RESIDENTS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS ETHNO-TOURISM IN ULYTAU, KAZAKHSTAN

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Abstract: This study aims to identify the local residents' attitude to ethno-tourism development in Ulytau region, which is located in the Republic of Kazakhstan. The research also analyses the economic, environmental, and socio-cultural impact of ethno-tourism both from positive and negative perspectives. To meet the research goals, a structured survey was constructed and distributed from February 2022 to September 2023 among locals of Ulytau. It was studied the attitude of the local population to ethno-tourism, openness and readiness for innovation and ethno-tourism. All variables of the measurement instrument were created based on a review of the relevant literature and modified to define the target group in accordance with the objectives of the study. Based on the results, local citizens are positive to develop ethno-tourism, but in sustainable way with preserving natural and cultural heritage.

Key words: ethno-tourism, Ulytau, local residents, innovation, sustainable development

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INTRODUCTION

Currently, ethno-tourism is considered as one of the most attractive types of tourism, which contributes to the economic, social, spiritual, and cultural development of many states and allows preserving the historical heritage. In this regard, it is important to comprehensively study theoretical approaches to the formation of scientific and theoretical foundations of ethno-tourism and conceptual views of residents' attitudes towards its development.

Kazakhstan is a multi-ethnic country, more than 140 nations and ethnic groups are leaving there. Some authors highlighted the residents' attitude on the development of ethno-tourism in multi-ethnic countries like United States (Santos and Yan, 2008), Europe (Shaw et al., 2004), Japan (Maruyama & Woosnam, 2015), Vietnam (Le et al., 2023), and China (Huo et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2020). Ulytau region is a new region of Kazakhstan, it was created in 2022.

It is located in the central part of Kazakhstan, formerly was a part of Karagandy region. Ulytau has a lot of cultural, historical and natural resources and has a great opportunity to become an ethno-tourism destination. According to the official statistic data of the Bureau of National Statistics of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Ulytau region has lowest population density (approximately 1.2 people / km^2) and it is the home for more than 50 nations and ethnic groups. However, while many studies focused on the identification of local residents' attitude towards cultural and ethno-tourism, there are no studies about Ulytau local citizens' attitude to tourism. This study examines the impact of the attitude of local residents to the development of ethno-tourism in Ulytau region both from negative and positive perspectives. The study results can be helpful for theoretical orientation of scientists, as well as for the government and DMO.

LITERATURE REVIEW
1. Ethno-tourism and resident's perception

According to the classical definitions of "ethno-tourism" by Smith (1977), Graburn (1978), McIntosh and Goldner (1990), this type of tourism includes tourists visiting the homes of local residents, communities and tribes, their participation in traditional and religious rituals, acquaintance with art and culture. Numerous authors studied the relationship between ethnic identity and the development of tourism industry, the factors influencing the ethno-tourism (Wood, 1998). In addition, McIntosh and Johnson (2005) investigated the concept of ethno-tourism and used it as a regional strategy for socio-economic development. The "ethno-tourism" concept is focused on the culture, ethnicity, forms of cultural existence of the local community, which are unique to tourists and may differ from their culture (Yang and Wall, 2009; Vengesayi et al., 2009). Additionally, the connection between tourism, multiculturalism, and creativity (Rugkhapan, 2023), the impact of ethnic minority endorsers on social media to tourists' perception of authenticity (Dong et al., 2023),

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ethnic minority groups livelihood (Le et al., 2023) and aspirations of women in poverty who are working in tourism in Vietnam (DeJaeghere et al., 2022) were analyzed in some relevant research studies. De Lima (2016) characterized ethno-cultural and ecological tourism as a cultural and economic expression of ethnic development. Currently, the wide popularity of ethno-tourism among tourists can be explained by several reasons (Figure 1).

