

SPECIFIC CHARACTERISTICS OF ETHNOTOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN THE SURKHANDARYA REGION AND THEIR ANALYSIS BASED ON ETHNOTOURISM PRACTICES

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ABSTARACT

The main objective of the study is to analyze the practical significance of the development of ethnotourism in the Republic of Uzbekistan today based on modern computer technologies and develop scientifically based recommendations for sustainable development. In particular, Surkhandarya region was selected as the research center. As a basis, it is aimed at determining the attitude of the local population to the high level of organization of ethnotourism in the region, as well as analyzing the economic and socio-cultural impact of ethnotourism from both a positive and negative perspective. Four major ethnotourism centers were identified in Surkhandarya regions: Termez, Boysun, Denov, and Shorchidistricts. Based on available statistical data, the national composition of the Surkhandarya population was determined and analyzed. The survey conducted to achieve the research objectives lasted from July 15 to August 15, 2025. A short empirical survey was conducted and distributed among the population of Surkhandarya region. According to the results of the study, the role and practical significance of ethnotourism in the regional economy was found to be positive.

KEYWORDS

Ethnotourism, cultural tourism, ethnoses, ethnographic history, national costumes.

INTRODUCTION

One of the most promising ways to preserve ethnic diversity, which is one of the most pressing issues of the 21st century, is to develop ethnotourism in these regions. Ethnotourism helps tourists realize their personal interest in new cultural and authentic experiences through active participation in traditional lifestyles. Staying with a local family, the opportunity to share traditional activities of local residents and their traditional lifestyles makes the tourist product more impressive and diverse in various types of tourism. (A. Alexandrova; E. Aigina 2014).Ethnotourism has gained popularity today because it allows people to learn about the traditions and cultural life of different ethnic groups not by reading literature or watching television programs, but by directly entering the living environment of ethnic groups. In this sense, the reason for visiting areas inhabited by certain ethnic groups of interest to tourists is considered a factor that creates conditions for the development of the country's economy, including a particular ethnic community, and provides a significant amount of income and a positive inflow of foreign exchange (Jamison, 1999; Wood, 1998) [1], [2]. Ethnotourism is defined as travel aimed at observing the culture and lifestyle of truly unique peoples, which allows tourists to visit the homes of local residents and participate in cultural events, dances and attracts participation in religious ceremonies. Nowadays, ethnotourism is considered to be based on the search for exotic cultural experiences by travelers, such as visiting ethnic villages, ethnic

minority houses and ethnic gardens, participating in ethnic events and festivals, watching traditional dances and ceremonies, or purchasing national handicrafts and souvenirs (A. Aleksandrova; E. Aigina 2014). [13]. In addition, ethnotourism, which is an important element of the above-mentioned tourism industry, is of particular importance for the region as a development strategy not only socially, but also economically (McIntosh & John son, 2005) [14].

The diversity of ethnic groups and different nationalities is one of the distinctive features of the current stage of development. Ethnic culture, ethnic and national diversity are one of the distinctive features of modern society. However, in the conditions of globalization, rapid scientific and technological development, environmental crises and the increase in information flows, the life of ethnic groups and minorities is becoming increasingly difficult. Ethnic-based tourism is one of the options for preserving ethnic diversity. In recent years, most developing countries have focused on the development of ethnotourism as a means of stimulating the development of local communities, including their economic development, which is carried out through the extensive use of cultural resources, that is, the potential of these destinations. (A. Alexandrova; E. Aigina 2014). (Henderson, 2003; Smith, 1989) [3], [4]. In addition, ethnotourism is considered a special force that not only creates conditions for the recognition of culture, traditions and languages, but also strengthens the specific characteristics and connections of different ethnic groups and communities (van den Berghe, 1992, 1994; Boissevain, 1996; Pitchford, 1995) [5], [6], [7], [8]. defines ethnotourism as meeting, seeking and pursuing other ethnic groups. Recent scientific research shows that ethnic and cultural tourism, which are very close in content, have branched out into a number of directions and are beginning to interact with other types of tourism.

The publication of a number of fundamental monographs by researchers such as K. Sh. Shoniyozov, T. Fayziev, B. Ahmedov, I. Ermatov, B. Kh. Karmisheva (P. Nazarov 2016) on the ethnogenesis and ethnic history of the Uzbek people, their ethnic composition, and a number of sub-ethnos in the region in the 1960s and 1970s led to the revival of the direction of ethnogenesis and ethnic history in the ethnography of the Uzbek people. Also, during the 20th century, a wealth of empirical and theoretical materials on the ethnography of the Uzbek people were collected in the direction of ethnology. In academic research conducted in the first half of the 20th century, more attention was paid to recording information about traditional customs that were becoming a thing of the past. However, starting from the second half of the 20th century, the current situation changed and the practical value of ethnological materials increased. After our country gained independence, the science of ethnology also rose to a new level. In particular, a number of studies were created on the problems of ethnogenesis and ethnic history. In this area, a number of fundamental studies and monographs by one of the heads of the ethnological science, academician Karim Shoniyozov, are of particular note. During his almost half-century of scientific activity, the hardworking and dedicated scientist K. Shoniyozov consistently studied the ethnogenesis and ethnic history of the Uzbeks and other fraternal peoples living in the Central Asian region.

