

THE ROLE OF ETHNIC TOURISM IN PRESERVING KAZAKHSTAN'S CULTURAL HERITAGE AND LOCAL TRADITIONS: LITERATURE REVIEW

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Abstract: This study investigates ethnic tourism's role in preserving cultural heritage and local traditions in Kazakhstan, assessing both benefits and challenges. Materials and Methods – a systematic literature review (SLR) gathered data from Google Scholar, ResearchGate, and Scopus, focusing on empirical studies from 2019 onward on ethnic tourism and cultural heritage preservation. Results and Discussions – the findings indicated that ethnic tourism supported cultural preservation by promoting traditional practices and aiding local communities. However, challenges like limited infrastructure and the commercialisation of culture risk the authenticity and sustainability of these efforts. Ethnic tourism in Kazakhstan plays a crucial role in preserving cultural heritage by offering immersive experiences in local communities' traditions, customs, and socio-cultural aspects. This approach fosters economic development and strengthens national identity and consciousness. The growth of ethnic tourism brings numerous benefits, such as increased income for local communities, diversification of the economy, infrastructure improvements, and the reinforcement of ethnic identity. Additionally, it promotes intercultural understanding and dialogue, contributing to a broader appreciation of cultural diversity. However, challenges accompany this growth. Ethnic tourism can sometimes lead to losing traditional skills, shifts in social behaviour, and potential land conflicts. Inequitable distribution of tourism benefits may exacerbate these issues. Furthermore, over-commercialisation is risky, which can dilute cultural authenticity and erode local traditions. Despite these challenges, ethnic tourism typically has a lower environmental impact. It attracts visitors to less crowded areas, encourages environmental conservation, and supports eco-friendly initiatives. Sustainably managed ethnic tourism can enhance cultural heritage preservation by fostering respect for local traditions while minimising commercialisation risks. By integrating community participation and equitable benefit-sharing, ethnic tourism can empower local populations and ensure long-term viability. Additionally, incorporating environmental sustainability into tourism practices can further protect natural and cultural resources for future generations.

Keywords: ethnic tourism, preservation of cultural heritage, Kazakhstan, local traditions, sustainable tourism, impact of cultural tourism

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INTRODUCTION

Analyzing the role of ethnic tourism in Kazakhstan is crucial now due to the rapid globalization and modernization affecting many traditional cultures. As cultural practices and languages face the risk of dilution or loss, ethnic tourism emerges as a valuable means to support and revitalize these cultural elements, making the analysis timely and relevant. After the collapse of the Soviet Union and gaining independence, the main task for Kazakhstan was nation-building (Qiu et al., 2022). The preservation of national cultural heritage and local traditions plays a significant role in this process, which has become an essential component of the country's identification in the international arena. One of the most effective tools for preserving cultural heritage is the development of ethnic tourism, which allows not only the promotion of unique traditions and rituals but also the contribution to their preservation and reproduction. The abrupt end of the Soviet policy of nationalities and its legacy of multinational states created challenging conditions for nation-building in Kazakhstan.

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However, multinationalism and multiculturalism have become the basis for the development of ethnic tourism, which allows the region to showcase its cultural richness and diversity. Ethnic tourism also helps restore the titular nationality's lost position, preserving its traditions by engaging tourists in authentic cultural practices (Van, 2024; Stankov et al., 2023).

Another important aspect is the revival of the culture of Kazakhstan's nomadic peoples, an essential area of ethnic tourism. The traditions of nomadic lifestyle, folk crafts, national cuisine, folklore and music have become popular among tourists, contributing to their preservation and transmission to future generations (Zandieh & Seifpour, 2020). Local culture becomes the basis of national identity, and ethnic tourism helps to maintain this link between the past and the future.

After its independence, Kazakhstan actively worked to create a new national policy, including forming a national identity and a vision of its history. This process inevitably involved cultural heritage. Ethnic tourism can bring economic benefits by promoting local businesses, crafts, and tourism, thus enhancing the living standards of indigenous communities. Furthermore, it fosters mutual understanding and respect for diverse cultures, leading to a more inclusive society that values cultural diversity. Ethnic tourism has become a tool for promoting unique traditions and ensuring their preservation in the context of globalization and the country's integration into international economic and political systems (Văduva et al., 2021; Turalin et al., 2023). Researching ethnic tourism within the Kazakh context contributes to broader knowledge in cultural studies, tourism, and sustainable development. It provides a case study on balancing tourism development with cultural preservation, a significant challenge in cultural tourism research. However, the challenges associated with the transition to a market economy have reduced funding for the cultural sector, making it challenging to preserve centuries-old traditions. In this situation, the development of ethnic tourism has become one of the ways to support the cultural environment. Tourist interest in local customs contributes to preserving folk crafts, music and dance traditions, and traditional lifestyles, which could disappear without proper support. Since gaining independence, Kazakhstan has faced numerous challenges, including preserving its cultural heritage and developing its national identity. One of the critical aspects of this process has been the role of ethnic tourism in reviving and maintaining local traditions and cultural heritage.

