiq, kelin salom". Umidjon's respond is: "There a huge number of traditions in Uzbekistan. For example traditions regarding wedding parties, birthday parties, traditions belonged to the birth of new baby".

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Theme 3. The specific benefit of maintaining cultural tourism development in Uzbekistan

According to the survey results maintaining cultural tourism is important for various reasons; it has a positive economic and social impact, it establishes and reinforces identity, it helps build image, it helps preserve the cultural and historical heritage, with culture as an instrument it facilitates harmony and understanding among people, it supports culture. Dilmurod (aged 28) commented: "The main benefit is economic. When tourists visit our country and all over the state, they are so attracted by locally produced items that they do not mind spending dollars on buying some of them. As a result, the locals gain income. Secondly, their opinion will matter when it comes to the popularity of our country abroad." Whereas, Feruza (aged 27) replied: "It brings a huge benefit. One of them is that, Uzbekistan can broad its national identity, customs and tradition to the world by this way". Many of the participants comment that the traditions also can be a unique key feature to attract tourists to our country. Safarmurod (aged 23) counted the spheres cultural tourism can be beneficial: "Cultural tourism results in better infrastructure; better road and better internet through the country". Last but not least, the opinion which I agree totally with Shokhista (aged 43): "Well, these traditions are specific to the local community and have been passed from generation to generations. 12 regions of Uzbekistan can demonstrate different types of traditional customs and this feature varies from other continent traditions which can be a motivator of rising interest of international guests "

Theme 4. The suggestions to make cultural traditions alive in Uzbekistan

It is not a secret that most festive Uzbek customs are related with major family celebrations: births and weddings. Uzbek traditions are based on hospitality and acceptance. With regard to survey, all participants highlighted the essence of keeping traditions alive. Shokhista (aged 43) suggests that "It would be recommended that these traditions should be widely promoted by media, representatives should demonstrate in other countries of the world in order to show Uzbek culture". Dilmurod (aged 28) suggested: "We have to increase the fund on cultural protection and maintenance of the historical buildings because

they are our main weapon that can attract tourists". Feruza (aged 27) and Mushtariy (aged 35) commented: "Authority should organize lots of cultural events among the public".

Theme 5. The positive experience they felt from attending different traditions in Uzbekistan

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Shifting from being a strategic goal to a cultural hotspot, visitors are looking to get a true feel for traditional Uzbek culture and hospitality. What attracted tourists attention most is that different holidays are followed by various ceremonies, festive bazaars at which musicians, dancers, wrestlers perform. All of the participants consider Uzbeks good hosts, are very friendly and hospitable. Muhammadyusuf (aged 27) commented: ""Uzbek people are quite hospitable and never failed to express their respect towards mostly they are humble and know how to feel happy times". Dilmurod (aged 28) commented to this question: "I always feel positive whenever I visit any of our cultural event such as a wedding or family gathering. Good mood, kindness among people, warm interaction, show-of some customs make me feel that our traditions are worth saving" Feruza (aged 27) stated: "First of all I feel proud of my nation's and I feel exciting, enjoyable atmosphere".

Theme 6. Positive or negative impacts of cultural traditions of Uzbekistan in terms of economy

Concluding the results, the impact of cultural values on the economic development of Uzbekistan. Also, the risks of failure and bad faith of the personnel arrangements. A lot of people commented that the role the traditions play in International cultural tourism contributes to diversification of the economy, creating industries, serving tourism. In turn, economic growth has had a positive impact on poverty reduction. We found there are positive economic and environmental aspects. Mushtariy (aged 35) commented: "They are the things to make me feel that I'm also a member of the great Uzbek nation". Muhammadyusuf (aged 27) pointed out the drawback:" I think there is not enough car parking as well as has increased cost of taxi. Another respondent comments: " It would be recommended that these traditions should be widely promoted by media representatives should demonstrate in other countries of the world in order to show Uzbek culture. Other participant suggest: "Government should take serious control age any support". Dilmurod (aged 28) stated: "Of course, tourism is a double-edged sword. Although on one side it can benefit, there are some negative effects on the nation. The environment will get worse. When a lot of people visit the state, it is no doubt the they will bring pollution too. Another setback is that the more local people pay attention to make money out of tourism, the less they attend to other sectors of industry. Consequently, the part which is a favorite place for tourists may be left behind in terms of industrialization". Feruza (aged 27) stated: "I don't think it has any kind of drawbacks in terms of economy. Because, not only government support these kind of events, but also other people provide some financial side. Safarmurod (aged 23) emphasized: "Sometimes they can be quite waste of budget if large sums of money squandered just to impress people".