A new era in the study of the ethnography of the southern oases began in the last quarter of the 20th century. During this period, the history, material and spiritual culture, customs and traditions of the population of the Surkhandarya region, where we are conducting our research, were studied. As can be seen from the above, ethnographic research conducted in the Kashkadarya and Surkhandarya oases and the initial stages of research, the study of the ethnic history and composition of the population, the unique material and spiritual heritage of the region, the traditions and rituals of a large number of sources are compared from the perspective of the modern era. It was shown that it is necessary to study on the basis of drawing clear scientific and theoretical conclusions by comparison. In the works of N.A. Maev, written based on the data of the Hissar expedition conducted in 1875 and 1878, ethnographic data were determined on the ethnic composition of the Khongirad, Durman, the Katagan, Yuz, Marka,

Lokai and Tajiks living in the territory of the Surkhan oasis, the geographical location of the oasis population, their dwellings, clothing, food, as well as their traditional economy. (P. Nazarov 2016)

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Since the first years of independence, special attention has been paid to all branches of tourism, especially ethnographic research. Because the Republic of Uzbekistan has unique opportunities for the development of ethnic and cultural tourism. Uzbekistan is economically and geographically located in the middle of Central Asia, surrounded by the countries of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Afghanistan. As a result, various large and small ethnic groups have formed. The indigenous population of Central Asia mainly belongs to two large races: the Mongoloid and the European race. The Mongoloid race includes Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, Karakalpaks, and the European race includes Uzbeks, Tajiks, Turkmens and other peoples. Most of the peoples of Central Asia speak languages and dialects that are part of the Turkic language group of the Altai family. Their ethnic and national culture was formed in connection with the Uzbek, Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, Turkmens, Tajiks, Russians, Koreans and many other peoples. According to data, 100 years ago, representatives of about 70 nationalities lived in the territory of present-day Uzbekistan. 30 years later, this number reached 91, in 1959 - 113, in 1978 - 123. A list taken in 2011 shows that representatives of 137 nationalities and ethnic groups live in Uzbekistan. The main goal of a multinational state policy should be to form interethnic harmony and religious tolerance. The Republic of Uzbekistan is considered a country with a great cultural and rich historical heritage, as well as a high level of ethnic diversity.

The most important aspects of the development of ethnotourism in Uzbekistan are the preservation of a high level of ethnic diversity of the population, which is manifested not only at the national or regional level, but also within individual subjects of the Republic of Uzbekistan and even within local administrative units (rural communities, districts, rayons). (A. Aleksandrova; E. Aigina 2014). Although tourism sectors in Uzbekistan, in particular ethnotourism, have been formed since the early years of the 21st century, they have shown their positive results in the period from 2016 to 2025. The growth of interest in local culture, objects and ethnic phenomena, their everyday life, costumes, language, folklore, traditions and customs, ethnic creativity in Uzbekistan has led to the development of ethnotourism. (A. Aleksandrova; E. Aigina 2014). This is due to laws established by the state and various state programs, as well as revived festivals. Tourists have the opportunity to visit many ethno-villages and neighborhoods in Surkhandarya region and get acquainted with their ethnic way of life. Initially, Surkhandarya region was established on March 6, 1941. The area is 20.1 thousand km². It consists of 14 districts, 8 cities, 114 towns and 865 rural settlements. The region is mainly inhabited by Uzbeks, Tajiks, Turkmens and Russians. The table below provides information on the national composition of the population of Surkhandarya region at the beginning of 2013-2020.

Table 1: National composition of the population of Surkhandarya region 2014-2024

The most populous city in Surkhandarya representatives of the nation	2014		2024	
	The total population is in people	Share in Percent	The total population is in people	Share in Percent
Total population of Surkhandarya region	2260600	100	2629135	100
uzbeks	1903425	84,2	2222182	84,5
tajiks	280314	12,4	326045	12,4
turkmens	2260	1,3	2705	1,2

russians	22606	1,0	21376	0,8
kazakhs	226	0,01	195	0,1
karakalpoks	226	0,01	160	0,006
kyrgyz	29387	0,1	32254	0,006
Tatars	6781	0,3	6985	0,2
koreans	678	0,03	739	0,02
ukrainians	4521	0,2	3554	0,1
Representatives of other nationalities	9042	0,4	12940	0,5

Note: The table was re-edited by the researcher based on data obtained from the Surkhandarya Regional Statistics Department.