In particular, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, there was a massive outflow of the Russian population to Russia, which led to a significant reduction in the number of qualified personnel in the cultural sector. At the same time, the material and technical base of cultural institutions was destroyed, making their work more difficult. Many cultural institutions were closed due to economic difficulties and inflation, which led to a decline in the country's cultural life level.

While ethnic tourism is widely studied, there is limited research on its specific impacts on Kazakhstan's cultural heritage. This gap in literature calls for more in-depth analysis to understand the unique challenges and advantages Kazakhstan faces in using tourism as a preservation tool. Despite these challenges, ethnic tourism can become a tool for preserving Kazakhstan's cultural heritage. The unique national culture, traditions and rituals of the Kazakh people can attract the interest of tourists from all over the world, contributing not only to the region's economic development but also to the revival of local cultural traditions. Local communities involved in ethnic tourism can revive ancient crafts, preserve language, music and dance, and pass this knowledge on to future generations. This article aims to highlight one of the main directions of the cultural policy of independent Kazakhstan: the revival of national culture. In this context, an important task is to preserve ethnic identity and develop tourism aimed at introducing the culture of the indigenous population, in particular, the nomadic traditions of the Kazakhs. Creating cultural centres and museums and organising ethno-tours helps not only to preserve cultural heritage but also to promote it internationally. In addition, the purpose of the study is to explore in depth the potential of ethnographic tourism in Kazakhstan, identify its current state, main problems and ways of sustainable development, which will ensure the cultural integrity of the country and a sustainable economic effect from tourism. This research can reveal specific strategies for safeguarding cultural practices, assess the effectiveness of ethnic tourism initiatives, and offer insights into the sustainable management of cultural heritage sites.

Research Focus

The primary purpose of this study is to assess how ethnic tourism supports cultural heritage preservation in Kazakhstan, emphasizing the dual impact on local communities and national identity. The authors examine the positive contributions and potential challenges ethnic tourism brings to maintaining cultural authenticity and fostering sustainable practices within Kazakh traditions.

Research Aim and Research Questions

This study aims to evaluate ethnic tourism's impact on the preservation of cultural heritage in Kazakhstan, explore how it aids in protecting local traditions, and identify strategies for sustainable growth.

Research Questions

1. How does ethnic tourism contribute to cultural preservation in Kazakhstan?
2. What are the benefits and challenges local communities face in ethnic tourism?
3. What strategies can improve the sustainability and authenticity of ethnic tourism in Kazakhstan?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ethnic tourism is critical in preserving Kazakhstan's cultural heritage, sparking renewed interest in historical and cultural sites. Aldybayev et al. (2021) supports this, noting that ethnic tourism revives both public and governmental interest in these sites. This revival is beneficial for maintaining the integrity of cultural sites and educating visitors on the country's rich heritage. Post-independence, Kazakhstan established a structured approach to cultural preservation with the 1992 Law on the Protection and Use of Historical and Cultural Heritage. This law, highlighted by Auganbai et al. (2020), established the groundwork for using cultural monuments as part of the ethno-cultural environment. Such legal

structures enable the development of ethnic tourism by prioritizing the conservation and promotion of cultural sites. The literature also emphasizes the educational potential of heritage sites. Chang (2019) notes that Kazakhstan's cultural monument utilization extends beyond tourism. It also serves to educate the public and foster local traditions. This educational aspect enhances local pride and allows tourists to engage more deeply with Kazakh history and culture.

The development of museums and cultural institutions further supports Kazakhstan's efforts in ethnic tourism. Alzhanova et al. (2024) describe how these institutions, such as the museum of the Golden Man, have become symbols of national pride. This strategy draws international visitors and strengthens Kazakhstan's cultural identity by showcasing unique artefacts and historical discoveries. Emphasizing historical figures, like Kazakh batyrs Kabanbai and Bogenbai, is another strategy that merges national pride with tourism. Zhiltsov & Zonn (2019) argue that promoting such figures is instrumental in boosting national consciousness and attracting ethnic tourism centred on local heroes. This type of tourism focuses on the narratives of these figures, blending heritage tourism with historical education. Ethnic tourism contributes to Kazakhstan's economic landscape and strengthens its cultural identity. Uniting communities around shared history and traditions supports socio-economic development and national cohesion. Kudaibergenova & Laruelle (2022) introduce the concept of "state-supported primordialism," which describes Kazakhstan's intentional revival of pre-Soviet history while subtly distancing itself from Soviet influence. This approach reinforces the country's national identity and provides a basis for attracting tourists interested in its unique cultural narratives. After gaining independence, Kazakhstan began to reshape its national identity, emphasizing pre-Soviet historiography and national culture. As noted by Kudaibergenova (2018), this period saw the introduction of new textbooks focusing on pre-Soviet history. However, Tiberghien (2019) points out that those Soviet-style nation-building methods continue to influence Kazakhstan's cultural policy, which is visible in repurposing former Soviet monument sites for new national symbols. This continuity and change illustrate the complex relationship between past Soviet ideologies and current Kazakh nationalism.