- A trip abroad takes more time and requires more money and effort than a tourist's acquaintance with his country and his own culture, especially after COVID-19 pandemic
- Some tourists are really interested in the history of their family, people or country, they want to get more information, satisfy their desire to learn
- Traveling is the way to neutralize routine, relax. Visiting other destinations, heritage sites to feel this culture and life of other people, become a direct participant in real action
- Many tourists are interested in the culture, heritage and traditions of other countries
- People are attracted by the sense of culture and the spirit of the past while traveling
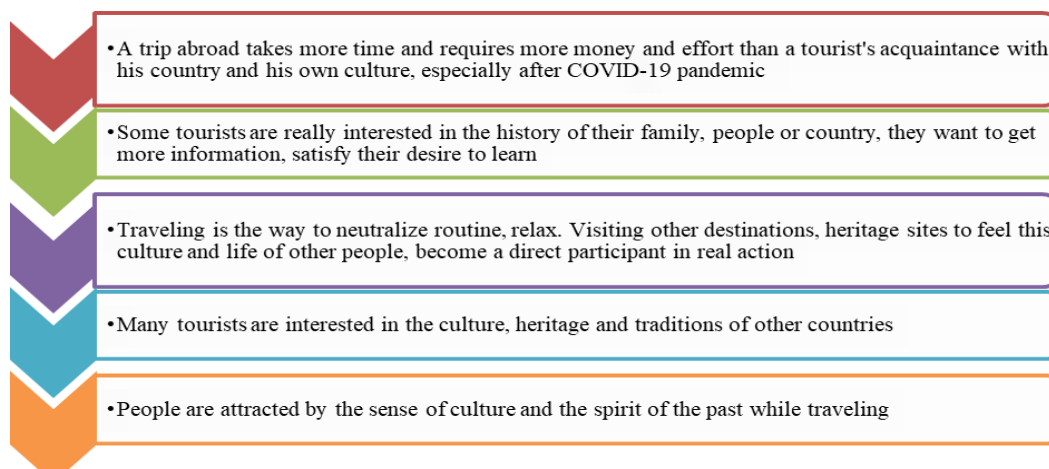
Figure 1. The main reasons for the sustainable development of ethno-tourism (Source: Compiled by authors based on (Swain, 2011; Li et al., 2021)

Telfer and Sharpley (2008) emphasized the "development dilemma" of local citizens because of ethno-tourism growth. On the one hand, ethno-tourism is economically beneficial for locals, but on the other hand residents must save their environment, culture and traditions to next generations. And in some cases these attempts can cause the tension between tourists and local communities. While price and quality are considered as the primary conditions for consumers in selecting and evaluating tourism services, they also tend to determine value based on their own experiences and the friendliness of local communities (Kulcsár, 2017). Jurowski et al., (1997) proposed a three-dimensional model of residents' attitude towards tourism development from economic, social and environmental aspects. According to Vargas-Sánchez et al., (2009) and Yoon et al., (2001) six dimensions of economic, socio-cultural and environmental impacts from both positive and negative perspectives are the most common.

2. Ulytau region, its ethno-tourist potential

Ulytau is the geographical center of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The administrative center of the region is the city of Zhezkazgan. In the north it borders with Kostanay region, in the northeast and east - with Karaganda, in the southeast - with Zhambyl, in the south - with Turkestan and Kyzylorda, in the west - with Aktobe region. Ulytau region consists of 3 cities of regional significance (Zhezkazgan, Karazhal, Satpaev), 2 districts (Ulytau and Zhanaarka), 25 rural districts, 71 rural localities (Table 1). The following table provides information on the national composition of the population of Ulytau region and Ulytau district at the beginning of 2023 (Table 2). Representatives of more than 50 ethnic groups live in the region.

Table 1. Population of Ulytau region, the beginning of 2023

№	Administrative unit	Territory km^2	Population, thousand people	Population density people/km^2
1	Zhanaarka district	62 347.81	31.1	0.5
2	Ulytau district	122 931.05	11.2	0.09
3	Zhezkazgan city	1 760.97	92.9	52.76
4	Qarazhal city	792.43	17.5	22.08
5	Satbaev city	1 104.35	68.7	62.2
	Total	188 936.61	221.4	1.17

Note – complied by authors based on the data from National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Kazakhstan [https://stat.gov.kz]

Table 2. National composition of the population of Ulytau region and Ulytau district at the beginning of 2023, people

Ethnic groups	Ulytau region	Share in the region, %	Ulytau District	Share in the District, %
Kazakhs	168,630	76.15	10,637	94.8
Russians	31,652	14.3	327	2.9
Ukrainians	6,554	2.95	57	0.5
Germans	2,764	1.24	47	0.42
Tatars	2,676	1.2	29	0.26
Belarusians	1,305	0.6	13	0.12
Koreans	1,058	0.5	13	0.12
Uzbeks	880	0.39	14	0.12
Azerbaijanis	843	0.38	2	0.02
Other nationalities	5,064	2.29	84	0.74
Total	221,426		11,223	

Note – complied by authors based on the [https://stat.gov.kz]

Based on table above, the majority of Ulytau population is Kazakh (in the region -76.15%, in the district-94.8%). In addition, representatives of Russian, Ukrainian, German, Tatar and other ethnic groups are living in the analyzed region.

