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Foreign Experience in the Development of Historical and Cultural Tourism and Economic Mechanisms for its Application in the Conditions of Uzbekistan

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Abstract: This article analyzes the economic essence of historical and cultural tourism and its role in regional development and the growth of the service sector. It studies the adequacy of governance models, clustering processes, digital technologies and public-private partnership mechanisms for the management of historical and cultural tourism in Spain, Italy, France and Turkey. The paper analyses, drawing on foreign experience, the opportunities to include cultural heritage in economic circulation, tourism rent, and the introduction of the “smart destination”. Based on the results of the research, an integrated adaptation model is proposed for the urban clusters of Uzbekistan based on the historical development of urban clusters, digital management systems and sustainable development principles.

Keywords: Historical and Cultural Tourism, Tourism Cluster, Clustering, Smart Destination, Digital Technologies, Sustainable Tourism, Tourism Rent, Regional Development, Service Sector, Integrated Model, Adaptation Model, Tourism Infrastructure.

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1. Introduction

Historical and cultural tourism is regarded as one of the main factors of sustainable economic development in the interdependent world, as it helps both regional economies to diversify and the service sector to grow, and transforms cultural heritage into an economic asset. This industry represents and strategic priority within the national economic development framework for Uzbekistan, gifted with fine historical and architectural potential.

In this regard, Point 58 of the Presidential Decree No. PF-158 dated September 11, 2023, “On the Strategy ‘Uzbekistan - 2030’”, approved by Shavkat Mirziyoyev, sets as priority tasks the development of inbound and domestic tourism, the creation of comfortable conditions for tourists and an increase in tourist flows.

The Uzbekistan - 2030 Strategy envisages comprehensive measures aimed at modernizing tourism infrastructure, improving service quality, and strengthening practical policy instruments in the sector to ensure the timely and effective implementation of these goals [1].

However, despite the presence of historic cities such as Samarkand, Bukhara, and Khiva – all included in the World Cultural Heritage List – the existing tourism potential has not yet been fully realized. Therefore, drawing upon the experience of Spain, Italy, and

France, it remains a pressing task to develop an integrated model tailored to the conditions of Uzbekistan. Such a model should incorporate cluster-based development, digital governance mechanisms (“smart destination”), and effective public-private partnership frameworks to enhance the competitiveness and sustainability of historical and cultural tourism.

Methodology The primary objective of the research is to examine foreign experience in the development of historical and cultural tourism and to adapt it to the conditions of Uzbekistan. The analysis is analytical, comparative, statistical, conceptual, and empirical. The experiences of Spain, Italy, France and Turkey were analyzed and indeed compared under five main themes/clusters (clustering mechanism, digital governance, public private partnership, development towards sustainable tourism sector).

Statistical data were analyzed according to international sources (UNWTO, WB, OECD etc.). It also permitted an assessment of GDP, employment and tourism revenues attributable to tourism, and thus test the economic efficiency of history and culture tourism. According to this, the preliminary concept of an interregional integrated tourism model for the historically built cities of Uzbekistan and a concept of a digital platform were developed. The suggested framework indicates a distinct prospective in designing tourism beyond a mere flow of tourists, but a holistic plan integrated with conservation, administration, and sustainable development of cultural heritage.

2. Literature Review

The economic essence and development mechanisms of historical and cultural tourism have been extensively examined in foreign and international scholarship. The key sources and their principal findings are analyzed below. According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), more than 40% of international travel in 2019 was associated with cultural and historical heritage sites. This statistic highlights the stability of historical and cultural tourism as a segment of the global economy and demonstrates its direct impact on regional development through investment attraction, employment generation, and value added [2].

Gonzalez-Reverte (2019) examines the concept of the “smart tourism destination” in Spain, emphasizing that digital technologies enable the integration of visitor flow management with the sustainable preservation of cultural heritage. This approach is exemplified by Spain’s successful implementation of clustering strategies and smart-destination platforms based on its 49 UNESCO World Heritage sites [3].