According to Aldybayev et al. (2021), post-Soviet Kazakhstan replaced the "laboratory of friendship of peoples" ideology with a focus on Kazakh folklore and national culture. This shift aims to strengthen the national identity by reviving indigenous cultural practices. However, they also raise the question of whether the Soviet ideology of multiculturalism, under the banner of "friendship of peoples," has disappeared. This underscores a nuanced continuity where elements of Soviet-era multicultural ideals persist, though refashioned to suit a new nationalistic narrative.

The Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan, as described by Seken et al. (2019), aims to foster national unity and social harmony by promoting Kazakh patriotism and civic cohesion. This approach is closely aligned with Nazarbayev's vision of a unified Kazakh identity while maintaining the cultural plurality of various ethnic groups. Amangosov et al. (2024) highlight that this body reflects Soviet-era multicultural rhetoric, though now positioned within an independent nation-building framework. The Assembly promotes each ethnic group's right to preserve its heritage, offering an institutional base for cultural events, which has implications for cultural policy and ethnic tourism.

Establishing non-governmental cultural institutions in the 1990s marked a crucial development in Kazakhstan's cultural sphere. Abdraimov & Sadykov (2023) emphasize the importance of these institutions for promoting cultural exchange and preserving cultural assets within Kazakhstan. This regulatory shift reflects the country's commitment to fostering a self-sustaining cultural sector while controlling cultural property export and supporting international cultural engagement, paving the way for local and global recognition of Kazakh heritage. Ualtaeva & Pernekulova (2020) examine ethnic tourism's impact, noting that it helps to revitalize and sustain local cultural practices, such as language, religion, crafts, and traditional music, supporting the identity-building process. By showcasing elements like Kazakh folk dances, cuisine, and Islamic heritage sites, ethnic tourism fosters national pride and contributes economically to local communities. The restoration of religious and historical sites, like mosques and madrassas, underlines Kazakhstan's dedication to spiritual and cultural preservation, which appeals to both domestic and international visitors interested in Kazakh heritage (Agyeiwaah & McKercher, 2024). Existing literature illustrates that Kazakhstan's cultural policies post-independence have embraced a dual approach: fostering a unified national identity rooted in indigenous heritage while preserving the multicultural aspects shaped by the Soviet period. Ethnic tourism is a crucial instrument in this approach, as it supports cultural preservation and economic development and addresses broader goals of national unity and identity. The state actively supports the development of ethnic tourism by organizing national festivals and cultural events and preserving historical sites. Cultural institutions are essential in promoting art and culture and have become critical elements in national consciousness.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The section describes the methodology used in this study, specifically employing a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) to analyze the role of ethnic tourism in preserving Kazakhstan's cultural heritage. The primary research objects include scientific articles published from 2019 onward, which focus on the impact of ethnic tourism on the preservation of cultural heritage and local traditions in Kazakhstan. This analysis considers several thematic areas, including the preservation of cultural heritage, traditions of local communities, the growth of ethnic tourism, and sustainable tourism practices. Only publications containing empirical data or employing quantitative or qualitative methods to assess tourism's impact have been included for the methodological approach. While the geographical focus of this research is on Kazakhstan, studies covering other Central Asian countries have also been reviewed for comparative insights (Figure 1).

Planning Phase

Objective of Study

The purpose of this study is to assess the role of ethnic tourism in preserving Kazakhstan's cultural heritage and local traditions by analyzing previous research to identify key trends, challenges, and potential impacts.

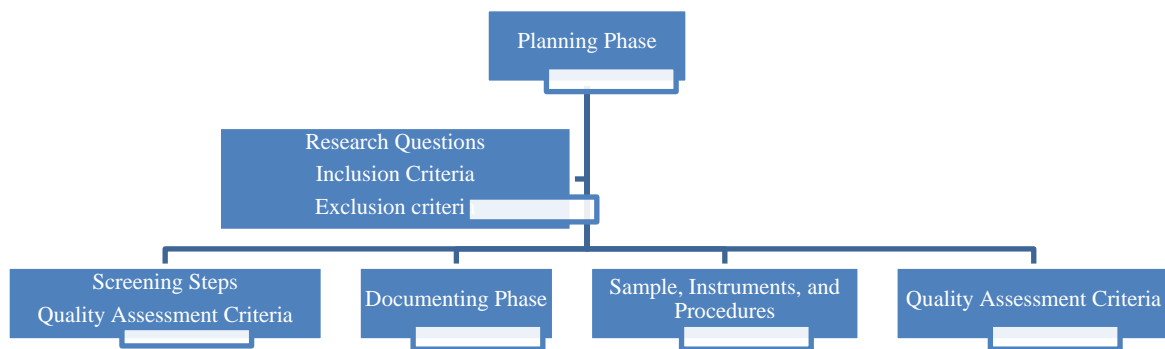


Figure 1. The flow chart of methodology steps (Source: Author's development)

Research Questions

1. How does ethnic tourism affect the preservation of Kazakhstan's cultural heritage and traditions?
2. What are the main challenges facing ethnic tourism in this context?
3. What initiatives can support the development of ethnic tourism in Kazakhstan to preserve cultural heritage?