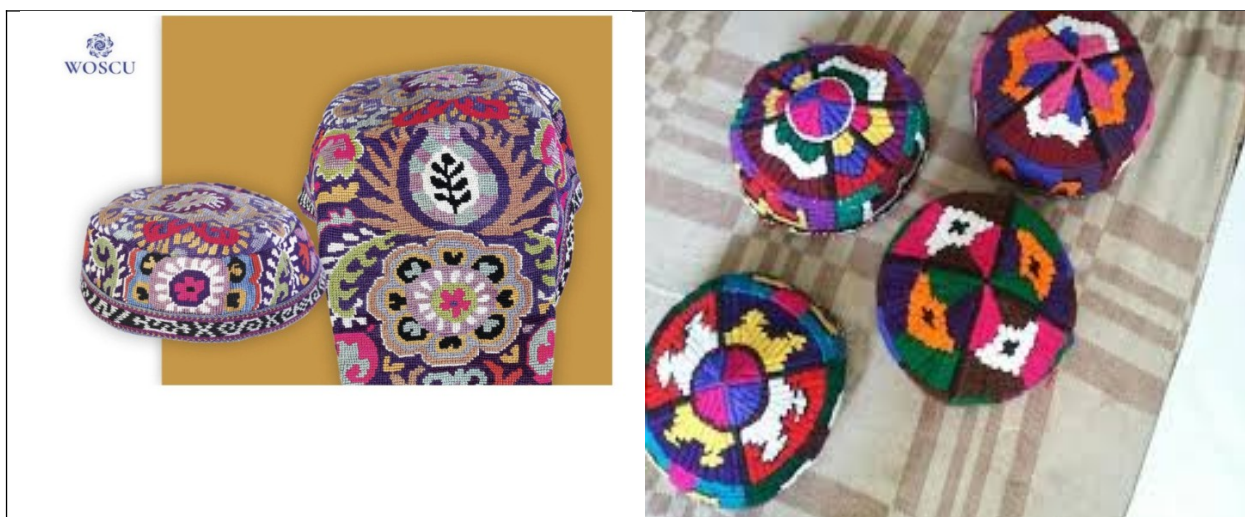
Currently, the region's population is mainly composed of representatives of several nationalities. Of these, Uzbeks make up 84.5%, Tajiks 12.4%, Turkmens 1.2%, and Russians 0.8%. Uzbeks, Tajiks, Turkmens, and representatives of other nationalities live in this region, and cultural harmony has been formed between them. According to the results of the conducted studies, the location of the population and ethnic groups in the southern plain part of the region differed from its northern part. In particular, representatives of various ethnic clans and tribes lived in the Denou, Sariosiyo, Uzun and Shurchi districts. Uzbeks and Tajiks made up the majority in these regions. Uzbeks lived in the foothills of the Babatag and in the upper reaches of the Surkhandarya, and Tajiks lived on the right and left banks of the To'palang, Sangardak, Obizarang, Khojaipok, Kyzylsuv, and Karatog rivers. Therefore, we can see that the Uzbeks formed a large ethnic group. Among the ethnic groups in the Surkhan oasis, the Turkmen also played an important role. It was found that the Turkmen in the Surkhan oasis lived mainly in the southern and southwestern parts of the oasis, especially in areas such as Boysun and Sherabad. These groups, in turn, preserved their own separate language, culture and customs, but they formed harmonious cultural ties with the Uzbeks and Tajiks. Research has found information that in the villages of Gegirdak and Navubag near the city of Sherabad in the Sherabad oasis, Uzbek-speaking Chigatai and Afghans lived together. [15]

1.3 National costumes of the region: The bright, open colors, free cut, and unique, diverse embroidery of Surkhandarya costumes indicate the high taste of the people. In Surkhandarya, women's headdresses called "kiygich" and "bash" are unique to Surkhandarya and are not found in other parts of Uzbekistan. "Bash" is a very special headdress that performs several functions:

Women protected their heads from heat, cold, and wind;

In it, women kept small items that were often needed in life (thread, needles, combs, and combs).

Figure 1: National Surkhon skullcaps of women from Surkhandarya region.



The women of Surkhandarya loved red and cherry colors. They chose colorful fabrics with stripes, sidirsga and large flowers for their clothes. The traditional women's dress of Surkhandarya is distinguished by the brightness of its colors. The women's dress includes: inner and outer shirts, trousers, outerwear, headdresses and jewelry. Embroidery on clothes was sewn not only to give beauty and aesthetic taste, but also had religious foundations. In particular, it was believed that such decorations protect women, children and brides from the evil eye. The clothing of the Surkhan oasis residents is made from ancient fabrics passed down from generation to generation, such as alacha, boz, khanatlas, banoras, shoyi, bekasam, adras, and other fabrics. [16] The Karluk, Qatagan, Turk, Kipchak, Mogyoni, Urgut, and other tribes of the oasis weave various fabrics from cotton. The mountainous regions of the oasis are the most productive in weaving cotton and linen fabrics. It has become quite developed in Darband, Sayrab, Muzrabod, Vakhshivar, Sangardak, Sina, Khonjiza, Denou, Qarlyk, Mirshodi and Sariosiya.

Figure 2: National costumes of women from Surkhandarya region.