Guccio Luigi, Lisi Domenico, Mignosa Anna, and Rizzo Ilde (2018), using the case of Italy, empirically demonstrate how the monetary value of cultural heritage and other tourism attractiveness factors influence the number of visits. Their research confirms that the economic valuation of cultural heritage plays a crucial role not only in increasing tourist flows but also in ensuring the sustainable growth of tourism revenues [4].

Panzeri Elisa, de Graaff Thomas, and de Groot Henri L. F. (2021) analyze the magnetic effect of “superstar” UNESCO sites in European regions, particularly in France and Italy. They conclude that high-profile cultural heritage sites attract not only visitors to their immediate locations but also generate spillover effects across entire regions, thereby amplifying the overall economic impact [5].

Mukhambetov Timur and Ottenbacher Michael (2021), focusing on Central Asia and Silk Road countries, evaluate the cluster approach as an effective mechanism for developing cultural heritage tourism. Their findings indicate that regional clustering facilitates resource integration, enhances competitiveness, and supports sustainable tourism development. The general conclusion drawn from the reviewed literature is that the economic effectiveness of historical and cultural tourism depends on the following factors:

Clustering and regional integration;
 Digital technologies and smart governance;
 Public-private partnership mechanisms;
 Principles of sustainable development and heritage conservation [6], [7].

Under the conditions of Uzbekistan, adapting these international experiences would enable the integration of historic cities such as Samarkand, Bukhara, Khiva, and Shahrisabz into unified tourism clusters, the implementation of digital platforms, and the establishment of a sustainable tourism model. Such a model should be designed with due consideration of national cultural values and regional specificities.

3. Analysis and Results

Tourism of the historical and cultural kind, compared to other kinds of tourism, is one of the most sustainable and high added value segments of the world tourism market. Cultural, historic, and heritage sites were the context for 42% of international travel internationally in 2019, according to the World Tourism Organization [8], [9]. Through greater investment, job creation, and value added in the service sector, this indicator shows the downstream impacts of heritage and cultural tourism on regional economies. In Spain, 83.7 million tourists were received in 2019, generating USD 92 billion in tourism revenue. Approximately 54-56% of visitors traveled specifically to historical heritage sites. The tourism sector accounted for 11.8% of GDP and 12.4% of total employment. Spain's 49 UNESCO World Heritage Sites have been managed through cluster-based governance, with tourist flows effectively regulated via "smart destination" platforms [10].

In 2019, in Italy, 64.5 million tourists, for more than 60%, densely concentrated only in a few metropolitan historical cities, such as, Rome, Florence and Venice. Greece, the birthplace of many traditions during how human civilizations evolved, heavily relied on historical traditions and cultural tourism with an approximate annual revenue of €155 billion of about 13% on GDP. The smart heritage city concept has been piloted to alleviate demand on infrastructure while not compromising the preservation of cultural assets for future generations.

Over 90 million tourists in France earned a tourism revenue of 170 billion euros [11], [12]. About 65% of those attracted to cultural and historical sites. With an average length of stay of 2.3 days for the individual destinations, Festivals and exhibitions were managed to increase the length of stay to 3.1 days on average, resulting in higher tourist expenditures overall.

51.2 million tourists generated USD 34.5 billion in Turkey and 48% of visitors came to visit historical sites. Being adept with the management of 21 UNESCO sites and the launch of public-private partnership mechanisms, tourism revenue grew by a tune of 2.6 from 2010 to 2019.

These indicators affirm that the economic viability of historical and cultural tourism is strongly determined by innovative governance, cluster development, digitalization, and public-private partnerships. Processed view enables tourism activity contributing to 10–13% of GDP, millions of jobs created, and sustainability of service sector growth [13].

Adaptation model for Uzbekistan ↔ Foreign experience Transformation of foreign experience for Uzbekistan assumes adaptation and implementation of digital platforms, cluster-based approach, public-private partnerships, sustainability mechanisms and historic-cultural protected area development strategy successfully applied in developed countries for historical and cultural tourism management based on a national context. These are: A new idea of management based on that in Spain, Italy, and France to connect historical sites in a single system for the management of these sites; but closer practice of Turkey model, to connect regional clustering and its active attractiveness and adapted

innovative practices closely to available local resources, infrastructure, and institutional environment in historic cities of Uzbekistan such as Samarkand, Bukhara, Khiva, and Shahrisabz [14], [15]. As a result, advanced foreign practices are transformed into an integrated adaptation model aligned with national cultural values, regional specificities, and socio-economic priorities (Figure 1).