Inclusion Criteria

1. Publications related to ethnic tourism and cultural heritage preservation.
 2. Studies analyzing the impact of ethnic tourism on local traditions and communities.
- Publications covering research conducted after 2019 and containing empirical data (Table 1).

Table 1. Publications featuring research conducted post-2019 and presenting empirical data (Source: Author's development)

Source	Reliability Assessment	Methodology Quality Assessment
Bashynska et al. (2019)	Relies on recent technology trends and primary data on internet marketing, enhancing relevance to current digital marketing practices.	The study uses descriptive methodology; limited data analysis could impact depth of findings.
Bielialov, & Namliiev (2024)	Explores the link between national tourism flows and macroeconomic development, and reflects the socio-economic role of tourism in national economies.	Applies production function modeling, regression, and correlation analysis using statistical software; modeling complexity may limit accessibility.
Fan (2024)	Addresses inter-ethnic tourism conflicts relevant to diverse cultural contexts, ensuring relevance.	Uses conflict resolution models; a mixed-methods approach could add robustness.
García-Soto et al. (2024)	Reliable due to focus on co-ethnic community contributions; current data adds relevance.	The case study methodology focuses on immigrant entrepreneurs but is limited in applicability beyond specific demographics.
Carvalho & Ivanov (2024)	Timely insights on AI in tourism; highly relevant with potential industry implications.	It uses a conceptual framework without empirical data, limiting quantitative validation.
Hu (2024)	It focuses on empowerment in ethnic tourism, using reliable data for policy relevance.	Employs case studies in human resources, though further quantitative analysis could improve accuracy.
Jie et al. (2024)	High reliability with a systematic review method covering perceptions of ethnic tourism is a key strength.	Rigorous methodology with a comprehensive review, though limited primary data integration.
Kovshun et al. (2023a)	Provides comprehensive analysis with recent data on ecological footprint, which aligns with sustainable development indicators.	It employs quantitative analysis and established footprint measurement metrics, adding to its methodological rigour.
Kovshun et al. (2023b)	Reliable due to updated data and a clear focus on rural tourism's role in economic development.	Utilizes mixed methods (survey and statistical analysis), though the regional focus may limit generalizability.
Mahmudin (2024)	Reliable focus on sustainable tourism and local economic impact, grounded in recent data.	Employs quantitative metrics on economic growth, though limited to specific local contexts.
Mukatova et al. (2024)	It uses qualitative data on resident attitudes toward ethno-tourism, which is relevant for local cultural impact studies.	Robust qualitative methodology with resident surveys; however, generalizability to broader contexts is limited.
Maxsudovich (2024)	Data on visitor demographics in Uzbekistan is recent, providing a current view of trends.	Descriptive statistical analysis and deeper analytical models would strengthen conclusions.
Parfinenko et al. (2019)	Supports long-term planning of sustainable tourism through strategic management.	Applies a conceptual and strategic framework for analysis; although lacking empirical data sets, it is structured and policy-relevant.
Prokopenko et al. (2019)	It focuses on a digital toolkit with implications for current marketing practices; data source reliability is noted.	It lacks detailed statistical validation, but the conceptual framework offers valuable insights into marketing tools.
Prokopenko et al. (2020)	Relies on primary data and case studies to support claims, making it relevant and credible.	The case study methodology is practical, yet the narrow focus may limit broader applicability.
Rather (2024)	Focuses on AI applications with relevant theoretical propositions for the hospitality sector.	It uses a theoretical framework but needs more empirical data, impacting practical application validation.
Saienko et al. (2020)	Empirically grounded, utilizing real-world tourism operator data in Ukraine, enhancing reliability.	The methodology is thorough, with a structured approach to evaluating efficiency; however, applicability may be geographically limited.
Suryani (2024)	Reviews sustainable cultural tourism trends; reliable due to comprehensive trend analysis.	Employs literature review; lacks primary data, though secondary analysis is thorough.
Sushchenko et al. (2023)	Vital source due to integrating urban transport and tourism, with data on logistical frameworks.	Multi-perspective methodology adds robustness, though the emphasis on local development may narrow findings.

