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SOCIO-CULTURAL ASPECTS OF TOURISM IN THE PARADIGM OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Abstract. *This article provides a comprehensive analysis of the social and cultural aspects of tourism within the framework of sustainable development. The study involved 250 participants, including 180 tourists and 70 tourism professionals. Data were collected using a validated structured questionnaire with a Likert scale and analyzed to identify trends and relationships. In addition, the research incorporated a review of international and domestic literature, an analysis of strategic documents in Kazakhstan's tourism sector, and qualitative content analysis.*

The findings highlight the social, cultural, economic, and environmental impacts of tourism. Socially, tourism enhances local community engagement and strengthens intercultural interactions. Culturally, participation in ethnic and gastronomic tourism contributes to tourist satisfaction and supports local cultural identity. Economically, tourism promotes investment, generates employment opportunities, and supports entrepreneurship. Environmentally, sustainable tourism practices, including the preservation of cultural heritage and environmental protection, are essential for long-term development.

The results provide practical recommendations for the development of socio-cultural tourism in Kazakhstan, emphasizing increased community participation, cultural heritage preservation, economic benefits, and environmental sustainability.

Keywords: *Tourism, sustainable development, social impact, cultural impact, ethnic tourism, gastronomic tourism, Kazakhstan, sustainable tourism.*

Introduction

Tourism is one of the strategically important sectors of the modern global economy. It plays a significant role not only in economic development but also in social and cultural development [1–4]. The rapid growth of the tourism industry affects the preservation of cultural heritage, the quality of life of local communities, and social structures [5–10]. In this context, the sustainable development paradigm requires tourism to be planned not only from the perspective of financial efficiency, but

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also with consideration of its social and cultural impacts [1, 5, 6].

Social aspects include tourism's interaction with local residents, job creation, and the preservation of cultural traditions and social norms [6–10]. Cultural aspects encompass historical, gastronomic, and ethnocultural forms of tourism, which diversify the tourist experience, promote cultural communication, and strengthen social cohesion [11–15]. Studies show that sustainable tourism strategies improve the quality of life of local communities and contribute to economic and cultural sustainability [5, 6, 11].

International experience demonstrates that the development of cultural heritage sites and historical attractions through tourism increases economic benefits for local communities while enabling the preservation of cultural traditions and social ties [1, 2, 19]. In addition, modern technologies and social media play an increasingly important role in tourism by enhancing tourist experiences and facilitating the dissemination of cultural information [13, 18].

Gastronomic tourism and sustainable food and beverage management are also important components of socio-cultural tourism. This direction enhances the social impact of tourism activities while contributing to the preservation of local culture and traditional products [11, 14, 15]. Furthermore, rural tourism and ecotourism support the social and economic development of local communities while adhering to the principles of sustainable development [9, 12].

The study of the socio-cultural impacts of tourism—including services for senior tourists, the preservation of historical and cultural heritage, and the development of gastronomic and ethnocultural tourism—is particularly relevant in Kazakhstan today [6–10, 20]. In this regard, research into the socio-cultural aspects of tourism within the sustainable development paradigm enables the tourism industry to develop in a socially responsible manner while protecting society and cultural heritage [5, 6, 20].

This article examines the socio-cultural aspects of tourism within the sustainable development paradigm, compares international practices with the situation in Kazakhstan, and proposes ways to effectively utilize cultural and social factors in tourism development.

Research Methodology

This study was conducted to provide a comprehensive analysis of the socio-cultural aspects of tourism within the sustainable development paradigm. A mixed-methods approach combining qualitative and quantitative techniques was employed, allowing for a holistic examination of the social and cultural impacts of tourism.

To establish the theoretical framework of the study, a literature review of international and national scholarly sources was carried out. The review enabled the identification of key characteristics of cultural, social, and economic impacts, as well as sustainable tourism strategies and practices. This method served as the basis for refining the research problem and formulating scientific hypotheses.

To assess socio-cultural tourism practices in Kazakhstan, a validated structured questionnaire was used. The questionnaire was designed to measure the socio-cultural impacts of tourism and was evaluated using a five-point Likert scale (1–5). This instrument was adapted from the study by Mohd Zaidi et al. (2017) and has demonstrated its reliability and effectiveness in international research. The questionnaire consisted of 18 items, 13 of which addressed socio-cultural domains, including statements such as “Tourism helps preserve cultural identity” and “Tourism enhances a sense of social cohesion.” Data were collected via the Google Forms platform from a total of 250 respondents, including 180 tourists and 70 tourism professionals.

Data processing and analysis were conducted using SPSS software. The statistical analysis included the calculation of mean values, standard deviations, correlation coefficients, and factor analysis. These methods made it possible to identify relationships between tourists' socio-cultural experiences and economic and demographic variables.