Surkhandarya's Boysun district is the strongest ethnotourism center in Uzbekistan. This area is a UNESCO-recognized intangible cultural heritage site. There are examples of real ethnovillages in the villages of Omonkhona, Sayrab, Darband, Machay and Kofrun. The fact that

the village of Omonkhona in Boysun district of Surkhandarya region was recognized as one of the winners of the “Best Tourism Villages” competition held by UN Tourism proves that the area is a real ethnotourism center. More than 270 candidate villages from 65 countries in Africa, America, Asia and Europe participated in this year's competition. The Tourism Committee of Uzbekistan nominated the village of Amonkhona, located in Boysun district of Surkhandarya region. As a result, the village of Omonkhona was recognized as one of the winners of the competition and was included in the “Upgrade Programme” of the project. This is another important achievement of the tourism sector of Uzbekistan on a global scale.

There are 8 museums in the region, which present interesting exhibitions about the history, creativity and spiritual rituals of Surkhandarya. The number of household and ethnographic items in these museums is 3760 (2023). The most interesting presentation of national culture can be seen during national holidays and events. National holidays, crafts and folklore make the regional tourism product even more attractive and vivid. The traditions and culture of the indigenous peoples living in Surkhandarya serve as the most attractive factor for the development of tourism in the region. This has long been understood by the state authorities. In accordance with the Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On measures to improve tourism infrastructure and create modern services and tourism facilities in the mountainous recreational areas of Surkhandarya region” (No. PQ-439), adopted on December 16, 2024, new initiatives have been announced to develop tourism in Surkhandarya. Since the village of Omonkhona and Sina is a national cultural center, this tourism area will further develop as the main center of ethnotourism on a republican scale and will not lose its ethnic character for many years.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The term “ethnotourism” was first explained by W. Smith (1977), who defined ethnotourism as a major type of tourist activity, often associated with the activities of local people in a specific market, which characterizes the exotic and other customs of these peoples [9]. Graburn (1978) defines ethnotourism as a combination of cultural and natural tourism. In addition, ethnotourism is defined as a journey to specific exotic peoples and worlds, rather than a process of searching for ancestors or family in places with historical roots. McIntosh and Geldscher (1990). One of the strongest attractions of ethnotourism products is traditional dance and song, and as a result, the sector serves as an important platform for musicians and dancers. Ethnic tourism is one of the most important sectors in ethnic communities, attracting tourists seeking exotic experiences (Lor, Kwa, & Donaldson, 2019; Yang & Li, 2011; Zhang, Xu, & Xing, 2017). The most frequently mentioned type of ethnic tourism emphasizes the exotic dimension (King, 1994; Yang & Wall, 2016). This is especially true for visiting ethnic villages, experiencing local lifestyles, appreciating artifacts and performances, tasting traditional foods, learning about historical narratives, and experiencing strong cultural identity. It is designed for tourists seeking unique cultural experiences by observing elements of minority settlements that evoke a sense of identity (Yang & Li, 2011). In particular, ethnic groups that have preserved original cultures, traditional lifestyles, and distinctive ways of life, including beliefs and values, often exist outside the mainstream society and its existing norms shaped by modernity (Xie, 2010; Yang & Wall, 2009). The main purpose of ethnic tourism is to provide visitors with the opportunity to experience the unique features of tangible and intangible traditional cultures, such as lifestyles, rituals, and customs (Tatiana & Denis, 2020). Developing tourism in response to tourism demand is a key strategy for generating income and foreign exchange for ethnic communities, as it has become a powerful tool for strengthening ethnic identity (Yang & Wall, 2016). The preservation and sustainable transmission of cultural practices is supported by tourism that values the unique way of life that has been passed down through generations (Tu & Zhang, 2020). This form of tourism serves not only as a means of

preserving heritage but also as a means of keeping cultural identity alive (Yang, Wall, & Smith, 2008). Finally, the growth of the ethnic tourism industry contributes to a sense of identity and ethnic pride (Esman, 1984). Both cultural and ethnic tourism are concerned with national culture, but are now being divided into a number of sectors [2]. To many people, these two forms of tourism may seem similar. However, they differ in content. Therefore, it is important to highlight the differences between them, ethnotourism is a narrow term that describes any excursion that focuses on human activities rather than nature and attempts to give the tourist an understanding of the lifestyle of the local population. It is also called "local tourism".

Cultural tourism is a type of tourism activity in which the main purpose of the visitor is to explore, discover, experience and consume tangible and intangible cultural attractions/products in the tourist destination. These attractions/products belong to the set of specific material, intellectual, spiritual and emotional characteristics of a society, which include art and architecture, historical and cultural heritage, culinary heritage, literature, music, creative industries and living cultures with their lifestyles, value systems, beliefs and traditions. Cultural tourism (this term is now widely used in many countries) provides an introduction to the history and culture of a country in all its aspects, including architecture, painting, music, theatre, folk traditions and lifestyles. However, since culture itself is a very broad concept, this type of tourism also encompasses various activities, art forms, historical periods (including modern culture), and peoples, etc. Ethnic and cultural tourism (or ethno-cultural tourism) is considered to be a combination of various tourism activities that arise from the desire to understand the multifaceted phenomena in the ethnic and cultural spheres [1]. Cultural tourism is not a new concept. According to the literature, by the 16th century, sons of nobles were sent on European trips to see the remains of classical antiquity. This was so widespread that by the 18th century, this traditional cultural tourism was known as the Grand Tour.

