

**ASSESSING THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF INTERNATIONAL TOURISM ON
LOCAL COMMUNITIES IN UZBEKISTAN: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF
SAMARKAND, BUKHARA, AND KHIVA**

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Abstract

The paper discusses the impact international tourism has on the local community life of Uzbekistan, in particular on the heritage cities of Samarkand, Bukhara and Khiva. Even though the field of tourism has evolved rapidly since 2017, there is a lack of empirical evidence regarding the allocation of the economic profits on the community level. The research involving the assistance of a mixed-methods research design includes quantitative survey data of 55 tourism workers and qualitative information materials on the basis of open-ended questions and informal interview. The analysis is devoted to the reliance of the tourism-associated income, character of employment, participation in the value chain as well as distribution and governance of benefits.

The outcomes have demonstrated that tourism is an important source of livelihood and that the respondents received an average of 56 per cent of their household earnings in the tourism industry and had an experience of eight years in the tourism related activities. The consumer benefits are, however, not equally spread and little involvement in community in tourism planning. It was also only in one variable, which is the local spending retention where Khiva showed more local economic relations compared to Samarkand and Bukhara. The qualitative data identifies the poor structural barriers, including, but not limited to, lack of adequate financial resources, poor infrastructure, and inability of small producers to enter the market, and bureaucracies. Despite these limitations, the respondents indicated that there was the potential to improve local participation through community-based tourism (CBT), more appropriate integration of local suppliers into tourism value chain as well as its introduction of capacity building services.

In summary, the study concludes that even though the international tourism is a thriving source of the local livelihoods in the heritage cities of Uzbekistan, the developmental advantages of the tourism industry are not so successful because of structural inequalities and poor local empowerment. The research suggests that it would expand the CBT programs, localize procurement processes, skills transfer, easing the regulatory environment, and that it would also engage communities more in management of tourism so as to create a sense of inclusiveness and sustainability. Its findings present evidence-based policies to inform policy makers who have a concern on enhancing equitable and resilient tourism development in Uzbekistan.

Keywords

Tourism Economics, Local Development, Value Chain, Community-Based Tourism, Uzbekistan, Heritage Tourism, Sustainable Livelihoods, Central Asia.

Аннотация

В статье рассматривается влияние международного туризма на жизнь местного населения Узбекистана, в частности, на исторические города Самарканд, Бухара и Хива. Несмотря на стремительное развитие сферы туризма с 2017 года, существует недостаток эмпирических данных о распределении экономической выгоды на уровне местных сообществ. Исследование, проведенное с использованием смешанного метода, включает



количественные данные опроса 55 работников туристической отрасли и качественные информационные материалы, полученные на основе открытых вопросов и неформальных интервью. Анализ посвящен зависимости дохода от туризма, характеру занятости, участию в цепочке создания стоимости, а также распределению и управлению выгодами.

Результаты показали, что туризм является важным источником средств к существованию, и что респонденты получали в среднем 56 процентов своего семейного дохода от туристической отрасли и имели восьмилетний опыт работы в сфере туризма. Однако выгоды для потребителей распределяются неравномерно, и участие местных сообществ в планировании туризма незначительно. Только по одной переменной, а именно по сохранению местных расходов, Хива продемонстрировала более тесные связи с местной экономикой по сравнению с Самаркандом и Бухарой. Качественные данные указывают на наличие серьезных структурных барьеров, включая, помимо прочего, недостаток адекватных финансовых ресурсов, плохую инфраструктуру, неспособность мелких производителей выйти на рынок и бюрократические препятствия. Несмотря на эти ограничения, респонденты указали на потенциал улучшения участия местного населения посредством развития общинного туризма (ОИТ), более адекватной интеграции местных поставщиков в цепочку создания стоимости в туризме, а также внедрения услуг по наращиванию потенциала.

В заключение, исследование приходит к выводу, что, хотя международный туризм является процветающим источником средств к существованию для местного населения в городах-памятниках Узбекистана, преимущества развития туристической индустрии не столь успешны из-за структурного неравенства и недостаточной поддержки местного населения. Исследование предполагает, что необходимо расширить программы ОИТ, локализовать процессы закупок, передачу навыков, упростить нормативно-правовую среду, а также активнее вовлекать местные сообщества в управление туризмом для создания чувства инклюзивности и устойчивости. Результаты исследования представляют собой основанные на фактических данных стратегии, призванные информировать политиков, заинтересованных в обеспечении справедливого и устойчивого развития туризма в Узбекистане.

Ключевые слова

Экономика туризма, Местное развитие, Цепочка создания стоимости, Туризм на основе местных сообществ, Узбекистан, Исторический туризм, Устойчивые источники средств к существованию, Центральная Азия.

1. Introduction

Tourism is generally considered to be one of the most vibrant sectors in the global economy because it generates nearly 10 percent of global GDP and provides approximately one out of every ten employment opportunities (UNWTO, 2024). Besides the global dimension, tourism in the majority of scenarios is a significant economic opportunity of the developing and transitional economies where some countries can stimulate income earnings, job creation, and investment in the sector (Ashley & Mitchell, 2009).