Ulytau is a region with rich historical, archeological, natural and cultural resources (Mukatova et al., 2022). More than 736 historical and cultural monuments are located in Ulytau, whereas 12 of them have republican significance, and more than 10 thousand are not registered with the state. Ulytau is famous for its archaeological, cultural, historical monuments, such as the mausoleum of Zhoshy Khan, the eldest son of Genghis Khan, Khan Ordasy - the cult place of the historical gathering of representatives of the three zhuzes (historically the division of population based on location), the residence of the khans (kazakh name of rulers), Taldysay complex - ancient center of metallurgy and etc.

The cultural landscape of Ulytau has been proposed by the Government of Kazakhstan as candidates for inclusion in the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2021 № 6560 based on "v- Cultural criteria". The development of ethno-tourism can increase the influx of tourists to the region and become a source of income for the state budget. In addition, it contributes to population growth, the creation of new jobs, gives region opportunity to attract investments from abroad. This type of development is connected to local citizens and requires sustainability, preserving cultural heritage, and improving the well-being of the population. It is vital to take into account local residents point of view to such type development.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In order to determine the role and attitude of the local citizens to the development of ethno-tourism in Ulytau, surveys, interview and monitoring were conducted. This research work was conducted from February 2022 to September 2023. On this basis, economic impact, environmental impact and socio-cultural impact of ethno-tourism development in Ulytau were analyzed from positive and negative perspectives. Additionally, the attitude of the locals to ethno-tourism, openness and readiness for innovation were analyzed. The survey was conducted face-to-face and online by using a Google form platform. The main steps are given in Figure 2.

the role and attitude of the local citizens to ethno-tourism development in Ulytau

from February 2022 to September 2023

surveys, interview and monitoring among 304 respondents

economic, environmental and socio-cultural impact, the attitude of the locals to ethno-tourism, openness and readiness for innovation
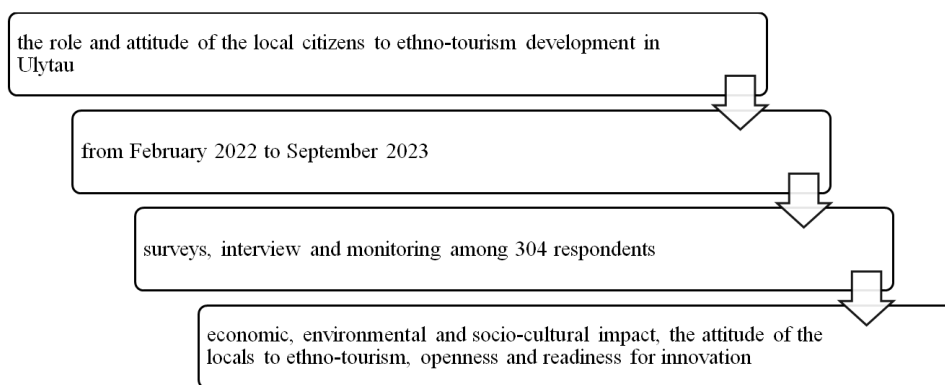
Figure 2. The main steps of methodology Note – complied by authors based on the survey

The study was conducted using a quantitative survey. All variables of the measurement instrument were created based on a review of the relevant literature and modified to define the target group in accordance with the objectives of the study. The survey conducted to collect data consisted of 5 parts. A total of 304 respondents answered the questionnaire. Respondents were selected from key stakeholder groups including the local population, ethnic majority, and minority groups as the target group. The items of this study were initially taken from a comprehensive review of the existing literature.

29.6%	• in active working age, 26-35 years old
28.6%	• 18-25 years old
one in two respondents	• a college graduate
36.3%	• bachelor degree
only 1.6%	• completed post-graduate education
The average monthly income of almost half of the survey participants	• was less than 200 USD
44.4% of respondents	• 201-500 USD

Figure 3. The main information about respondents Note – complied by authors based on the survey

The main information about respondents is given in Figure 3. The average monthly income of almost half of the survey participants was less than 200 USD, and 44.4% of respondents - 201-500 USD. Based on the official data of Bureau of national statistics, the average monthly nominal salary in Kazakhstan (1st quarter of 2023) was 365 502 KZT (730 USD), while the minimum salary - 70,000 tenge (140 USD) (https://www.stat.gov.kz).