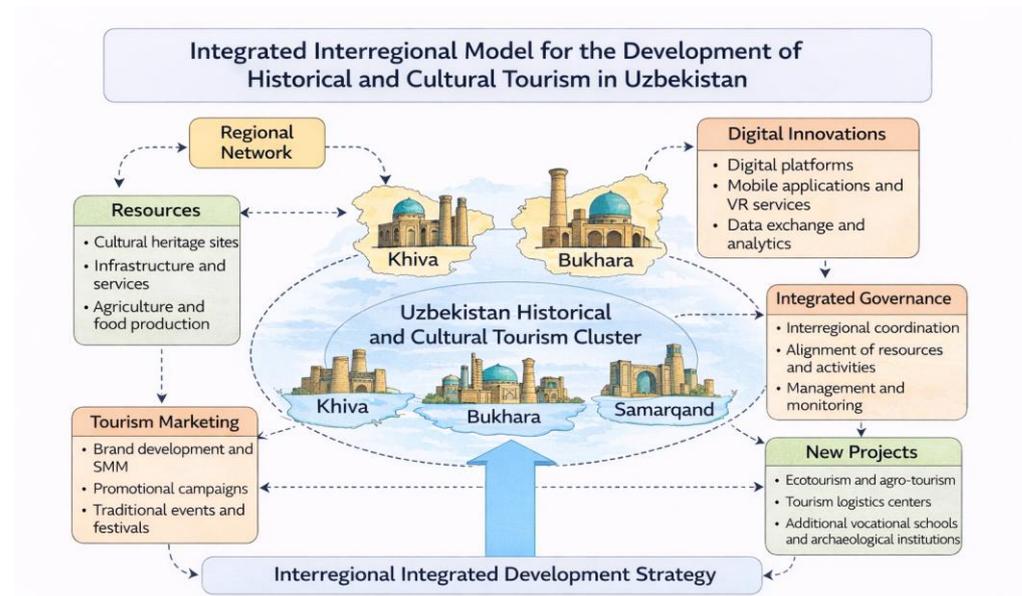


Figure 1. Interregional Integrated Adaptation Model for the Development of Historical and Cultural Tourism in Uzbekistan.

Interregional Adaptation Model for the Development of Historical and Cultural Tourism in Uzbekistan. The figure illustrates a model for developing historical and cultural tourism in Uzbekistan based on interregional adaptation [16]. At the center of the model is the “Uzbekistan Historical and Cultural Tourism Cluster”, interpreted as a comprehensive system operating through a resource-management-innovation-marketing-regional cooperation chain.

Key components of the model include:

- **Regional Network and Resources:** Cultural heritage sites, infrastructure, services, agriculture, and handicrafts form the primary resources of the tourism cluster.
- **Digital Innovations:** Mobile applications, VR services, and data analytics adapt the “smart tourism” concept to Uzbekistan, enabling management of tourist flows and service quality [17], [18].
- **Integrated Governance:** Interregional coordination, resource allocation, and monitoring ensure cluster sustainability, based on a public-private partnership framework.
- **Tourism Marketing:** Branding, social media marketing (SMM), and thematic routes (e.g., “Great Silk Road Cities”) create a unified tourism image for the cluster regions and extend visitor stays.

The model implies going beyond the mere transfer of foreign best practices and involves adapting them systematically to national and regional settings, considering the historical, regional, and institutional peculiarities of Uzbekistan [19]. It is the conceptual framework the dissertation research is based on and which has scientific and practical value for tourism sustainability in historic cities and foundations for a strategic, interregional, and integrated development of historical and cultural tourism.

This figure presents tourism as a comprehensive system that combines visitor flows with heritage preservation, management, and sustainable development. The model follows

a sequential framework: “**design concept** → **objectives** → **functions** → **integration** → **practice** → **users**”, bridging strategic and operational levels.