Being a representative of one of the highways, Uzbekistan possesses both an architectural and cultural heritage and this has been complemented by influx of foreign tourists which has grown exponentially in the past decade. The expedited tourist base development has also been informed by the shift in the policy that has been observed since 2017, particularly the liberalization of the visa policy, the increase in the number of international flights, and the increase in the number of state and non-state investments. Although other sources have estimated it, there are different sets of governmental and international data sets which indicated that there is actually a trend to the rising number of tourists who travel to the country in a single year.



Considering the fact that the focus on tourism as one of the main priorities of the strategic development of the Government of Uzbekistan is enhanced, it is vital to elaborate the evidence-based interpretation of the economic backlash of the tourism at the community level. This will furnish invaluable information concerning the process by which tourism has managed to populate the localities, obstacles that can be introduced to derail the fair participation, and policy that should be put into place to make sure that the business proceeds in an inclusive and sustainable flow. This chapter presents a rationale on the study, background on the process of research, description of the major problem and objective of the study and study questions that will be applied in the future study.

There is also a paucity of or no empirical data of the real effects of the tourism on the local communities despite the fact that, international tourism is increasing in Uzbekistan. The available literature is largely national hence fails to give an understanding of the effects of tourism on employment, value chain integration and livelihoods of some fraction of the groups in the tourism destinations. This raises certain serious questions of whether it is scattering or the accumulation of the positive side of tourism to few stakeholders and regions.

The literature review shall focus mainly on incorporating the interdisciplinary literature on research of tourism economy, community studies alongside the literature related to the transition economy with the aim of creating a current state of knowledge on the economic implication the international tourism has on the local communities within Uzbekistan.

This broad objective has the following specific objectives:

To gauge the degree of economic dependency of households in the tourism related income and employment.

To analyze the essence of local participation in the tourism value chains and to determine the main points of participation and non-participation.

To explore the views of the society with regard to equalities in the distribution of benefits as well as the degree of participation in tourism planning and governance.

To develop the principal structural and institutional problems that constrain more holistic and equitable domestic economic payoffs in tourism.

To recommend evidence-based policy and practicable solutions to enhance the local economic association, local empowerment, and sustainable tourism development.

These objectives are guided by the central research question: What are the direct and indirect economic impacts of foreign tourists in Uzbekistan, and what structural factors shape the equitable distribution of these benefits?

Literature Review

The chapter will aim at searching academic as well as experimental literature that will be located within the context of the investigation of the economic implication of international tourism on the local communities. The past studies by this researcher present her theoretical frameworks, methods of analysis and other support data of the current study. It also is used to fill gaps in the existing body of knowledge hence rendering the research problem possible.

The tourism and local development literature are found in various areas of study such as economics, development studies, sociology and regional planning. Some of the most influential themes of this review are the overall discussion of how tourism may work within the economic system in the host country as well as how the tourism benefits, value chains and local participation and what issues the local communities that are dependent on tourism face. In addition, the relevance of the described themes in the specific context of the developing and transitional economies such as the Central Asia ones are also considered in the chapter.

A combination of these perceptions, the review offers a systematic system according to which tourism can lead to the employment of people, generation of income and businesses and how these results can differ in various forms as per the various communities. The actions that are



determined based on this literature are used to guide the actions of the research procedure and analytical attention. This is subsequently trailed by the observations on the conceptual frameworks, empirical data, and comparative study in the regions which will crowd-source a general understanding of the economic influence that tourism has on the community level.

2.1 Theoretical Foundations and Conceptual Frameworks of Tourism Economic Impact Assessment

Theories about economic effects of tourism have expanded and evolved in embracing an immeasurable array of theoretic perspectives. The two frameworks offer focus on a number of mechanisms through which tourism operates concerning the local economies. By incorporating these approaches, one will have a starting point on how the role of tourism on the societies of the transitional economies such as Uzbekistan can be interpreted.

Theories of Economic Base and Multiplier Models.

One of the earliest attempts to assess the impact of tourism is the approach which considers tourism as an export-base of a region. Based on this view, the tourists inject foreign money into the local economy that instigates the generation of new employment and other spending. In classical economic base theory, the primary industries are defined as those that generate new income and non-primary sectors as those that supply local goods and services (Archer & Fletcher, 1996). When the major industries like tourism make growth, it might result in growth of non-major industries. It is a theory over which the popular concept of multiplier is founded. Multipliers are used to represent the flow of the initial expenditure by visitors around the economy initially through business-to-business spending (indirect effects) and later on through household spending funded by the tourism wages (induced effects) (Stynes, 1999). Although the influence may be evident, the multiplier models have been criticized to be too simplistic in their examination of the local economies and the linkage of such sectors is assumed to be great and the benefits of tourism over-rewarded especially in developing countries where supply capacity is low at the home front (Briassoulis, 1991).

Dependency Perspectives and Modernization.