The first part consists of 9 general questions based on scientific studies aimed at determining the profile of the respondent (Yang, 2011; Taheri et al., 2014; Kim et al., 2012) and the attitude of local residents to innovation consisted of 7 attitude questions (Gardiner and Scott, 2018; Ozseker, 2018; Tomescu and Botezat, 2015).

It was rated on a 7-point Likert scale (where 1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree). The survey questions were aimed at determining the age, gender, level of education of the respondents, income, field of activity, nationality, time of residence in Ulytau, and the degree of social networks use. The second part consisted of 7 questions on the topic "Positive / negative impact on the economy." The third part considered 4 questions on the topic "Positive/negative impact on the environment", the fourth part included 7 questions on the topic "Positive/negative socio-cultural impact".

These questions were compiled on the basis of questionnaires (Gursoy et al., 2002; Koa and Stewart, 2002) and evaluated on a seven-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). The fifth part consists of 10 questions that explore the current state of development of ethno-tourism in the region and the readiness of local residents for its development. In compiling this section, the works of Woosnam et al. (2019), McGehee and Anderek (2004) were used. In this section, respondents' familiarity with the concept of ethno-tourism, knowledge and preservation of traditions, attitude towards ethno-tourism, readiness for its development and problems were assessed on a seven-point Likert scale (1 = completely disagree, 7 = completely agree). Quantitative and qualitative analytical methods were used to analyze and interpret the data. Quantitative data were coded and analyzed using SPSS and Excel statistical software.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

According to the results, the image of the respondents was determined. The characteristics of the respondents (i.e., socio-demographic, etc.) are shown in the following table (Table 3). The majority of respondents have lived in the region since birth (52.6%), while 25.7% have lived there for more than 10 years.

The ethnic majority is 93% Kazakh, while ethnic minorities include Russians, Uzbeks, and representatives of other nationalities. In fact, the Kazakh language is developing in the Ulytau region, representatives of other nationalities also speak the Kazakh language, interethnic marriages also took place in the region.

Table 3. Profile of survey respondents among the local population (N=304) Note - compiled by the authors based on the results of the survey

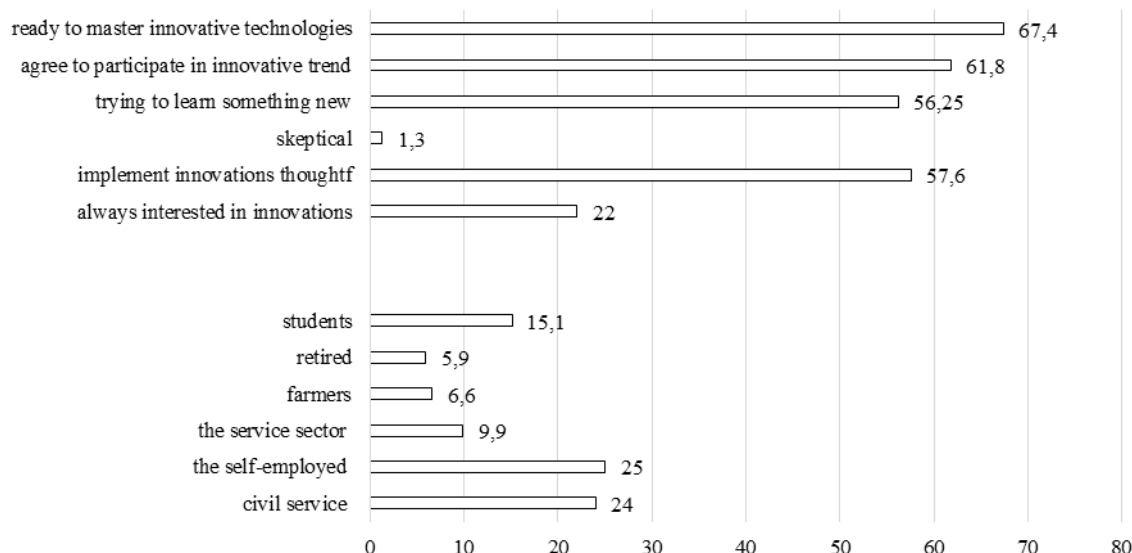| Variables	%	Variables	%
Gender Male Female	 52.6 47.4	Use of social networks Instagram Facebook Telegram Classmates Others Does not apply	 75.7 20.1 13.8 3.9 25.3 5.9
Age 18-25 26-35 36-45 46-55 56 and above	 28.6 29.6 18.5 12.8 10.5	Length of stay in Ulytau up to 1 year 1 to 3 years 3 to 5 years 5 to 10 years Over 10 years From birth	 2.3 2.3 5.6 11.5 25.7 52.6
Marital status Married Single	 66.1 33.9	Education level Secondary education College graduate Bachelor's degree Post-graduate education	 15.1 47 36.3 1.6
Approach to innovation Shows constant interest in innovation, Interested in innovation but not thoughtlessly implemented Smooth reception Doubt, don't believe in innovation	 22 57.6 19.1 1.3	Employment Office worker Civil servant Self-employed Farmers Worker Service industry Stay-at-home spouse Student Retired	 3 24 25 6.6 3.3 9.9 7.2 15.1 5.9
Nation Kazakh Russian Uzbek Other nation	 93 2.3 1 3.7	Monthly income (USD*) Less than 200 USD 201-500 USD 501-1000 USD 1001-2000 USD More than 2000 USD	 50.6 44.4 4.3 0.7 -