Troian et al. (2023)	Combines historical and empirical data on marine tourism, enhancing credibility.	The systematic review approach ensures comprehensiveness, though it lacks in-depth quantitative analysis.
Yang & Wall (2023)	Discusses ethnic tourism challenges with a balanced perspective on impacts, enhancing reliability.	Broad systematic review approach; a lack of region-specific data may limit depth for specific contexts.
Yang et al. (2023)	High reliability due to cross-community perspectives on tourism quality of life.	It uses qualitative methods with community surveys; it is broad but lacks deep statistical validation.
Zaiachkovska et al. (2021)	Explores the impact of the global perfume market on tourism flows, presenting relevant economic-cultural links.	Applies economic analysis with market indicators; limited primary data reduces empirical depth.

Exclusion criteria include publications published before two thousand and nineteen, review articles that lack empirical data, and publications written in languages other than English. During the conducting phase, literature searches will be carried out using Google Scholar, ResearchGate, and Scopus databases. The keywords guiding this search are “ethnic tourism,” “preservation of cultural heritage,” “Kazakhstan,” “local traditions,” “sustainable tourism,” and “impact of cultural tourism” Screening Process (Table 2).

Table 2. The process of literature screening (Source: Author's development)

Stage	Number of Publications
Initial number of publications found	310
Publications meeting inclusion criteria	110
Excluded duplicate publications	50
Final selection for analysis	60

Screening Steps

- Step 1: Search by keywords in the selected databases.
- Step 2: Literature selection based on inclusion and exclusion criteria.
- Step 3: Check each publication for duplication.

Quality Assessment Criteria

- Removal of duplicates: All duplicate publications were removed to ensure unique results.
- Reliability of results: Each article's methodological reliability was assessed.
- Clarity of research goals and objectives: Articles were checked for clearly defined research questions and hypotheses.
- Description of methodology for replicability: Selected publications included a detailed methodology to allow for study replication (Table 3).

Table 3. Application of the methodology in the form of a table (Source: Author's development)

Quality criterion	Assessment process	Result
Removal of duplicates	Automatic deletion in the data storage system	All duplicates removed
Reliability of results	Evaluation of methodology and statistical data of each article	85 articles were compliant
Clarity of aims and objectives	Manual check for clear aims	70 articles retained after review
Repeatability of the described methodology	Assessment of the detail of the methodology	60 articles passed this stage

Documenting Phase

Critical data were extracted from each source, including the author, year of publication, main conclusions, research method, and critical results. The data from the selected literature were then analysed to identify common themes and trends in research on ethnic tourism and the preservation of cultural heritage in Kazakhstan.

Sample, Instruments, and Procedures

The sample consisted of scholarly publications that met the inclusion criteria. The systematic literature review protocol was used to collect, evaluate, and analyse the selected literature. Data storage and analysis tools included Excel, which was used for data structuring, and NVivo, which was employed for qualitative analysis to identify thematic connections within the text.

Quality Assessment Criteria

All duplicate articles were removed, ensuring a refined selection of sources. Quality assessment criteria included the reliability of conclusions, the clarity of research goals and objectives, and a detailed description of methodology that enables replication of the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Ethnic tourism, often used alongside terms such as cultural tourism or heritage tourism, emphasises authentic and direct interaction with local communities. This type of tourism aims to help travellers gain a deeper understanding of the daily life, customs, traditions and socio-cultural characteristics of the people of Kazakhstan. For tourists, it is a unique opportunity to go beyond traditional routes and explore the country's cultural values, which is an essential factor in preserving cultural heritage. For residents, ethnic tourism is becoming an opportunity to preserve their customs and to benefit economically from such activities. Given the rapid globalisation and the desire of many nations to preserve their national identity, ethnic tourism is of great importance to Kazakhstan. This type of tourism contributes to the preservation of unique traditions and customs that form the basis of the country's cultural heritage. The study approaches this issue comprehensively, considering the interrelated aspects of ethnic tourism (Table 4).

Table 4. Interrelated aspects of ethnic tourism (Source: Author's development)

Economic aspect	Ethnic tourism creates new opportunities for local communities to generate additional income by developing crafts, local services and souvenir businesses. This type of tourism allows residents to support their region's economy by developing local initiatives and preserving heritage in a globalised world.
Socio-cultural aspect	As Kazakhstan rapidly modernises, many traditions risk disappearing. Ethnic tourism can encourage local communities to preserve and revive their traditions. In this way, authentic cultural practices survive and become a source of national pride and respect for heritage.
Educational aspect	Ethnic tourism provides a deeper understanding of a region's history, anthropology, and culture, offering tourists a living-learning experience. At the same time, for residents, interaction with tourists from other countries broadens their horizons, allowing them to better understand global processes and cultural differences.
Environmental aspect	Cultural tourists have a lower environmental impact, as they are more likely to visit less crowded places and are interested in protecting natural resources. Moreover, revenues from such tourism can be used to support environmental initiatives and ensure sustainable tourism development.