The development of tourism on a bigger sense is also realized under the economic change theories. The modernization theory views tourism as a tool to connect the peripheral regions to the global economy to also improve technological revival, entrepreneurship and improved governance (Sharpley & Telfer, 2015). Within this framework, tourism should be seen as the factor to enhance the level of skill and give the community the chance to transition into the diversified economical organization.

Dependency theory on the other hand, is more critical. It asserts that the polar unequal relations are often replicated in the developing nations as foreign firms steal a good share of the profits and the local populations suffer on environmental and social costs (Mowforth & Munt, 2015).

Core-periphery theory also does provide reasons as to why certain regions are better than others. Investment in tourism is also observed to shift to new destinations with good infrastructure and ease of access and increase inequalities within a geographical area (Oppermann, 1993). This may be observed especially in Uzbekistan where major historic cities receive majority visitors and investments in the sector is concentrated in the major cities.

Pro-Poor Tourism Approaches.

At the beginning of the 2000s pro-poor tourism (PPT) formed an array of concepts under which tourism can provide direct improvements to low-income populations, help them directly as a result of tourism. PPT does not just consider the aggregate benefits and thereafter consider distribution of benefits. Studies have shown that even as far as tourism can inject a lot of money in the local economy, the money is normally washed out of the economy or it is channeled towards the urban elites and foreign forces (Ashley & Mitchell, 2009).



The paradigm also highlights the non-financial elements of empowerment in which it says that poverty alleviation is not confined to income incomes but more to voice, participation and control of local means and resources (Scheyvens, 1999).

Tourism Value Chain Analysis.

The other theory that is impactful is the value chain theory that examines the generation, dissemination, and maintenance of value on the tourism supply chain. This plan portrays that a greater number of middle men in the chain (such as foreign tour operators, booking websites and foreign suppliers) will likely cause more leakages and decrease the benefits to the local community (Tolkach & King, 2015).

The value chain analysis is especially prominent in the transition economies where home-based producers in most cases are unable to manufacture products to the required standard demanded by the tourism industry, and might be replaced by foreign based companies in the high value industry product of accommodation, air travel, and tour packages. Under the policies of investment, SME development projects and the institutional support in Uzbekistan, the degree to which local suppliers can be integrated into these chains depends on the level of investment in the country.

The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF) brings with it a much more micro-level, household-based approach. According to it, the tourism income must be substituted as a part of a broader scope of livelihood strategies depending on diverse types of capital - social, human, natural and economic (Shen, 2008). Tourism tends not to replace the old jobs but is a constituent of diversified rural livelihoods. The model is particularly relevant to the rural Uzbek communities when tourism-related income is usually taken as an addition to other sources, e.g., agriculture or work of the hand. SLF helps in explaining why some households are beneficial as compared to others, which is based on their resources, capability and availability of networks.

The Multiple Perspectives to the Uzbek Context.

Nobody can explain in detail the complexity of the tourism economic impacts of Uzbekistan within one single framework. The features of transition economy that include the altering institutions within the nation, the lopsidedness in infrastructures and the various forms of ownership of the businesses within the nation make the integrated approach more fitting (North, 1990). A more detailed approach to the implications of tourism on the local people is provided by an integrated analysis model combining: value chain analysis (to understand how benefits are distributed), PPT principles (to quantify the effects on the low-income groups), and SLF knowledge (to learn the household level dynamics). With this type of combined perspective, there is firm ground on cracking down on the contribution or avoidance of local development in Uzbekistan by tourism in other countries.

2.2 Empirical Experiences of the Effect of Employment and Income.

Creation of employment is one of the most frequently quoted economic roles of tourism. But it has been proven that the job in tourism in different countries is more, better or more assured. It is estimated that the total employment around the globe is around 10 percent as a result of tourism, however, in most instances, tourism is bigger in small island states and developing economies (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2019). These aggregate figures however, hide important differences between job security, wages, seasonal and skills demand (Baum, 2015).

Employment trends in Central Asia.

Central Asia, analysis shows that tourism has formed a huge source of new employment in the last several decades, especially in those sectors that are directly connected with the visitor services such as room and board, dining, and shops, as well as cultural tourism (Kantarci, Uysal, & Magnini, 2017). The Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan have extremely seasonal tourism jobs. There are many jobs that can only be offered during the busiest seasons of the year and this limits the tourism in terms of providing steady and throughout earnings to families. It is possible to notice



the same tendencies in Uzbekistan. The largest share of the tourism jobs is centralized in such big historic cities as Samarkand, Bukhara and Tashkent but the periphery areas are not as engaged in the tourism job distribution. According to the Uzbekistan tourism officials, the industry has been witnessing the steady increase in the number of individuals who are employed within the industry since it ranks just after the industry in terms of growth over the past 1 decade yet jobs are still being concentrated within a small number of sectors. Most of the jobs lie in the accommodation and food services and fewer job opportunities are available in transportation, recreation and tour operation.

Jobs and Gender Dynamics.

One more theme which is similar among tourism labor markets is the gender inequalities. It is also shown in the international literature that women will make a considerable percentage of tourism workforce, but in low paying, lower status, or informal work (Baum, 2015). Available statistics on Uzbekistan further reveal that the female workforce is also segmented in other sections of the housekeeping and catering services and reception services as compared to the managerial or technical jobs that are more conducive to men. This pattern contributes to the inequality of the wages and denies women in the industry the freedom of movement in the long run.