In ethnic tourism, the tourist is interested in direct contact with the local population. He wants to get acquainted with the lifestyle and cultural monuments of the people he is visiting. In this form of tourism, the tourist visits the homes of the local population, observes and participates in their festivals, dances, ceremonies and other cultural expressions. In this form of tourism, human contact with indigenous peoples is very important and it also includes studying and purchasing local products.

The term "ethnic" was originally applied to all non-Jewish groups. By the mid-15th century, all non-Jewish and non-Christian groups were referred to as "ethnic." By the late 19th and early 20th centuries, "ethnicity" was placed between the ideas of race and culture.

However, in cultural tourism, the contact with people is indirect. The main interest of tourists is not to directly experience and participate in the traditional cultural practices of the local population. It is not to experience the culture, but to see it. Thus, in ethnic tourism, the tourist seeks a more "close" and "authentic" contact. In cultural tourism, however, the contact with indigenous peoples is not so direct.

METHODOLOGY

Surveys, interviews, and monitoring were conducted to determine the role and attitude of local residents in the development of ethnotourism in Surkhandarya.

The target audience was people with various professions (Tourism workers, Artisans, Entrepreneurs and Teachers) and Students with an active lifestyle aged 18 to 50. 200 people participated in the survey. The survey lasted from July 15 to August 15, 2025. It was conducted in 4 large districts of Surkhandarya region: Termez, Denov, Boysun, and Shorchik. The number of questions asked to the participants was short and clear. Ethical aspects were carefully considered during the research process. All participants were informed and informed consent was obtained from all of them before the interviews and interview discussions. Participation was completely voluntary and participants had the right to withdraw at any time without any consequences. The

main objective of this study was to identify the specifics of ethnic tourism activities using the preserved ethnic communities in the Surkhandarya region, located in the southernmost part of Uzbekistan, and to find answers to the questions of how familiar the population of the region is with the concept of ethnotourism, as well as to what extent they are familiar with the concept of ethnotourism. On this basis, the economic impact, environmental impact, and socio-cultural impact of the development of ethnotourism were analyzed from positive and negative aspects and evaluated on a Likert scale. Participants answered the questions:

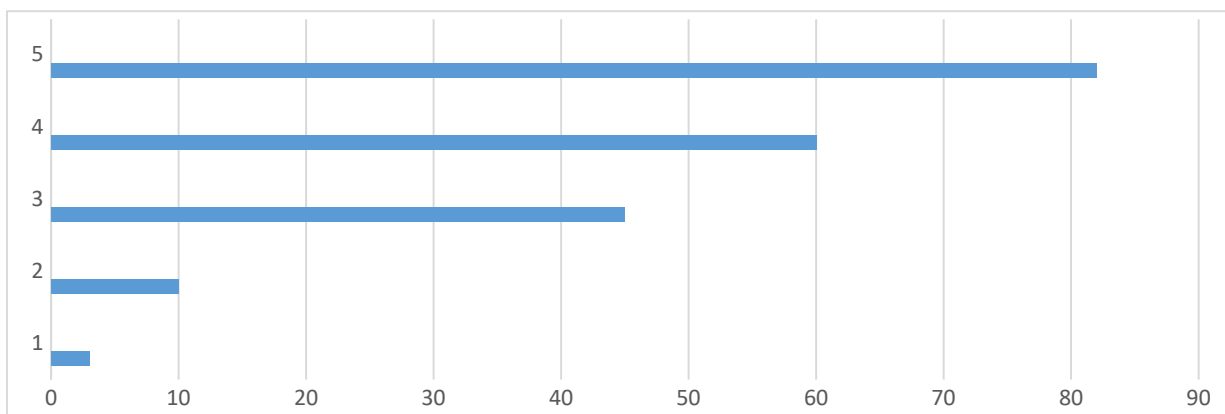
- 1-I totally disagree
- 2- I partially disagree.
- 3-Neutral (no opinion)
- 4- I partially agree.
- 5- I completely agree.

They were asked to choose one of the options given above and explain their answers. This was done to increase the reliability of the questionnaire and to analyze the responses accurately. The questionnaire was conducted face-to-face and online using the Google Forms platform. The study was conducted using a quantitative survey. The questionnaire used to collect data consisted of a section and 6 questions. A total of 200 respondents answered the questionnaire. Table shows the age, occupation, number and gender of 200 respondents in percentages and numbers, shows the age, occupation, number and gender of 200 respondents in percentages and numbers.