Figure 4. The occupation and attitude to innovation of respondents, % Note-Compiled by the authors based on the results of the survey

The occupation and attitude to innovation of respondents are given in Figure 4. In the section on the positive and negative economic impact, 97% of respondents strongly agree that the development of ethno-tourism in Ulytau increases employment opportunities for local residents. And 94.7% of residents fully agree with the possibility of increasing incomes because of ethno-tourism, 93.8% with the attraction of foreign investment in the region and an increase in the sale of local agricultural products, 92.4% with the development of infrastructure, 94.1% with an increase in the standard of living of the population, while 55.9% completely disagree that the development of ethno-tourism leads to higher prices (Figure 5).

Note-Compiled by the authors based on the results of the survey

According to the results of section about the positive / negative impact on the environment, 93.8% of respondents fully agree with the positive impact on the protection of the environment and natural resources, 94.1% with improving the operation of public facilities and improving the quality of services, while 60.5% completely disagree with the raising of noise level and 59.5% completely disagree with the increase of environmental pollution (Figure 6).
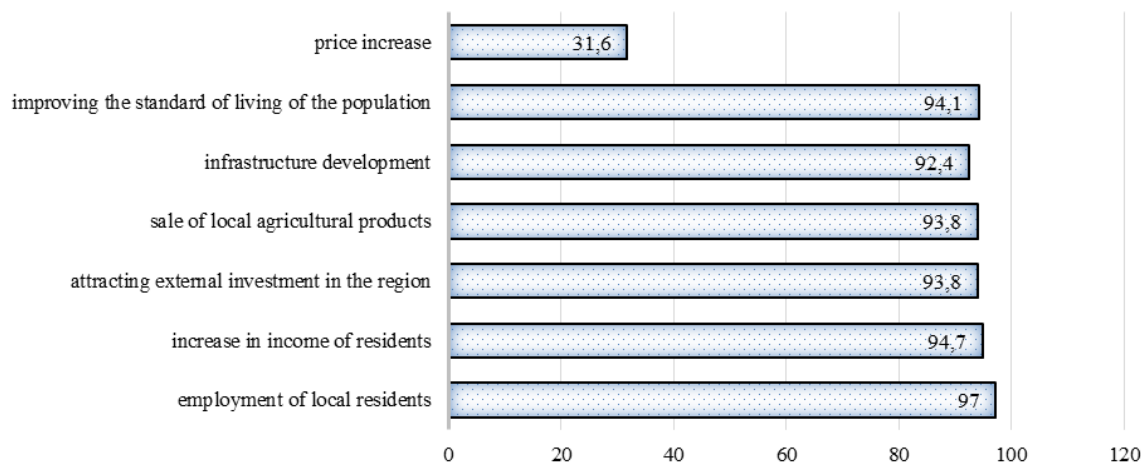
Figure 5. Results of a survey of local residents on the positive and negative economic impact on the development of ethno-tourism, %
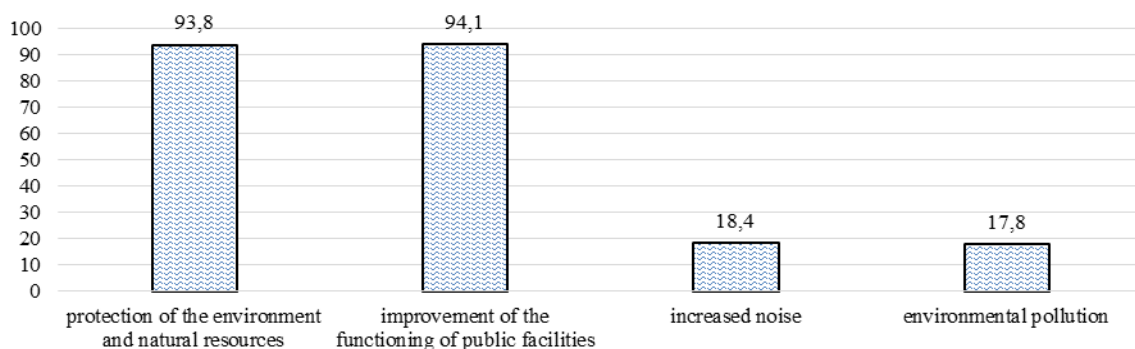