The Indirect and Induced Employment Effects.

Other jobs generated as a result of tourism are also ones that are not physically visible. Production to other industries, such as agriculture, construction, and handicrafts that supply goods and services to the tourism businesses, will be necessitated under the indirect influence of the demand of tourism. Induced effects are realized when the employees spend their income on tourism related items in the local market. All these processes make up the tourism multipliers.

The multiplier in all developing and transitional economies is commonly ranging between 0.6 to 1.8 meaning that tourism and local suppliers are either moderately related (Stynes, 1999). The average multiplier of tourism in the transition countries, according to Christie and Crompton (2001) is approximately 1.2 to 1.4 which means that in every dollar that an individual invests as a tourist, he or she creates an additional 20 to 40 cents of revenue in the destination.

The multiplier is yet to be estimated continuously in the case of Uzbekistan. Research on some provinces of the country such as Samarkand suggests that the Type II multiplier of income is approximately 1.36 (Spechler, 2008). This fact though effective in the sense that there exist non-negligible economic spillages, means that supply chains remain to some extent dependent on imported goods and thus the total multiplier is diluted.

Comparison of two regions Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan.

Before the pandemic, international tourism in Kazakhstan brought in billions of revenues, and an average tourist has no very low expenditure (WTO, 2020). The highest amount of these benefits however was in the large cities and the activity of the tourist industry in the rural areas had been limited due to the seasonal trends.

The situation is different in Kyrgyzstan. It is attributed to the successful case of Community-Based Tourism (CBT) network which helps the impoverished pending in rural areas to survive. The CBTF groups help the locals to offer homestays and direct services and cultural practices in such a way that a percentage of the tourism revenue may be left in the villages. Although the income scale is limited, CBT organization implies equal benefits distribution and supplements farm and nomadic livelihood (Kyrgyz Community-Based Tourism Association, 2019).

The comparison demonstrates that the economic contribution of tourism does not also always directly depend on the number of visitors, but also the type of governance, ownership, as well as the excellence of the connections between tourism companies and suppliers in the region.

2.3 The community participation and local development are connected with Regional Inequality.



There is not a tendency of development of tourism all over a nation in the same way. Instead, it is more probable to be concentrated in places that have the best infrastructure, visibility and institutional encouragement. This yields us the spatial patterns of inequality with some places getting homogenous investments and enjoying growth because of the tourists and not getting associated with major economic flows as well. The international studies state that the phenomenon is particularly common in the developing and transition economies where the spatial distribution of the tourism resources is conditioned by the historical, political and geographical factors (Telfer, 2002).

Local Empowerment and Community Participation.

The community involvement plays the primary role in either limiting or diffusing to other parts the benefits of tourism regardless of whether they are concentrated in the urban centers or spread to other areas. The research studies undertaken in developing nations have always pointed to one direction which is the fact that as long as the community effectively participates in the tourism planning, service delivery and decision-making process then there is a greater likelihood that the resultant economic benefits would trickle down to the local households (Scheyvens, 1999). The participation enhances the local ownership and human capital and equal sharing of tourism revenue.

The Uzbekistan community involvement level is very different. Along the tourism activities, it is considered that in well-established tourism experience in the cities, small enterprises, craft guilds and family run hospitality services are often integrated within the tourism activities. Rural areas on the other hand are more likely to be used in limited manners of participation. The local people can be engaged in an informal level like seasonal labor, small-scale selling of the crafts or visitors, but they are not usually equipped with the training, market knowledge, and the institutional support on which to fit into a higher paid job.

Infrastructure and Inequality of Accessibility.

Tourism opportunity is a factor that is influenced by infrastructure. Tourist places that are well developed with good roads, transport, accommodation and well-preserved cultural sites have higher number of tourists and attract personal investments. Areas which lack such infrastructure experience escalation in cost of operations and business risks in addition to reduced competitiveness.

This is a severe issue out of the major tourism concern in the case of Uzbekistan. There are numerous rural destinations with excellent cultural or natural features and they are not readily accessible to foreigners. Poor roads, interregional transportation frequency and absence of digital connectivity contribute to poor viability of tourism businesses and involves the destruction of the local supply chain.

Balancing between the Social Equity and Tourism Growth.

Lastly, the aspect of tourism to the development of a given region can be assessed on the basis of benefits spreading and access of economic opportunity. The issue is that in the absence of any special policies, tourism is able to reinstate the status quo by investing in the already developed areas. Community empowerment, social equity, and inclusive governance must then be given one of the priorities, as a way of ensuring that tourism is a catalyst of balanced and sustainable development across Uzbekistan.