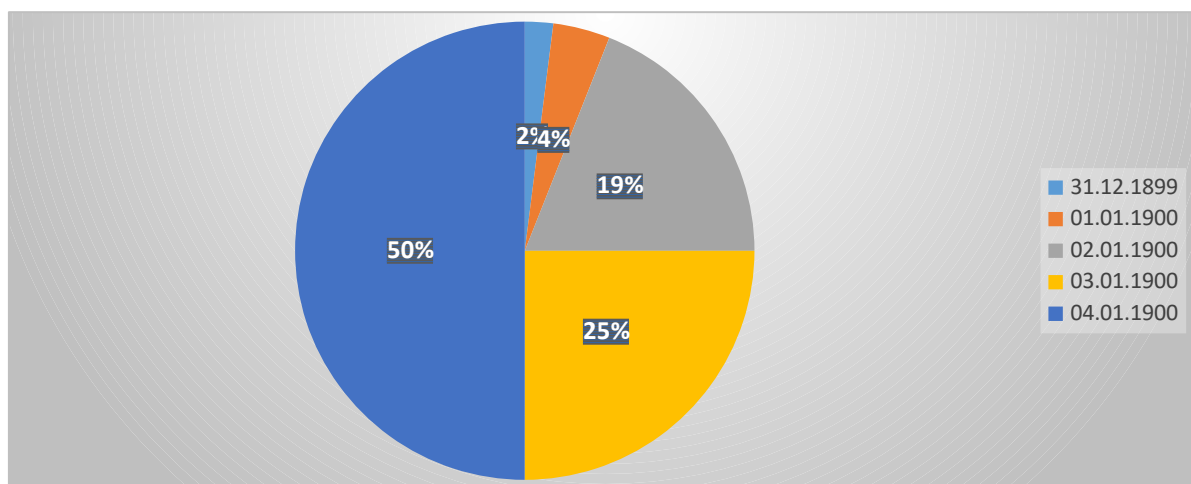
Youth composition			Professional content			Sex composition		
Age range	Number of participants	Percentage	Professional content Type of occupation	Number of participants	Percentage	Gender	Number of participants	Percentage
18-25 years old	30	15.0 %	Tourism staff	70	35.0%	Men	89	44.5%
26-32 years old	45	22.5 %	Craftsmen	35	17,5%	Women	111	55.5%
33-42 years old	65	32.5%	Teacher	20	10.0%			
43-50 years old	60	30 %	Entrepreneur	60	30.0%			
			students	15	7.5%			

Basic information about the respondents is presented in table .The first part consisted of 3 general questions based on scientific research aimed at determining the age, gender, and ethnicity of the respondent. The second part of the questionnaire assessed the attitude of the population to ethnotourism through 6 broad attitudinal questions. In this section, respondents' familiarity with the concept of ethnotourism, their attitude to ethnotourism, in particular its positive and negative impact on the development of the regional economy, and their readiness and problems with its development were assessed on a five-point Likert scale (where 1 is completely disagree and 5 is completely agree). Quantitative data were analyzed using excel statistical programs.

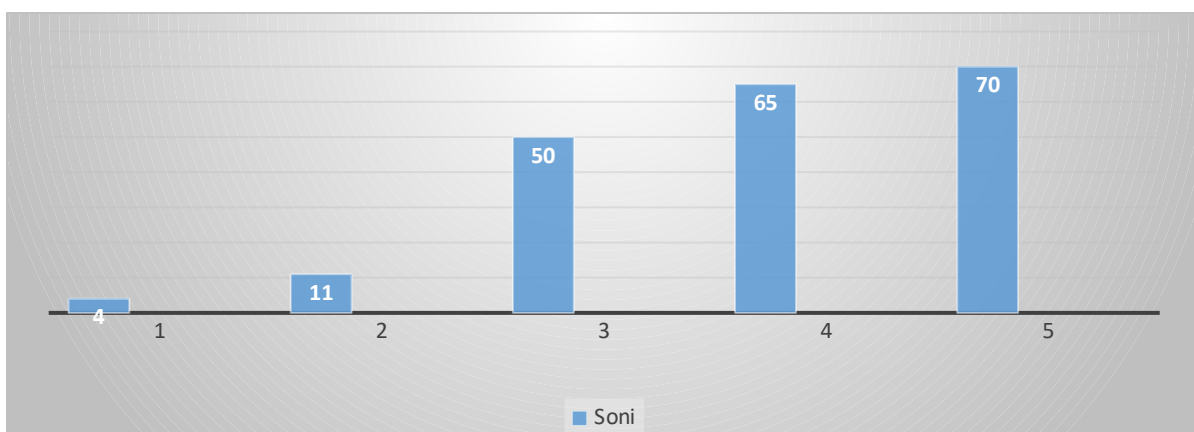
Q1. Ethnotourism arose with the aim of seeing and learning about the ancient culture and traditions of different ethnic peoples.Average rating: 4.04.