Figure 6. Results of a survey of local residents on the positive and negative impact on the environment
on the development of ethno-tourism, % (Note-Compiled by the authors based on the results of the survey)

According to the results of the socio-cultural impact, 94.7% of respondents strongly agree that the development of ethno-tourism in Ulytau contributes to the continuation and preservation of culture, 92.4% improve the understanding of various cultures, and 93.1% allow the culture of local residents to be widely known among tourists, 93.4% strongly agree with the increasing popularity of the region, 93.1% with the possibility of joint work of local residents, 64.5% strongly disagree with the lack of cultural authenticity, while 90.8% strongly agree with commercialization of traditional foods and rituals.

According to the results of the section devoted to the current state of development of ethno-tourism in the region and the readiness of local residents for its development, 49% of respondents are familiar with the concept of ethno-tourism, and about 7% are not familiar with it or could not answer. 93.1% of respondents are familiar with the traditions and customs of their people, 84.9% keep traditions, 58.6% answered that ethno-tourism supports the culture of the region, 41.4% believe that it contributes to improvement of regional identity (Figure 7).
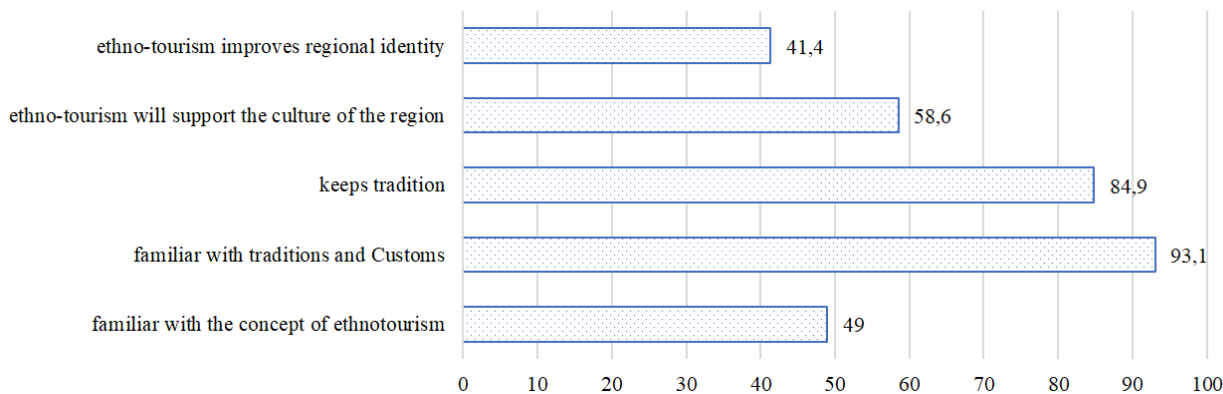

Figure 7. Results of a survey of local residents on the current state of development
of ethno-tourism, % (Note-Compiled by the author based on the results of the survey)