2.4 Synthesis and Research Gap

The literature proves that the relationship between tourism and economic impact is not automatic and in a positive manner. It is mediated by the structure of local economy, the level of sectoral connectivity, asset acquisition of tourism and management of the industry. Despite the fact that deep research has been done in such themes in other regions of the world and among the developing states, the lack of empirical and community-based studies in Uzbekistan is intense. The literature on Uzbek tourism accessible has been either promotional, descriptive or



macroeconomic in nature. The above theoretical frameworks will assist this research to fill this gap and produce original data at micro level on how international tourism is impacting and how it could be able to benefit the local populations at the heartland of Uzbekistan better.

Overall, the findings imply that the existence of the giant possibilities to ensure the positive role of tourism to the domestic economy in Uzbekistan, the opportunities realization will entail the coordinated policy actions, investments in the country capacities, and the researches, which will be more focused on the distributional implication. The opportunities will be considered through the consideration of both opportunities and constraints both in discussing the grounds of the future research and policy interventions and how to make the tourism industry more inclusive and resilient. The next chapter explains how the issues were explored with the help of methodological approach.

2. Methods

In this chapter, the research design is determined and the approach that would form the basis of researching the economic role of the concerned international tourists in the local communities within Samarkand. It starts with the justification of the application of the mixed-method approach, sampling, the process of data collection and protection of the privacy of the respondents. Lastly, it talks of the limitations of the methods employed, and finally has a little description of the methodologies employed to carry out the empirical research.

3.1 Research Method

The research design that was employed was the mixed methods research design because the researchers needed to conduct a research on the socioeconomic effects of international tourism on communities that live in Uzbekistan. It embraced the convergent parallel mixed-methods approach according to which the data collected was quantitative and qualitative and the data analyzed was done at the same time and synthesized on an interpretation level. The fact that the total effects of tourism could be recorded in the economic indices which are measurable numerically, and in perceptions which cannot be quantified and therefore necessitated a combination between the number set and the contextual perceptions thus creating a comprehensive view.

3.2 Population Sampling

Target population

The study was carried out in the biggest tourist hotspots in Uzbekistan that comprised of Samarkand, Bukhara as well as Khiva. They are selected on the basis of their past, cultural and economic specifics and as far as their progress in the sphere of tourism is concerned. Together, these locations are the main geographical locations where the international tourism is added to the local source of livelihood.

The sample population was pre-selected in terms of those directly involved in the tourism line of occupation. It encompassed employees in the hospitality (hotels and guesthouses), tour guides and tour operators, artisans and manufacturers of hand crafts and products, restaurant and catering employees, transport providers, agricultural suppliers to hotels and restaurants, seasonal workers and informal tourism service providers. The element that made it representative of the various livelihoods channels, which are affected by international tourism in Uzbekistan is the sampling of the citizens in these occupations.

Sampling strategy

In order to sample the respondents, purposive method of sampling was embraced and in the given case, the sampling criteria had the following requirements; the respondent must be actively taking part in any tourism related activity and the respondent must have a minimum of one year experience in the tourism industry. It is based on this that it was able to include people who would be able to give informed opinions concerning socio-economic changes in relation to the tourism industry. The respondents recruited were fifty in number and had various regions and job groups.



The survey would form the basis of the research based on open-ended questions and a lengthy informal discussion with a small sample of respondents of the qualitative data. This convenient qualitative sampling facilitated gathering of the experiential and narrative data which helped in supporting quantitative data.

3.3 Data Collection

Tools and instruments

The form of data collected was quantitative because Google form was a structured survey in form of a questionnaire of 23 questions. The tool questions were close-ended, multiple choices and ordinal scale and Likert scale on the one hand, where the questions sought to measure the demographic characteristics of the respondents, its employment situation, dependency on income in the tourism sector, its perceived changes in the income level in the past five years, its association with tourism supply chain and its opinion on the distribution of the tourism benefits.

Qualitative data were collected using open ended survey questions in which the respondents would provide descriptions of the challenges issues, opportunity, and advice related to the growth of tourism. The other sources of information were small informal yet systematized interviews of small groups of the interviewees during the survey process. These supplements helped in creating a background of the context and contributed to the explanation of the latent causes of quantitative tendencies.

Data collection process

The surveys that will be applied with an aim of gathering the information are carried out both in person and online in the month of November 2025 and it will take three weeks to finish the data collection process through Google Form survey. These procedures were explained to the respondents regarding the purpose of the study, confidentiality, and free will. The mean time of completing the questionnaire was 5-10 mins.

The questionnaires were written or tape written and contained qualitative remarks depending on the field notes, since the interviews made with the employees were short interviews in the tourism sphere. This was so as to make sure that structured and narrative data would be collected.

Data analysis

The quantitative data was analyzed using the SPSS Statistics and coded. The descriptive statistical analysis such as the frequency distribution and percentages, were employed to interpret the demographics variables, income trends, employment statuses, supply-chain interconnectedness and perception of the tourism benefit served as the forgivers. The cross-tabulations investigated the existing relationships between the occupation of the variable, region and the reported changes in incomes.

The thematic analysis was used to analyze the qualitative data. The answers to open-ended questions and field notes were re-read two-three times, in order to outline the similar ideas and trends. The codes would be inductively made and then organized as a higher theme which comprised of: infrastructure problems, unfair allocation of good, lack of access to markets and skill development needs. Through these themes, interpretative understanding of the results was done based on the numerical results.