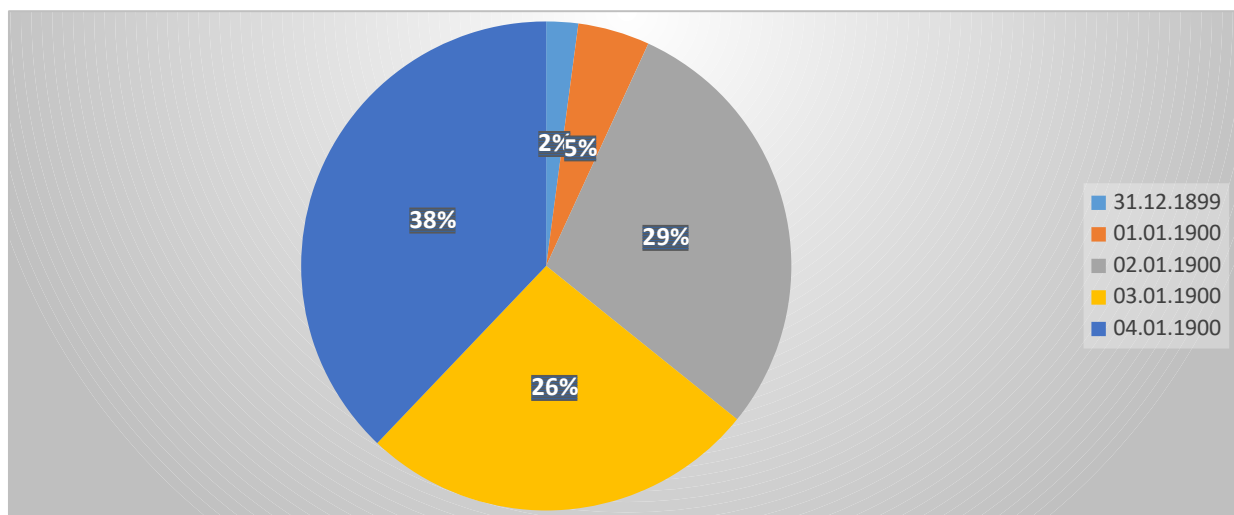
Q2. Tourism is one of the main factors influencing the improvement of the economy of Surkhandarya region. Average rating; 4.19



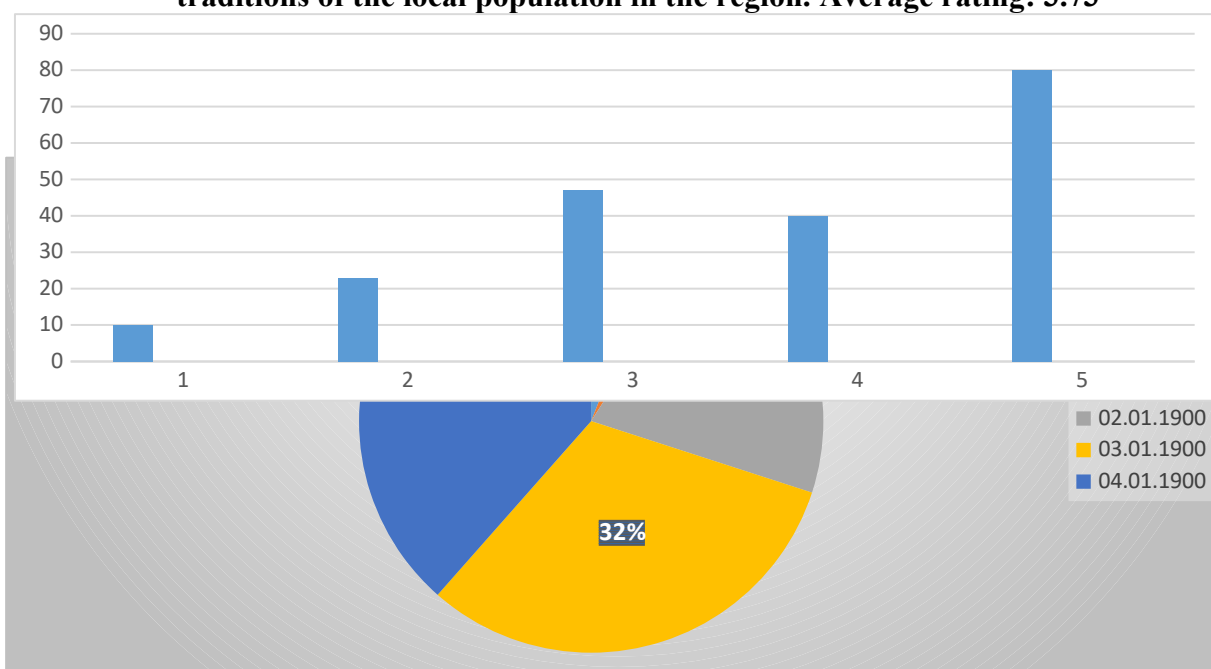
Q3. Ethnotourism has a positive impact on increasing employment and improving the living standards of the local population in the Surkhandarya region.



Q4. Festivals such as "BoysunBahori" and "Bakhshichilik" in Surkhandarya play an effective role in promoting ethnotourism in the region. Average rating; 3.93



Q5. Ethnotourism helps to preserve and promote the ancient cultural values and national traditions of the local population in the region. Average rating: 3.73



Q6. State support is essential for the sustainable development of all sectors of tourism in the region. Average rating 4.18

Average rating: 3.93. Most respondents gave a high rating, which means that ethnotourism is positively perceived and correctly understood in the region.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The age of the respondents in the survey ranged from 18 to 50 years, with the largest group being respondents aged 33-42 (32.5%). The smallest group was 15%, corresponding to respondents aged 18-25. In terms of professional composition, tourism workers (35%) and entrepreneurs (30%) occupied the main share. In terms of professional composition, students had the lowest share, coming in last with 7.5% out of a maximum of 100%. By gender, women (55.5%) and men 44.5%. Fewer men participated in the survey. Mostly women participated very actively in

the survey, and answered the questions in depth and accurately. Note: When calculating the results of the survey, the Likert scale was used as the evaluation criterion, according to which:

- 1- I totally disagree
- 2- I partially disagree.
- 3- Neutral (no opinion)
- 4- I partially agree.
- 5- I completely agree.