Documentary analysis was also applied in the study. Strategic documents related to tourism development in the Republic of Kazakhstan, reports on cultural and environmental programs, and statistical data on local tourism infrastructure were examined. This method enabled an objective assessment of the socio-cultural impacts of tourism and supported evidence-based conclusions.

In addition, the collected data were qualitatively examined through content analysis. The analysis of open-ended survey responses and documentary sources provided deeper insights into the socio-cultural effects of tourism, practices of cultural heritage preservation, and the impacts on local communities.

The socio-cultural tourism practices in Kazakhstan were compared with international experience. This comparative analysis made it possible to identify effective sustainable tourism strategies and to determine how cultural and social factors can be appropriately integrated into tourism development.

The study employed a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, including a validated questionnaire, documentary analysis, content analysis, and comparative analysis, to comprehensively investigate the socio-cultural aspects of tourism in Kazakhstan.

Results and Discussion

The findings of this study are based on data obtained from the literature review, the survey, and documentary analysis, which together allowed for a comprehensive assessment of the current state of socio-cultural tourism in Kazakhstan. The results were examined across social, cultural, economic, and environmental dimensions. For each aspect, the findings were interpreted using quantitative analyses conducted in SPSS 27.0 as well as qualitative content analysis.

Results of the Literature Review

The review of international and national literature extensively addresses the sustainable development dimensions of tourism.

Social aspects. Previous studies indicate that tourism increases social activity within local communities, fosters new social networks, and strengthens intercultural interaction [2, 3, 5]. For example, the study by Zhuang et al. (2019) clearly demonstrates the positive impact of tourism on community participation and social cohesion.

Cultural aspects. The preservation of cultural heritage, the development of ethnocultural tourism, gastronomic tourism, and the dissemination of cultural experiences through social media are identified as key factors [5, 13, 15]. Mohd Zaidi et al. (2017) demonstrated that tourists' level of participation in cultural experiences has a direct effect on their overall tourism satisfaction.

Economic aspects. Tourism positively contributes to local economies by attracting investment, creating employment opportunities, and stimulating entrepreneurship [6, 9, 10, 11, 14]. According to Rustemova et al. (2024), historical and cultural tourism projects can increase local economic activity by 15–20%.

Environmental aspects. Environmental monitoring, heritage protection, and environmental conservation are considered essential conditions for sustainable tourism development [1, 4, 9, 20].

The literature emphasizes the integrative nature of sustainable tourism, highlighting the interdependence of social, cultural, economic, and environmental dimensions. Several studies argue

that the effectiveness of sustainable tourism policies depends on balanced stakeholder involvement, including local communities, government institutions, and the private sector [1, 6, 11]. Researchers note that ignoring any of these dimensions may lead to social inequality, cultural commodification, or environmental degradation. Consequently, contemporary scholarship increasingly supports holistic and community-based tourism models as the most effective approach to achieving long-term sustainability and resilience in tourism development.

Table – Key directions identified in the literature review

Aspect	Key directions	Sources	Overall impact
Social	Community participation, social networks	[2, 3, 5]	Increased community activity and intercultural interaction
Cultural	Heritage preservation, ethnocultural tourism, gastronomy, social media	[5, 13, 15]	Enriched tourist experience and wider dissemination of cultural practices
Economic	Investment, employment, entrepreneurship	[6, 9, 10, 11, 14]	Positive impact on local economies
Environmental	Environmental monitoring, environmental protection	[1, 4, 9, 20]	Ensuring tourism sustainability

The literature review highlights the interconnections among the various aspects of socio-cultural tourism in Kazakhstan and provides a solid theoretical foundation for the empirical analysis.

Survey Results

The survey was conducted using the validated structured instrument developed by Mohd Zaidi et al. (2017). Data were collected via the Google Forms platform from 250 respondents (180 tourists and 70 tourism professionals). The data were analyzed using SPSS 27.0, applying descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and factor analysis.

The reliability and internal consistency of the survey instrument were assessed prior to the main analysis. Cronbach’s alpha coefficients for the socio-cultural dimensions exceeded the acceptable threshold of 0.70, indicating a high level of reliability of the measurement scale. This ensured the accuracy and consistency of the collected data and increased the validity of the subsequent statistical analyses. The use of both descriptive and inferential statistical methods allowed for a more robust interpretation of respondents’ perceptions regarding the socio-cultural impacts of tourism.

Social Aspects

The survey results indicate that most respondents rated the social impacts of tourism on local communities highly.

Table 2 – Descriptive Statistics of Social Impact Indicators of Tourism

Social indicators	Mean	Standard deviation
Formation of new social ties	4.15	0.62
Community participation	4.05	0.71
Intercultural interaction	3.98	0.68
Learning through tourism	4.22	0.59

Correlation analysis in SPSS revealed a strong relationship between social ties and intercultural interaction ($r = 0.64$), indicating a significant social impact of tourism. Many respondents strongly agreed with the statement that “tourism enhances a sense of unity within society.”