A more accurate interpretation of the data was then determined by first showcasing the quantitative data and the qualitative data separately and then pairing the two data. Convergence, divergence pattern between sets of data have been discussed to appreciate the aspect of whether or not, qualitative explanations improved or augmented or refuted quantitative tendencies. One of the steps that led to the validity of the whole study was the integration step and was because of triangulation of the various types of evidence.

Ethical Considerations

These were the most ethical practices during the collection of data. It was voluntary and the respondents were aware that they can as well drop out any time. The anonymity and the confidentiality were ensured and no personal data could be classified. The provided data was



applied strictly to the academic point, and the results were presented in aggregate data to exclude the process of revealing individuals and business.

3.4 Limitations of the Method and Sample.

This study has several drawbacks in terms of methodology. The sample size (55 respondents) and the purposive type of the sampling predetermine the lack of representativeness and the lack of generalizability when it comes to all the tourism workers in the Uzbekistan. The self-reported data are subject to bias and inaccuracy especially on income and job stability. The qualitative data came out through the short open-ended questions with minimal depth though they presented the background of the information. Moreover, the geographical area of the study despite covering the hotspots of tourism was not everything that community in the value chain of tourism. The interpretation of the qualitative and quantitative findings is susceptible to fail which should be averted by critical analysis. Irrespective of such constraints, primary data collection will deepen, the local information which cannot be found using the secondary sources of data alone.

This will be a preliminary data collection mixed methodology to provide a general and substantiated analysis of the economic value of tourism in Uzbekistan. It is a hybrid qualitative and quantitative data that will result in the deeper perception of both measurable economic impacts and the social reality that exists but that will assist in establishing better and more comprehensive tourism policy.

Results

This chapter provides the outcomes of the survey and qualitative interview of three big heritage tourism destinations in Uzbekistan including Samarkand, Bukhara and Khiva. They are aimed at finding the socio-demographic characteristics of tourism stakeholders, assessing the key indicators of tourism participation and impacting perception, and giving an insight into the regional variations in the tourism-related experience. When quantitative data analyses, qualitative information is employed to provide a levelled view of the local participation, challenges and opportunities of heritage tourism economy.

4.1 Demographic of the respondents.

The survey was carried out in the samples of 55 who were representative of three large heritage destinations such as Samarkand (n = 20), Bukhara (n = 18) and Khiva (n = 17). It is a representative sample of a heterogeneous socio-demographic profile. The most common was the age category of 26-35 years (36.4%), meaning that the tourism in the regions is enabled by fairly young labor force to a large extent. It was of average gender balance; 58.2 percent of the respondents were male and 41.8 percent female.

The educational attainment was very high, 57.7% of the respondents had the rank of Bachelor degree followed by the secondary education (38.2%). Concerning employment, most of the respondents were formally employed with others being self-employees or part time workers. In terms of the activities in terms of tourism, accommodation services were the most prevalent (35.5%). Overall, the demographic environment shows that the population is highly educated and active in the tourism market and engages into the tourist activity within the three areas.

Characteristic	Most Frequent Category	Percentage (%)
Age Group	26-35	36.4%
Gender	Male	58.2%
Region	Samarkand	36.4%
Education	Bachelor's Degree	57.7%
Occupation	Formal Employment	32.7%



Characteristic	Most Frequent Category	Percentage (%)
Type of Activity	Accommodation	35.5%

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Profile Summary

Source: Own Elaboration

4.2 Descriptive Statistics of Key Variables

Variable	Mea n	SD	Min	Max	ANOVA A F	p- value
Years of involvement	8.25	6.41	1	25	1.84	0.168
Share of income from tourism (%)	56.18	27.9	10	100	2.12	0.130
Perceived tourism benefit fairness (1-4)	2.71	0.91	1	4	0.94	0.398
Local spending retention (%)	42.3	18.2	10	80	3.27	0.046
Tourism impact on quality of life (1-4)	2.83	0.91	1	4	1.09	0.343
Community involvement in planning (1-3)	1.9	0.74	1	3	2.54	0.089

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics

Source: Based on author's research

Table 2 highlights the important quantitative data on the topics of tourism involvement of the respondents and their perceptions. The respondents were average experienced and largely economically reliant with the mean duration of 8.25 years of experience in the tourism sector and earned 56.18 percent of household income in the industry.

The effects of tourism were rated moderately-low. An overall score of 2.71 (benefit fairness, where 1=very unfair, 4=very fair) on the 4-point scale (where 1=very unfair, 4=very positive) and 2.83 the quality of life were the results. Poor scores in the community involvement in planning (1.90/3-point scale, 1= not involved and 3= actively involved), little change in well-being and low-involvement in the process of governance were detected.

Out of all the variables, the only variable showing a significant regional difference was the local spending retention, which has an average of 42.3% with the highest being Khiva ($p = 0.046$). The income share, years of involvement, community involvement and fairness perceptions among the other variables, were not significantly different between regions ($p > 0.05$). Overall, this indicates that similarity in experience of tourism activities is quite evident in the three cities, without considering the fact that the economic power of the local economy may have differences in tourism spending.