Theme 7. Positive and negative effect of cultural traditions of Uzbekistan they have experienced in terms of society and culture

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The traditions reflecting the multinational nature of Uzbekistan are omnipresent in its music, dance, painting, applied arts, language, cuisine and holidays. National and religious tolerance have been qualities inherent since ancient times in the Uzbek people. One respondent points out: "As a negative aspect, some nations could influence badly to people's behaviour and clothing styles, however it might have a good effect on education". Feruza (aged 27) stated: "For me, I learned one of the beautiful Asian culture and it hasn't got any negatives". Safarmurod (aged 23) commented: "Sometimes, I felt like people get obsessed over organizing these traditions in a wider range". Umidjon (aged 25) emphasized: "I have never faced drawbacks of our culture".

Theme 8. The ways cultural traditions can enhance image of Uzbekistan

The key to understanding the richness of culture of Uzbekistan is learning more about its artistic, literary, and musical traditions. The main findings show that the destination image of Uzbekistan is dominated by heritage and reference to traditions, customs, holidays. When asked about the ways cultural traditions can enhance image of Uzbekistan Alisher (aged 46) highlighted: " As every nation in the world try to make them as international, the traditions also can improve the image of the country and can attract many foreigners to our country who want to observe the traditional rituals on their own eyes". Feruza (aged 27) and Muhammadyusuf (aged 27) emphasized: "Cultural traditions are really important for the image of Uzbekistan. Safarmurod (aged 23) stated: "If provoked properly, traditions can attract huge audiences and serve a core of cultural tourism". Umidjon (aged 25) stated: "According to my view, cultural traditions are the best way to show our mentality, nationality, hospitality". Many participants agree that the festivals attract creative souls from all around the world, and here that you can see the full assertiveness of Uzbek traditions namely dances, music, applied arts.

Discussion

In the modern tourism industry, traditions, cultural events and festivals once again play a significant role in the development and strengthening of cultural tourism. Some programs provide the traveler with additional reasons to visit a location beyond the standard cultural product on offer. Festivals and one-off events are frequently another reason why tourists from other cultures visit a place because they provide a concentrated and frequently unique offering in a short amount of time. They may make a location more appealing to tourists, moving it up their list of potential vacation spots. Due to the distinct advantages that festivals and events have over other types of gatherings, they are both useful tools for drawing both new and returning visitors. (City Tourism and Culture, 2005 p. 44.) We can say that these events, festivals, and parades primarily cover cultural thematics such as music festivals and events as well as all other forms of fine arts festivals and events. Of course, the motivation for tourism that entertainment (of events and festivals) serves is extremely diverse to analyze (of course we can highlight gastronomy, religion, folk, film, history etc.

topics as well). The various festivals can advance a region's or area's development and enhance locals' or a community's awareness of issues that affect them. Cultural traditions, festivals and events play a crucial role in acting against seasonality because they can be organized in such large numbers during the low season, besides the fact that they typically produce a timely concentration during the high season in the majority. On the other hand, if we take into account the size of the megaevents and the carrying capacity of places, for example the enormous amount of people visiting these places in a relatively short period of time we must emphasize that cultural traditions, events and festivals could have a seriously negative impact on the environment and on the local population as well.

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Conclusion

As a conclusion to this study, we must note that both the cultural tourism product and the industry of cultural tourism as a whole are very complex, with a wide range of supply and demand options. Its positions in the future will likely be strengthened both directly and indirectly, as the demand for cultural travel will most likely increase quickly as the recreational needs of tourists and visitors change (additionally when we consider the new appearing sending markets). Of course, traditional mass tourism will continue to hold a sizable share of the market, but new visitors will have a growing variety of interests in learning about the diverse cultures and customs of distant places. Cultural Tourism contributes to countries' growth and development in two ways: first, by bringing in numerous economic gains and advantages, and second, by aiding in the development of brand value, image, and identification in the area. The tourism sector contributes significantly to economic expansion and goes beyond desirable vacation spots. (Khalil et al.2007) It contributes significantly to a country's economic growth. The key driver of regional development in the majority of the nation, boosting current economic activity, is expected to be tourism. It has a favorable effect on revenue growth, job possibilities, gross income, and output, but because of things like traffic congestion, pollution, and ecological damage, it can be harmful to the environment. (Ren et al. 2019)

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