Cultural Aspects

Table 3 – Descriptive Statistics of Cultural Impact Indicators of Tourism

Cultural indicators	Mean	Standard deviation
Participation in ethnocultural tourism	4.02	0.72
Participation in gastronomic tourism	4.18	0.66
Protection of cultural heritage	3.95	0.70
Sharing experiences via social media	3.85	0.69

Most tourists actively participated in gastronomic tourism, while experience sharing through social media was comparatively less intensive. Factor analysis identified two main components within the cultural domain—ethnocultural tourism and gastronomy—which together explained 57% of the total variance.

Economic Aspects

Table 4 – Descriptive Statistics of Economic Impact Indicators of Tourism

Economic indicators	Mean	Standard deviation
Spending on local services	4.12	0.61
Spending on local products	3.82	0.65
Support for employment	4.05	0.68

Economic factors clearly reflect tourism’s contribution to local communities. The correlation between economic impact and cultural experience was $r = 0.52$, confirming the integration of social and economic effects within tourism development.

Environmental Aspects

Table 5 – Descriptive Statistics of Environmental Impact Indicators of Tourism

Environmental indicators	Mean	Standard deviation
Adoption of environmentally friendly practices	4.30	0.58
Participation in cultural heritage protection	4.02	0.61

Tourists demonstrated a high appreciation for environmental sustainability. The correlation between cultural heritage preservation and environmental practices was $r = 0.49$, indicating a clear link between cultural awareness and environmental responsibility among tourists.

Results of Documentary Analysis

Strategic documents related to tourism development in the Republic of Kazakhstan, as well as reports on cultural and environmental programs, were analyzed [6–10]. The analysis revealed the following trends:

- Ecotourism and agrotourism projects in rural areas increased by 25% between 2019 and 2023.

- Funding for cultural heritage preservation programs increased by 45% between 2020 and 2024.
- The level of local community participation reached 60% in 2024.

The documentary analysis results are consistent with the survey findings and provide concrete evidence of the social, cultural, economic, and environmental impacts of tourism.

General Discussion

The overall findings of the study indicate that:

- Social aspects: Tourism enhances social activity within local communities and strengthens intercultural interaction.
- Cultural aspects: Ethnocultural tourism, gastronomy, and the dissemination of experiences through social media contribute to cultural satisfaction and reinforce cultural identity.
- Economic aspects: Tourism positively affects local economies by attracting investment, creating jobs, and supporting entrepreneurship.
- Environmental aspects: Environmental monitoring and cultural heritage protection are essential for the long-term sustainability of tourism.

SPSS analysis revealed significant correlations among social, cultural, and economic factors, highlighting the importance of an integrated approach to tourism development. The consistency between survey and documentary analysis results provides an accurate representation of the current state of socio-cultural tourism in Kazakhstan.

Conclusion

The study results indicate that the socio-cultural aspects of tourism within the sustainable development paradigm in Kazakhstan are multifaceted and integrated. From a social perspective, tourism enhances the activity of local communities, strengthens intercultural connections, and contributes to social cohesion and stability. Culturally, tourism promotes ethnocultural tourism, gastronomic tourism, and the dissemination of cultural experiences through social media, which increases tourists' cultural satisfaction and supports the cultural identity of local communities. Economically, tourism contributes to attracting investment to local economies, creating new jobs, and fostering the development of small and medium-sized enterprises. Additionally, considering environmental aspects, the long-term sustainability of tourism requires environmental protection, cultural heritage preservation, and environmental monitoring.

Quantitative analysis in SPSS clearly demonstrated the correlations among social, cultural, and economic factors, enabling a holistic approach to tourism development. The results of the documentary and content analyses aligned with the survey findings, providing an accurate representation of the current state of socio-cultural tourism in Kazakhstan. Furthermore, comparative analysis with international experiences allowed for the identification of effective strategies for sustainable tourism development and the appropriate use of cultural and social factors.

Based on the study findings, the following recommendations can be made:

1. Social recommendations: Organize social and cultural events to increase local community participation in tourism and strengthen intercultural dialogue between residents and tourists. Additionally, support programs aimed at promoting social cohesion and active participation through tourism are recommended.
2. Cultural recommendations: Implement specialized projects and routes to preserve cultural heritage and develop ethnocultural tourism. Develop marketing strategies to widely

disseminate cultural experiences through gastronomic tourism and social media.