Regional Differences

Year of tourism involvement in Bukhara and Samarkand and Khiva were not significantly different as compared to other years ($t(53) = 1.10, p = 0.276$). The same was seen in gender-based comparisons because the difference in perceptions of fairness was not significant ($t(51) = -0.47, p = 0.639$).



Chi-square tests uncovered that there was great regional diversity in tourism job types ($\chi^2 = 11.82, p = 0.037$). This kind of activity of producing handicraft was more commonly covered in Bukhara and Khiva, yet in Samarkand, guiding positions were more dominant. The three cities were not significantly different at the component of formality of employment ($\chi^2 = 4.07, p = 0.539$).

4.3 Qualitative Themes and Discussion Synthesis.

Theme 1: Barriers in Organizations that sabotage Local Benefit Capture.

The most referred issue (as revealed by 38 respondents) was shortage of financial resources and investment. The small businesspersons found it hard to access the credit to grow their businesses or even upgrade their facilities. Bureaucratic hurdles like implicated licensing procedures and the sense of unequal taxation on the micro-enterprises were also included in them.

The acquisition of all the permits of a small guesthouse is a long and expensive process. When you are occasionally tempted to stick to the means of approach that are no more than informal you stand in no defense at all. - Guesthouse owner, Bukhara.

There were also infrastructure limitations particularly within centers of these cities which were considered old. Other issues that were experienced include poor parking, lack of water supply during high seasons and lack of good management of waste. Furthermore, the unfair access to the market was also in common. Many professionals in arts and agricultural industry have grumbled that they find it difficult to deal directly with tourists or present their products to larger tourism firms.

The textiles and souvenirs are subcontracted to the Tashkent companies by the large hotels in Samarkand.

They say that we have no standardized products or that we cannot supply them in big quantities as they demand. - Artisan, Samarkand.

Only these qualitative data can explain the moderate scores of benefit fairness and alarming average local spending retention 42.3. They give an idea on how the structural factors will facilitate a leaky value chain, where majority of the tourist expenditure will not pass through the local smallholders.

Theme 2: Perceived Livelihood Effects: Dependence between dissatisfaction.

The respondents indicated that tourism is a vital factor as far as cash inflow is involved particularly in the spring and fall seasons. It was given the accolade of providing employment to the educated youths and renewal of traditional workmanship. Weakness as an accompaniment of this dependence came to be experienced. As it was observed, the revenue is volatile and seasonal. Some of the Samarkand respondents highlight the implications of housing and commodities on tourism destinations through inflammatory implications, which contradicts the impact of income experience to some degree.

The guiding wage is fair but 5 years later the billing fee in my flat by Registan had increased tripled. Such advantages are related to increasing expenses. - Tour guide, Samarkand.

This aids and supports the version of SLF which concludes that tourism money, though large, does not correlate the other livelihoodal determinants (such as potentiality of cost-effective living) to transform the net result of the score (2.83) of the effect of quality of life.

Theme 3: Formalistic Governance and The Minimal Empowerment.

The qualitative data on the quantitative outcome of the low community involvement drew a very graphic description (mean=1.90). Respondents also talked of what is also known as a top-down approach to planning, and this involved the consultation at the Local level being figurative.

It even tempts to be invited to meetings in the khokimiyat [local government], yet the plans are to be made in new territories of the tourism business or regulations. They have their ears filled and we do not see our ideas at work. - Khiva, the representative of the community.

The presumed deficiency of agency is also contributing to the disillusionment and the sense of local proprietorship, which is the key to the sustainable development, which, in its turn, can be



compared to the post-Soviet form of governance in which the decision-making process gets centralised.

Theme 4: Unique and Inclusive ways in Khiva

One of the significant distinctions is the retention of the local spending in the region and it was to be taken into account. Qualitative sources say Khiva had had a watered-down historic center (Ichan-Qala), later growth burst as compared to Samarkand and Bukhara, and an established handicrafts tradition which has enabled a rather local economy. Direct sales are simple because of the existence of such artisans and owners of small shops which cover the walled city.

Khiva has a diversity of small family workshops in the former city. The tourists do direct selling. I believe there is more cash over with the craftspeople. - Woodcarver, Khiva.

The respondents reported that in all the cities, there are evident opportunities of improvement. The most apparent was the establishment of Community-Based Tourism (CBT) in the adjacent on Kyrgyzstan to atomize the incomes of the hubs of the cities. Other suggestions that were important included:

The probability of establishment of local producer cooperatives to constitute economies of scale and satisfy the demands of the larger hotels.

Studying special skills in hospitality business, internet marketing and foreign language.

Coming up with a formal local procurement scheme between the farmers and artisans and the tourism enterprises.

5. Discussion

The findings support an intermediate level of economic dependency on tourism by the respondents because 56 percent of the households base on the tourism activities when it comes to the household income. This is in line with what literature has indicated regarding heritage-city tourism economies in Central Asia where tourism plays a prominent role in the livelihood despite being uncertain and severely seasonal.