Ethnic tourism is being developed in line with Kazakhstan's strategic initiatives, including the Rukhany Zhangyru and Seven Faces of the Great Steppe programmes. These programmes aim to enhance Kazakhstan's international image by promoting its natural wonders and cultural traditions. According to the Concept for the Development of the Tourism Industry for 2023–2029, promoting such initiatives is necessary for economic growth, fostering national unity, and preserving the country's identity (Tleubayeva, 2019). Scientists' research highlights ethnic tourism as a vital tool for preserving and promoting Kazakhstan's culture. According to Wendt (2020), developing ethnic tourism can help preserve traditions, provide income for local communities, and ensure a sustainable future for the country's heritage.

Ethnic tourism, based on the study and appreciation of the cultural and traditional aspects of Indigenous people's lives, can be categorised according to tourists' different goals (Table 5).

Table 5. Tourist goals of ethnic tourism (Source: Kenzhebekov et al., 2021)

Educational eco-tourism	This type of ethnic tourism focuses on spreading knowledge about the culture and traditions of indigenous peoples. Tourists can participate in workshops, lectures and other forms of learning to understand local customs, language and history.
Cultural exchange	Tourists may seek to engage directly with indigenous peoples to share experiences and knowledge. This may include participating in traditional celebrations, ceremonies or crafts.
Adventure tourism	Some tourists see ethnic tourism as an opportunity for active recreation, including hiking, mountaineering, and river rafting, surrounded by traditional cultures. It combines the desire to explore culture with active physical activities.
Social tourism	This aspect of ethnic tourism focuses on supporting local communities. Tourists can participate in charitable projects or initiatives that help indigenous peoples preserve their culture and traditions.
Ecological tourism	This type focuses on preserving the natural environment in which indigenous peoples live. Tourists can learn how traditional practices use natural resources and contribute to the preservation of ecosystems.
Culinary tourism	They explore the traditional cuisine and gastronomy of indigenous peoples. Tourists can learn about cooking methods, traditional dishes, and the specifics of using local products.
Cultural heritage research	Appreciation and documentation of indigenous cultural elements such as music, painting, dance and crafts. Tourists can participate in activities that contribute to the preservation of this heritage.

Tleuberdinova et al. (2024) present a classification of the main types of ethnographic tourism, identifying the primary goals of each type:

- Ethnographic tourism; Educational; Experimental; Pilgrimage; Adventure; Ethnic tourism is based on festivals.

Ethnic tourism, which focuses on studying indigenous cultures and traditions, is vital for preserving and promoting cultural heritage (Troian et al., 2023). This tourism includes tangible and intangible cultural assets passed down across generations and holds historical, cultural, and social value (Halachev, 2024). In Kazakhstan, a diverse cultural heritage shaped by various ethnic groups, including Kazakhs, Uzbeks, Uighurs, and others, contributes significantly to the development of ethnographic tourism. Ethnic tourism, particularly educational ethnographic tourism, allows tourists to gain in-depth knowledge of local traditions and customs. Learning about history and cultural practices helps tourists understand the values behind these heritages, thus supporting their preservation (Cerquetti et al., 2022). Experiential ethnic tourism enables tourists to immerse themselves in local daily life, helping to revive and sustain traditional crafts and arts (Lim et al., 2023). Participation in domestic work and traditional activities enriches tourists and supports local communities by fostering interest in cultural preservation. Pilgrimage and festival-based ethnographic tourism allow tourists to explore Kazakhstan's spiritual heritage. Celebrations like Nauryz help preserve cultural values and foster community unity (Nowicka, 2020). The development of ethnographic tourism in Kazakhstan represents a critical step toward preserving and revitalizing cultural values. Government initiatives to restore historical monuments, such as the mausoleum of Khoja Ahmed Yassau, reflect the nation's commitment to safeguarding its heritage amid the challenges of globalization (Reeza, 2023).

In this context, transnational initiatives like the restoration of the Silk Road emphasize Kazakhstan's role as a cultural bridge between East and West. The exchange of goods, ideas, and cultural practices fosters mutual understanding and strengthens a shared national identity. Ethnic tourism in Kazakhstan is a vital tool for promoting cultural heritage and a powerful mechanism for preserving and rejuvenating local traditions (Riyadh et al., 2024). Through immersive experiences, interactions, and a deep awareness of diverse cultural identities, Kazakhstan can reconnect with its roots and engage actively in global cultural dialogues. As the world increasingly acknowledges culture as the fourth pillar of sustainable development, Kazakhstan's cultural role is evolving. While the importance of tangible heritage was recognized soon after independence, the role of intangible heritage took longer to be integrated into official policies. Although traditions played a

key role post-independence by fostering a unified national identity, the broader developmental significance of traditional culture was recognized in subsequent years (Devterov et al., 2024). At the same time, this process has been different in Kazakhstan. The development of ethnic tourism has multifaceted aspects, both positive and negative (Table 6).