However, local residents indicated that they are currently not ready for the development of ethno-tourism, and 94.7% believe that local residents should acquire tourist service skills. 96.7% of respondents fully agree with the support for the development of ethno-tourism in the region, 75.7% of respondents are currently ready to develop ethno-tourism, among the factors that hinder them: lack of skills in servicing tourists - 34.5%, lack of funds - 59.5%, use of information technologies lack of skills - 9.5%, lack of training courses - 25.7%, lack of interest in the development of ethno-tourism - 0.3% (Figure 8). The reliability of survey data was measured using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. Since the result exceeds the value of 0.7, the survey questions were determined to be reliable. The study Reliability Scale is presented in the following table (Table 4).
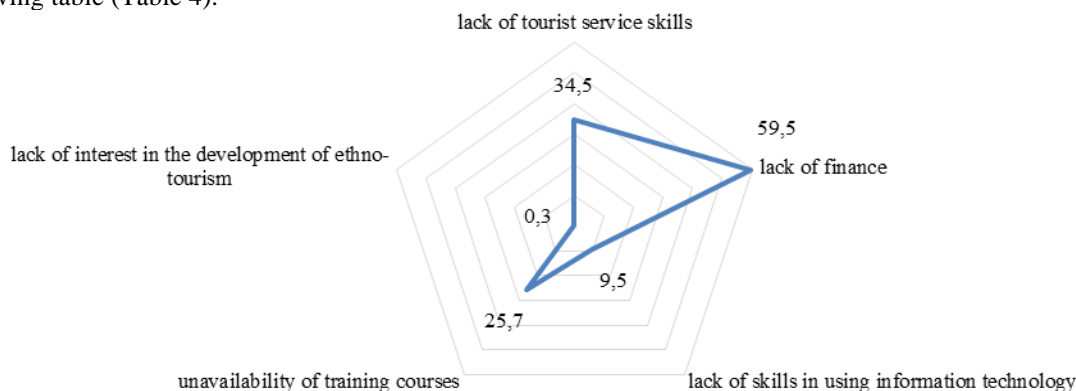

Figure 8. Results of a survey of local residents on factors that hinder
ethno-tourism development (Note-Compiled by the authors based on the results of the survey)

Table 4. The study Reliability Scale

Reliability Scale	Number of questions	Cronbach's alpha coefficient
A survey of local residents on the development of ethno-tourism in Ulytau	32	0,73

Note - compiled by the authors based on the results of the survey

According to the results of a survey conducted among local residents on the development of ethno-tourism in the Ulytau region, it was found that the locals have positive attitude towards the development of ethno-tourism and 75.7% strongly agree with their readiness to develop it, while 8.2% just agree. In general, 64.1% of the locals are familiar with the concept of ethno-tourism, and a significant part of them preserves and celebrates their traditions.

In addition, in relation to the attitude of local residents to ethno-tourism, 58.6% of them believe that ethno-tourism helps to preserve the identity and culture of the region, and 41.4% believe that it contributes to its improvement. 52.6% of the

local residents who took part in the survey believe that since they have been living in this region since birth, they attach significant importance to the development of the region and work on the development of ethno-tourism, which will positively affect the economy, cultural development, environmental protection and improvement of people's well-being.

CONCLUSION

According to the main results of residents' survey, it was found that the development of ethno-tourism causes the possibility of employment and increase in their income, attracting foreign investment to the region, raising the sale of local agricultural products and infrastructure development.

In addition, in terms of environmental impact, most respondents believe that the development of ethno-tourism contributes to the protection of the environment and natural resources, improves the operation of public facilities, and improves the quality of services, without increase in noise and environmental pollution.

According to the influence of ethno-tourism on culture, it has been established that its development contributes to the preservation of culture, improves understanding of various cultures, allows tourists learn about the culture of local residents, increases the popularity of the area, positively effects on the ability of local residents to work together, which leads to the commercialization of traditional products and customs. In general, it was found that the results are positive, local residents are ready for the development of ethno-tourism and know, expect, and agree with the benefits of ethno-tourism development. Analyzing the attitude of local residents to innovations, showed local residents openness to innovations, their thoughtful implementation after successful testing in the usual conditions.

Moreover, results demonstrated locals' attempts to discover and master new things and technologies, participate in innovative processes, acquire new knowledge and skills. In general, according to the results of the survey, local residents are ready to develop ethno-tourism, and for its implementation it is important to master the skills of serving tourists, introduce new programs, allocate funds from the state, develop tourism infrastructure, gain skills in using information technology, as well as open training courses. In conclusion, the development of ethno-tourism in Ulytau region is supported by locals, and requires sustainability with preserving natural and cultural heritage.

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