The inequalities in the region were low though not very high regardless of the significance of tourism other than the perceived local spending retention which was merely extremely high in Khiva. This signifies that Khiva is more absorbed into the tourist economy of setting up artisans and small-scale vendors into the metropolis compared with western and larger cities with more market orientation, such as Samarkand and Bukhara.

Community lacks a great involvement in the planning process is a pointer to other similar cultural heritage sites in the developing economies where the decisions and control is largely centralized and the controlled process are those of the state or foreign investors. The idea of not distributing the benefits equally implies unrelenting leakage by:

1. Imported goods for hotels
2. Tour companies owned by non-Indians.
3. Investors (non-local) based in cities.

The qualitative contributions support the fact that the access to the market will increase with the tourism and structural accesses such as finance, infrastructures, and regulatory constraints impound the gain of pro-poor tourism.

The definition of the community-based tourism (CBT) and the fortification of the local value chain are based on the assumption of the existence of the clear guidelines on how the positive outcomes of the local development could be improved. The resultant total allows to comprehend how the heritage tourism in Uzbekistan is capable of being re oriented so that it could be more inclusive, more locally-related, in which the interest of the heritage tourism is the capacity developing, and the lowest leakage is minimal.

Synthesis



The comparison of the two shows that there is irreconcilable contradiction of the fact that high livelihood dependency on tourism correlates with low local empowerment and the hemorrhagic economic drainage. The communities are also economical productive but have a low value chain and governance system position. Potential but not prescriptive cases include Khiva where increased spatial economic connectivity would possibly help enhance retention at the local level. The widespread opinion among the stakeholders is that the transition between the existing model to a more inclusive model is supposed to be conducted gradually in terms of financial access, bureaucratic reform, coordination of the value chain, and the reality of participatory planning.

6. Conclusion

The present paper has assessed the economic impact of the international tourism on the hosts in Uzbekistan with a mention of the heritage cities of Samarkand, Bukhara, and Khiva. The research design was a mixed-method design based on quantitative survey of 55 participants of tourism, and qualitative interpretation of the data given by the participants of the survey regarding open-ended questions, and informal interviews. The findings will give one a faint understanding of how tourism sustains the lives of the locals how the benefit will be distributed and how the community has been shaped by the structures themselves.

Generally, the results reveal that tourism is a major economic pursuit among the sampled communities as the respondents earn more than half of their household income as a result of tourism activities. Despite this high degree of dependence, there are imbalanced distributions of benefits of tourism. Most of the measurable measures like the number of years of involvement, the share of income, the perceived fairness, the impact of tourism on quality of life, as well as, the involvement of communities showed no significant differences by the region suggesting quite similar tourism experiences. The regional disparity was the only prominent difference and was in the nature of local spending retention that was highest in Khiva, which signified that it was more assimilated in the value chain of small vendors and artisans to the tourism.

The qualitative data revealed that, qualitatively, there were several barriers to participation in a fair way in the system. The lack of financial strengths, incomplete infrastructure, inability to market their products to tourists, and bureaucracy was very widespread in the respondents. There is also the low aspect of community involvement in the planning of tourism and decision-making process is regarded to be top-down and ceremonial in nature. These restrictions create additional leakages of the tourist income in the imports of goods, firms belonging to foreigner and non-local investors.

The implications of these findings are relevant in the fields of policy and practice. The first one is that community based tourism programmes must be institutionalised, funded and expanded where national CBT mechanisms should offer technical support, marketing and quality assurance to CBT projects in heritage cities and their rural environments. Second, it should incentivise or mandate local procurement via procurement charters that require large accommodation and tour operators to procure designated quota of goods and services locally facilitated by building out artisan and agricultural co-operatives that can deliver quality and quantity goods and services. Third, local entrepreneurs and workers, in hospitality management, digital marketing, e-commerce, and foreign languages, should receive capacity development in a systematic way, associated with the availability of tourism-specific microfinance products with repayment terms that reflect the seasonality. Fourth, simplification of regulations such as simplified business registration, harmonisation of license, and the facilitation of the adaptation of culturally specific informal operations to formal structures are necessary in order to minimise impediments to micro-enterprise formalisation and subsequent development. Fifth, there is a need to have authentic participatory levels of governance, like constituted Community Tourism



Councils with a recognised advisory capacity on destination planning processes, in order to counter the reported lack of community voice and ownership.

Subsequent research ought to focus on the limitations of the present study via nationally representative surveys of the tourism workforce, value chain studies of the individual product line (silk, ceramics, dried fruit), longitudinal studies of the effects of policy interventions, elimination of the gender effect by conducting a disaggregated study of the empowerment constraints and opportunities, and exploration of the rural tourism nexus that is needed to enable a more spatially balanced growth. The structural obstacles identified within the context of this research can be alleviated and Uzbekistan can strive to have a tourism industry that is not only globally competitive but also inclusive and resilient as a society where the success of its great cultural heritage is widely and fairly spread.

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