Table 6. Implications of ethnic tourism development for the country's policy and economy (Source: Author's development)

Positive effects	Economic - increased income and improved living standards; Diversification of the local economy; Foreign currency generation; Improving infrastructure; Strengthening ethnic identity Stimulating intercultural understanding and communication.
Negative effects	Losses are the loss of traditional production skills; Changes in social behaviour and traditional values; Changing attitudes towards visitors (hospitality); Problems with land and other property; Loss of hidden indigenous meanings in traditional cultures.
Causes of negative effects	Fostering misunderstandings of modernisation. Uneven distribution of benefits from tourism development; Identification of minority culture with tourism products; Misunderstanding of the consequences of tourism development; Limits of local authorities.
Comparison of effects	The positive effects are related to the economy, while the negative ones are related to multiculturalism. Positive effects are easily perceived, while negative ones are hidden; Positive effects depend on the degree of negative ones; The costs of ethnic tourism are covered by local minorities; The benefits of tourism belong to outsiders.
Cultural impact	Costs - loss of authenticity in architecture, art, ritual, etc. Benefits - preservation/revival of traditional art and culture.
Social impact	The costs are dehumanization, problems in family and social life; Unacceptable pressure on local hospitality, moral problems; The benefits are the promotion of modernization and women's independence.

The term “traditional” originates from the Latin “traditio,” meaning transmission, indicating the stable nature of traditional culture. Researchers view tradition as a sustaining element in the historical process of identity creation. Cultural identity involves identifying with a distinct and unique (national) traditional culture, which reflects a unique cultural world developed by various peoples (Vainola, 2024). Comparative cultural studies help to highlight specific elements unique to particular cultures and trends that contribute to traditional identity potential (Yurko & Riabtsev, 2024). Tiberghien (2020) discusses the stability of traditions, comparing them to customs, which are historically established norms of social behaviour that endure through generations and are upheld by public opinion. Traditional culture, defined as a set of material and spiritual values created by specific people and reflected in their way of life, is inherited across generations. Tradition can thus be understood over centuries as a harmonized way of living that aligns with the given geographical, climatic, cultural, and historical context. This culture includes rituals, oral folk art, music, dance, and crafts that contribute to the self-identification of ethnic groups. Traditional Kazakh culture is closely linked to the lifestyle of nomadic peoples. The nomadic way of life shaped the spiritual values and worldview of the Kazakh and Kyrgyz peoples, fostering qualities like humility and resilience in challenging conditions (Zhakyp et al., 2023). The demanding lifestyle also influenced child-rearing practices, emphasizing independence, endurance, and knowledge of natural phenomena, crafts, and traditions. Additionally, traditional Kazakh culture emphasizes continuity in the moral and spiritual education of younger generations (Kaliyev, 2023).

Ethnic tourism in Kazakhstan is vital in preserving cultural heritage and local traditions, acting as both an economic contributor and a tool for enhancing national identity (Sadvokasov & Zhumashev, 2023). The globalized world brings added relevance to heritage preservation, as traditional practices risk disappearing. Smagulova & Zharkynbekova (2024) explain that modern cultural development is shifting from merely preserving artefacts to integrating traditions into broader societal aspects, such as embedding cultural norms and values for sustainable development. Through ethnic tourism, ethnic groups in Kazakhstan promote their traditions while sharing them with a broader audience (Bekbossinova et al., 2023). Kazakhstan's wealth of traditional culture, including intangible heritage, forms the foundation for ethnic tourism. In collaboration with international organizations like UNESCO, local authorities are essential in supporting cultural policies promoting tourism and heritage preservation. These efforts contribute to social inclusion and economic growth (Mayuzumi, 2022). The government supports Kazakhstan's tourism development plan. It aims to stimulate tourism with a particular focus on unique cultural experiences. The plan includes infrastructure development, training of service providers and marketing campaigns to attract local and international tourists to ethnographic sites (Table 7).

Table 7. Tourism development plan in Kazakhstan (Source: Tiberghien, 2019)

Maral breeding in Eastern Kazakhstan	It is an integral part of the local culture and offers a unique and promising area for developing ethnic tourism. Maral breeding is a fusion of culture, tradition, welfare, and gastronomy. With proper planning, sustainable practices, and a commitment to authenticity, maral breeding can become an essential attraction for eco-tourists seeking to experience the unparalleled cultural offerings of East Kazakhstan.
Ethnic villages in Kazakhstan	They have a massive potential for developing the country's ethnographic tourism sector. They offer a combination of education, entertainment and cultural immersion, making them attractive to many tourists.
Sivers' apple	The Sievers apple, also known as <i>Malus sieversii</i> , is believed to be the ancestor of many modern apples. It grows in the mountainous regions of southern Kazakhstan, especially in the vicinity of Almaty, and is a fruit and a significant part of the region's natural heritage. Celebrating its flowering is a way to honour its aesthetic beauty and historical significance. The blossoming of the Siversa apple trees is a sight to behold. The orchards are covered in a blanket of white and pink, creating a picturesque panorama against the majestic mountains. The apple has a special place in Kazakh folklore and traditions, and the festival is an occasion to delve into these stories, dances, songs and other art forms.
Festivals and events	Kazakhstan hosts a variety of cultural festivals and events dedicated to its heritage. Nauryz Meyrami (Kazakh New Year) and the Shchuchinsk-Borovoye Ski Festival are examples of events that combine tradition with modern celebration.
Historical sights	Work continues on preserving and restoring historical sites such as the mausoleum of Khoja Ahmed Yassau, the ancient city of Otrar, and the petroglyphs in the Tamgala Gorge, allowing tourists to explore Kazakhstan's past.
Gastronomic tourism	Traditional Kazakh cuisine is a significant part of the cultural heritage. Tourists can taste dishes such as beshbarmak (a meat and noodle dish) and try fermented milk products such as kumys.