3. Economic recommendations: To maximize tourism's positive impact on the local economy, enhance investment attractiveness, support small and medium enterprises, and create new employment opportunities. Integrating tourism services with cultural projects can further increase economic benefits.
4. Environmental recommendations: During tourism project implementation, adhere to principles of environmental protection, cultural heritage preservation, and ecological monitoring. These measures ensure the long-term sustainability of tourism and help maintain the ecological balance of tourist destinations.

In conclusion, the development of socio-cultural tourism in Kazakhstan requires a comprehensive approach that considers social, cultural, economic, and environmental factors together. This study provides a scientific basis for sustainable tourism development in Kazakhstan and enables the formulation of practical, evidence-based recommendations.

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ТҰРАҚТЫ ДАМУ ПАРАДИГМАСЫНДАҒЫ ТУРИЗМНІҢ ӘЛЕУМЕТТІК-МӘДЕНИ АСПЕКТІЛЕРІ

Аңдатпа. Бұл мақалада тұрақты даму парадигмасындағы туризмнің әлеуметтік-мәдени аспектілері жан-жақты зерттелді. Зерттеу 250 қатысушымен жүргізілді, оның ішінде 180 турист және 70 туризм саласының мамандары бар. Деректер валидтелген құрылымдық сауалнама арқылы жиналып, Likert шкаласы бойынша бағаланды, содан кейін SPSS 27.0 бағдарламасында орташа мәндер, стандартты ауытқулар, корреляциялық және факторлық талдау әдістерімен өңделді. Сонымен қатар, зерттеуде халықаралық және отандық әдебиет шолуы, Қазақстан Республикасының туризм саласындағы стратегиялық құжаттарын талдау, сондай-ақ мазмұндық талдау (content analysis) әдістері қолданылды.

Нәтижелер туризмнің әлеуметтік, мәдени, экономикалық және экологиялық әсерлерін нақты көрсетті. Әлеуметтік тұрғыдан туризм жергілікті қауымдастықтардың белсенділігін арттырады және мәдениетаралық өзара әрекетті күшейтеді. Мәдени аспектілерде этно-туризм мен гастрономиялық туризм туристердің мәдени қанағаттануын арттырады және жергілікті мәдени идентификацияны қолдайды. Экономикалық жағынан туризм жергілікті экономикаға инвестиция тартуға, жұмыс орындарын құруға және кәсіпкерлікті дамытуға ықпал етеді. Экологиялық аспектілерде туризмнің ұзақ мерзімді тұрақтылығын қамтамасыз ету үшін мәдени мұраны сақтау және қоршаған ортаны қорғау маңызды болып отыр.

Зерттеу нәтижелері Қазақстандағы әлеуметтік-мәдени туризмді дамытуға арналған нақты ұсыныстар жасауға мүмкіндік береді, соның ішінде әлеуметтік қатысуды арттыру, мәдени мұраны сақтау, экономикалық пайда мен экологиялық тұрақтылықты үйлестіру.

Кілт сөздер: Туризм, тұрақты даму, әлеуметтік әсер, мәдени әсер, этно-туризм, гастрономиялық туризм, Қазақстан, тұрақты туризм

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СОЦИАЛЬНО-КУЛЬТУРНЫЕ АСПЕКТЫ ТУРИЗМА В ПАРАДИГМЕ УСТОЙЧИВОГО РАЗВИТИЯ

Аннотация. В данной статье всесторонне исследуются социально-культурные аспекты туризма в парадигме устойчивого развития. Исследование проводилось с участием 250 респондентов, включая 180 туристов и 70 специалистов в области туризма. Данные

собирались с помощью валидированной структурированной анкеты и оценивались по шкале Лайкерта, после чего обрабатывались в программе SPSS 27.0 с использованием методов расчета средних значений, стандартных отклонений, корреляционного и факторного анализа. Кроме того, в исследовании использовались обзор международной и отечественной литературы, анализ стратегических документов Республики Казахстан в сфере туризма, а также методы контент-анализа.

Результаты показали конкретные социальные, культурные, экономические и экологические воздействия туризма. С социальной точки зрения, туризм повышает активность местных сообществ и усиливает межкультурное взаимодействие. В культурном аспекте этнотуризм и гастрономический туризм повышают культурное удовлетворение туристов и поддерживают локальную культурную идентичность. С экономической точки зрения, туризм способствует привлечению инвестиций в местную экономику, созданию рабочих мест и развитию предпринимательства. В экологическом аспекте для обеспечения долгосрочной устойчивости туризма важны охрана культурного наследия и защита окружающей среды.

Результаты исследования позволяют выработать конкретные рекомендации по развитию социально-культурного туризма в Казахстане, включая повышение социальной вовлеченности, сохранение культурного наследия, баланс экономической выгоды и экологической устойчивости.

Ключевые слова: туризм, устойчивое развитие, социальное воздействие, культурное воздействие, этнотуризм, гастрономический туризм, Казахстан, устойчивый туризм.