Figure 1 Average score: 4.04. According to the results of the first question, the majority of respondents showed that they had sufficient knowledge about the concept of ethnotourism, and their opinions were assessed positively. The results showed that most participants answered "4" and "5" (I completely agree), while the answers "I completely disagree" and "I partially disagree" were very few. Therefore, the majority of respondents were interested in the formation and recognizes the ancient traditions and culture of ethnic groups as a means of understanding and studying them in their development. It is possible to see a predominance of positive attitudes towards ethnotourism in the region

Figure 2 Average rating 4.19. Impact of ethnotourism on the economy Residents (25%) rated the impact of ethnotourism on the economy positively, with (50%) rating it as "4" (Partially Agree) and (49%) rating it as "5" (Fully Agree). The majority of participants identified it as an important factor that directly impacts the economy.

Figure 3 Ethnotourism has a positive impact on the employment rate and lifestyle of the population. The majority of participants believed that the development of ethnotourism, increasing employment rates, would have a positive impact not only on the economy but also on social life. Although those who fully agreed and those who partially agreed ranked high with a total of 67.5%, some participants also mentioned the change in the ecological situation and the risk of losing authenticity. The results of the analysis show that although ethnotourism is considered a beneficial sector for society, it is important not to forget about various risks. The average score is 3.93.

Figure 4 "Boysun Spring" and Bakhchichi festivals. Despite the fact that festivals are very important for the formation and development of ethnotourism in the region, among the participants, 2% strongly disagree and 5% partly disagree, and 29% are neutral. Analyzing these results, it was found that the interest and knowledge of festivals among the population is somewhat low. Despite this, 26% partly disagree and 40% completely agree. Average score. 3.73. According to the results, 36% of the survey participants disagreed, partially disagreed, and were neutral, but there were many positive opinions among the respondents, 64%. So, the festivals organized in the region are effective in promoting ethnotourism. In our opinion, festivals certainly have a positive impact on the development of the ethnotourism sector in Surkhandarya region, but it is necessary to promote it more widely and increase its influence.

Figure 5. The majority of survey participants believe that one of the main tasks of ethnotourism in the Surkhandarya region is to help the local population preserve its ancient rich cultural heritage, national values, and national traditions. The reason for this was the example of ethnovillages being organized in the region. According to the results of the analysis, 80% of respondents (40%) fully agreed. Most of them are tourism workers. According to participants who disagree with this opinion, ethnotourism, in addition to preserving cultural heritage, provides cultural exchange between the host and the visitor. Personal communication broadens the worldview, and increases respect for different cultures between the host and the visitor. Another important feature, one of the greatest advantages of ethnotourism is its ability to generate income. It is worth noting that a large part of this income is valuable foreign exchange. The ethnotourism sector creates space for the development of secondary income-generating activities such as crafts, dance, music and theater. It also creates jobs in the industries that serve the sector.

Figure 6. State support According to the results, the absolute majority of respondents recognized active state support as an important factor. Leading with 39%.

The results of the survey conducted in Surkhandarya region were analyzed and the opinions of the participants were studied. It was reported that the population of the region has a high level of knowledge and understanding of the concept of ethnotourism. The positive benefits of ethnotourism to the economy, especially in terms of employment and infrastructure development, were also mentioned by a large number of respondents as one of the main ones. In recent years, as a result of various projects implemented by the state in the region, it can be seen that the tourism industry in the region has been developing at a high level. In conclusion, the responses of the participants are consistent and the research tool is reliable.

COCLUTION

In conclusion, the indigenous people of Surkhandarya region see tourism as an opportunity for the economic and cultural development of their region, but they are implementing this process cautiously, gradually, because tourism can harm their original culture and national identity. The main task now is to explain to the local population that the normal development of tourism can bring significant benefits comparable to mining, metallurgy, trade or agriculture, but tourism can cause less damage to the environment than the above-mentioned industries. This study did not face any restrictions during the data collection process, especially in terms of attracting participants for in-depth interviews and questionnaire discussions. The residents of Surkhandarya region were generally somewhat hesitant to be interviewed, since the participants selected among them were mainly real hard-working artisans, entrepreneurs and young students. After obtaining permission, the villagers were informed about the objectives of the study and the reason for collecting data through interviews. During the interview, it was found that the population has positive perceptions of ethnotourism and is very well informed about all sectors of tourism. Even though they live in a geographically disadvantaged area, both in terms of natural and economic geography and far from the central cities, the respondents' answers were clear and convincing. They provided clear information about their rich ethnographic history and ethnotourism potential. For future research, larger surveys using quantitative methods could be conducted to study tourists' intentions to visit the destination. In addition, this study did not examine aspects related to tourism marketing, cultural destination branding, or service quality development, which future research could consider to further enrich the body of knowledge in ethnic tourism research.

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