The Sacred Kazakhstan Project: This initiative identifies and promotes various holy and historical sites across Kazakhstan. The project ensures the preservation of these sites and encourages domestic and foreign tourists to visit them. **Cooperation with international organisations:** Kazakhstan cooperates with international organisations such as UNWTO (United et al. Organisation) to develop sustainable ethnographic tourism practices that benefit tourists and local communities. Combined with Kazakhstan's rich diversity of cultures and traditions, these programmes position the country as a unique destination for those seeking an authentic and immersive cultural experience. Next, the authors explore potentially promising areas for the development of ethnographic tourism based on cultural heritage in Kazakhstan.

Preserving the traditional cultural identity of the people of Kazakhstan in the context of globalisation is a crucial challenge for society. Ethnic tourism, given its ability to engage tourists in local cultures and their customs, is becoming a mechanism that helps maintain cultural diversity (Fraser, 2020). It contributes to economic development and provides a platform for intercultural dialogue, encouraging society to recognise its cultural identity (Grubor et al., 2022). Thus, the development of ethnic tourism in Kazakhstan is an essential component of preserving cultural heritage, and this aspect is becoming crucial in shaping sustainable cultural development. Interaction between the state, business, and public sector is essential for implementing projects that promote traditional culture. Ethnic tourism is becoming not only an economic initiative but also an essential step in preserving and enhancing the cultural heritage that forms the identity of the people of Kazakhstan.

CONCLUSION

Ethnic tourism in Kazakhstan plays a crucial role in preserving cultural heritage by providing immersive experiences in local communities' traditions, customs, and socio-cultural aspects. This approach promotes economic development and strengthens national identity and consciousness. The growth of ethnic tourism brings numerous benefits, including increased income for local communities, diversification of the economy, infrastructure improvements, and reinforced ethnic identity. Moreover, it fosters intercultural understanding and dialogue. However, challenges accompany this growth. Ethnic tourism can sometimes result in losing traditional skills, social behaviour shifts, and potential land conflicts. Inequitable distribution of tourism benefits may also amplify these issues. Still, ethnic tourism typically has a lower environmental impact, as it attracts visitors to less crowded areas, encouraging an interest in environmental conservation and support for eco-friendly initiatives.

Ethnic tourism offers a means to revive and preserve cultural practices, instilling national pride in local communities. Its educational potential enables tourists and residents alike to better understand each other's lives, promoting mutual respect. National programs like *Ruhany Zanggyru* and *Seven Faces of the Great Steppe* guide government policies to support ethnic tourism as an economic and cultural development tool. In a globalized world, Kazakhstan's ethnic tourism can be a vital force for preserving cultural diversity and encouraging intercultural dialogue. For sustainable development, collaboration between public, private, and civil sectors is essential, along with involvement from international organizations to support heritage preservation and attract investment. Thus, ethnic tourism in Kazakhstan is economically beneficial and a powerful mechanism for cultural preservation, requiring a coordinated management approach to address contemporary challenges.

Future research on ethnic tourism and cultural rights in Kazakhstan should focus on developing a nuanced understanding of cultural human rights that account for the complexity of modern globalization. Key questions include protecting cultural identity in a world where digital technologies, population mobility, and social structures are rapidly changing. Research should examine how these factors impact access to cultural resources, cultural identity expression, and local heritage preservation.

Additionally, understanding the role of state and non-state institutions in ensuring cultural rights is essential. Research could explore how these institutions might create inclusive policies that provide equal access to cultural resources, particularly for marginalized communities. This also includes examining mechanisms to safeguard cultural rights amid economic and political instability and methods to foster self-identification and inclusion for diverse social groups.

Another critical focus should be developing comprehensive policies for realizing cultural rights on both national and international levels. Future research should consider interdisciplinary approaches to cultural rights to address societal dynamic changes better, balancing cultural preservation with modern development needs. This approach will deepen our understanding of cultural human rights as interconnected social, political, and economic phenomena, helping to create a society where cultural diversity is recognized and actively supported.

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