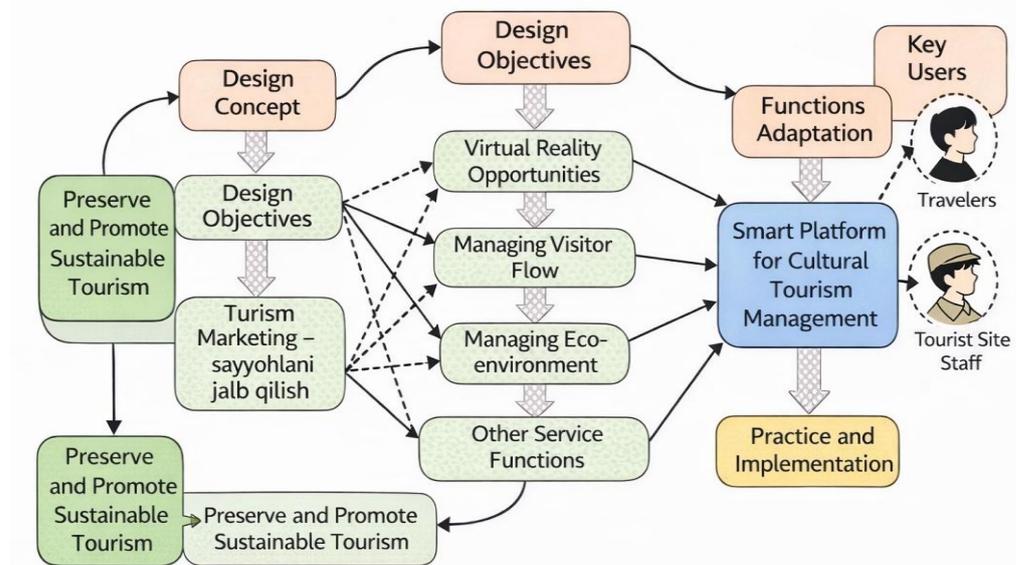


Figure 2. Integrated Digital Platform and Management Model for Historical and Cultural Tourism.

Key elements of the model include:

Design Concept and Objectives: Ensures a balance between attracting tourists through cultural heritage and tourism marketing while maintaining economic benefits alongside cultural responsibility (Figure 2).

Functional Blocks: Include virtual reality (VR), visitor flow management, environmental monitoring, and auxiliary services such as transport, ticketing, and guided tours.

Integration: All functions are unified within the “Comprehensive Platform for Historical and Cultural Tourism”, transitioning management from fragmented to systematic control [20].

Functionality: Tourists & tourism staff use it to information & process tracking, service management

Based upon the human-technology-heritage connection, this model interprets historical and cultural tourism as a sustainable and systematic mechanism [21].

4. Conclusion

Historical and cultural tourism has established itself as a stable and highly added value segment in the world tourism market over the past 10 years. Practice from Spain, Italy, France and Turkey shows that the management of historical heritage as an economic resource, clustering, digitalization and public-private partnership mechanisms are central for the transformation of tourism into an economically and socially efficient sector. In Uzbekistan, it is known that despite the historical cities of Samarkand, Bukhara, Khiva, Shahrisabz being a destination that attracts international tourism potential, integrated foreign approaches have not yet been fully adapted. Consequently, for the management of the inhabitant inflow it is necessary to perform the tourisit rent formation and service sector expansion through interregional integrated clustering and digital platforms.

These measures consist of: establishment of clusters along Samarkand-Bukhara-Khiva-Shahrisabz route, unification of local resources and an infrastructure within a single

system, smart-destination and virtual tourism solutions via interactive services, public-private partnerships, and environmental and cultural sustainability. Additionally, creating thematic interregional tourism brands and extending visitor stays via festivals and cultural events will support the sustainable development of Uzbekistan's historical and cultural tourism at both regional and national levels. Ultimately, historical and cultural tourism can serve not only as a source of economic revenue but also as a tool for preserving cultural capital and diversifying the service sector, securing a priority position in national development strategies.

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