



International Conference on Education, Psychology and Humanities

Hosted Online from Moscow, Russia

Date: 28th March, 2026

Website: <https://econferencia.com>

THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF ETHNOCULTURAL TOURISM AND ITS STRUCTURAL COMPONENTS

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Abstract

This article examines the theoretical and methodological foundations of ethnocultural tourism and its structural components. The study provides a comparative analysis of tourism concepts based on international and Uzbek experiences. Special attention is given to the classification of tourism types, the role of cultural heritage, and the integration of ethnocultural tourism into regional development strategies. The research employs comparative, analytical, and system-based approaches, supported by tables and scientific interpretations.

Keywords: ethnocultural tourism, tourism theory, cultural heritage, comparative analysis, Uzbekistan, tourism development

Introduction

Tourism has become one of the most dynamic sectors of the global economy in the 21st century. It plays a crucial role not only in economic growth but also in cultural exchange and social development. Among various forms of tourism, ethnocultural tourism has gained increasing attention due to its focus on preserving and promoting cultural identity.



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According to World Tourism Organization, tourism is defined as the activities of persons traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business, and other purposes [1].

In Uzbekistan, tourism is also considered a strategic sector, especially in the context of cultural heritage preservation and regional development. Therefore, studying the theoretical and methodological foundations of ethnocultural tourism is essential.

1. Theoretical Approaches to Tourism Concept

Tourism as a scientific concept has been interpreted differently by foreign and Uzbek scholars. These interpretations reflect economic, social, and cultural perspectives.

Table 1: Comparative Analysis of Tourism Definitions

Source	Definition	Key Focus
UNWTO	Travel and stay outside usual environment	Economic & statistical
G. Richards	Cultural experience through travel	Cultural interaction
R. Sharpley	Socio-economic activity	Social & economic
Uzbek scholars	Sector of economy and cultural exchange	National development

Analysis:

Foreign scholars tend to emphasize the experiential and economic aspects of tourism, while Uzbek researchers focus more on tourism as a tool for national development and cultural preservation.

2. Concept and Essence of Ethnocultural Tourism

Ethnocultural tourism refers to travel motivated by interest in the traditions, customs, lifestyle, and cultural heritage of specific ethnic groups.



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It includes:

- Traditional crafts
- Folklore and oral traditions
- National cuisine
- Rituals and ceremonies

Table 2: Structural Components of Ethnocultural Tourism

Component	Description	Example (Uzbekistan)
Cultural heritage	Tangible & intangible heritage	Navruz traditions
Lifestyle	Daily life of local communities	Rural settlements
Handicrafts	Traditional production	Ceramics, embroidery
Folklore	Music, dance, oral traditions	Bakhshi art

Scientific Insight:

Ethnocultural tourism integrates both tangible and intangible cultural resources, making it a complex and multidisciplinary research field.

3. Methodological Foundations of the Study

The research is based on the following methodological approaches:

1. Comparative Analysis Method

Used to compare tourism concepts in foreign and Uzbek contexts.

2. System Approach

Tourism is studied as an interconnected system including resources, infrastructure, and stakeholders.

3. Statistical and Analytical Method

Used for evaluating tourism development indicators.



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4. Field Observation (Case Study)

Applied in analyzing regions such as Bakhmal and Gallaaral.

4. Comparative Analysis: Foreign vs Uzbekistan Tourism Models

Table 3: Tourism Development Models

Criteria	Foreign Countries	Uzbekistan
Management	Market-driven	State-supported
Focus	Profit & experience	Cultural heritage
Infrastructure	Highly developed	Developing
Marketing	Global branding	Emerging branding

Analysis:

Developed countries focus more on commercialization and innovation, while Uzbekistan emphasizes cultural preservation and gradual development.

5. Role of Cultural Heritage in Tourism Development

Cultural heritage is the core element of ethnocultural tourism. It includes monuments, traditions, language, and identity.

Table 4: Types of Cultural Heritage

Type	Description	Tourism Role
Tangible	Monuments, artifacts	Attractions
Intangible	Traditions, customs	Experience
Natural-cultural	Landscapes + culture	Ecotourism



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Example:

In Uzbekistan, traditional festivals such as Navruz attract both domestic and international tourists.

6. Ethnocultural Tourism in Uzbekistan: Opportunities and Challenges

Opportunities:

- Rich cultural heritage
- Diverse ethnic traditions
- Government support

Challenges:

- Infrastructure limitations
- Lack of skilled personnel
- Weak international marketing

7. Case Study: Bakhmal and Gallaaral Regions

These regions have strong ethnocultural tourism potential due to:

1. Traditional lifestyle
2. Natural landscapes
3. Preserved customs

Table 5: Tourism Potential Analysis

Region	Key Resource	Tourism Type
Bakhmal	Mountains, crafts	Ecotourism + Ethno
Gallaaral	Traditions, history	Cultural tourism



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8. Scientific Discussion

The study shows that ethnocultural tourism is not only a tourism type but also a socio-economic and cultural phenomenon.

Key findings:

1. It contributes to sustainable development
2. It preserves cultural identity
3. It supports local economies

CONCLUSION

The research concludes that ethnocultural tourism has strong theoretical and practical significance. Comparative analysis shows differences between global and national tourism models. Uzbekistan has great potential, but further development requires:

1. Improved infrastructure
2. Scientific research
3. Strategic planning

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