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THE ROLE OF FAMILY-OWNED BUSINESSES IN THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM IN SAMARKAND

Abstract. This article analyzes the socio-economic contribution of family-owned businesses to tourism development in Samarkand. Quantitative survey methods were used with 103 respondents. The study shows their key role in job creation, cultural heritage preservation, and tourism growth, while noting challenges like finance, succession, and digital skills.

Keywords: Samarkand, tourism, family-owned businesses, sustainable tourism, culture, heritage preservation, economic growth, SMEs, Uzbekistan, local development, entrepreneurship.

Introduction. Samarkand is one of the ancient cities in the world and is included in UNESCO world heritage sites. Samarkand is recognized for its architectural magnificence and rich history, and invites visitors with its mixture of ancient heritage of Silk Road and modern cultural appeal. Tourism in Uzbekistan is one of the most important industries of the economy and improves thanks to our unique cultural and historical heritage and government support. In this regard, the development of tourism depends much on family businesses as there are most families involved in this sector.

There are some iconic destinations in Samarkand that mostly attract foreign tourists and first and the most important is Registan Square. Registan Square is a collection of three madrassas – Ulugbek, Sherdor and Tilla-Kari. Gur-e-Amir and Shahi-Zinda are next historical landmarks of Samarkand attracting more and more tourists each year, by this contributing economy of the city.

Samarkand is an important tourist center of Uzbekistan with a rich cultural and historical heritage. The development of family business in the field of tourism contributes to maintaining the uniqueness of the city, attracting tourists and strengthening the economy of the region.

The study of this topic is important for understanding the role of small businesses in the sustainable development of the tourism industry. This paper can help to identify the mechanisms by which the family business contributes to the economic growth of Samarkand, as well as to develop recommendations for its support. As well the study of this topic will emphasize how family businesses help to preserve traditions, passing through generations and introducing them to tourists. It can create a unique tourist experience. Modern tourists are looking for authenticity and unique experiences that only small family businesses can offer. Studying their contribution to the tourism sector of Samarkand will help determine how these companies create the region's competitive advantages in the global tourism market. Family businesses contribute to the balanced development to tourism, minimizing its negative impact on the environment and society. This is especially important for Samarkand as a UNESCO world heritage site. This research reveals the features of the interaction between family business and tourism, offers ways to solve existing problems and contributes to the development of strategies for the sustainable development of the region.

Family-run businesses, including hotels, traditional craft shops, restaurants and guest houses are key intermediaries in preserving cultural heritage by offering tourists unique experiences. Family-owned businesses play crucial role in development of tourism infrastructure and services in Samarkand. Even more family guest houses, hostels and other accommodation facilities were planned to build in Samarkand in 2024. 74,6 billion sums were allocated for this purpose and it will allow to create more than 2000 new workplaces. It will not only multiply the quantity of the available places for stay for tourists but as well will create an opportunity for local families to be involved in tourism businesses.

Literature review. Family-owned businesses including hotels, restaurants and handmade workshops and excursion services play vital role in culture support and historical heritage of region, especially in regions with rich historical and cultural heritage, such as Samarkand. This type of business contributes to tradition preservation and creating unique tourist experience and

supporting local economy. The purpose of this review is to analyze already existing researches, related to role of family-owned businesses in tourism development.

Family-owned businesses are very important in insuring sustainable development of the sphere. In comparison with huge corporations, family enterprises are more tend to implementation of ecological and cultural practices, that suit to the principles of sustainable tourism. Family businesses can support high standards quality of the service and pay more attention on uniqueness local traditions and cultural values. Researches show that family enterprises often establish strong connections with local community of ecology. According to some researchers (Getz, 2000) “family enterprises are interested in long lasting success, that contributes to their efforts in supporting ecological and cultural sustainability” Being in touch with locals, these enterprises can create and develop products and services that will reflect local features. It contributes not only increasing the quality of the tourist product, but also stimulates to save cultural handicrafts. Some scholars mentioned that (Getz, D., & Carlsen, J., 2005) family business helps to save economic stability of the region, creating workplaces, improving quality of the services and developing local infrastructure. Family business is such a concept which was defined in lots of scientific works and there are some attitudes to this definition. Some other researchers (Shnayder, 1997) highlighted that family business features with three main contains: family owns business, family manages business and continuity planned for next generation. In tourism sphere, family business can include activities such as hotel and restaurant businesses, tour agencies, excursion companies and etc. According to highlights of some researchers (Cassidi, 2007) family companies in tourism can be as big as small enterprises, which often offer more qualified and personalized service. From highlights of other researchers (Sharpley, 2000) family enterprises actively involved in saving of the cultural heritage. For example, most of them are restoring historical buildings and organizing cultural events, that attracts more tourists and increases the awareness in uniqueness of local culture.

Flexibility and ability to innovations in family enterprises are also important. Family businesses in tourism are usually more flexible in their activities, which allows them to respond quickly to changes in consumer preferences and global trends. This for example can be seen in small travel agencies that provide services focused on niche markets, such as ecotourism or gastronomic tours. (Sharma P. C.-3., 2001). What is more important in family-owned businesses unlike nonfamily businesses it is family values and traditions. In family businesses in tourism, there is often a strong influence of family values and traditions on management decision-making. This can manifest itself in the desire to provide high-quality service, which has an important impact on the reputation of the business (Carney, 2005). According to other authors (Getz, D., & Carlsen, J., 2005) family business in tourism defines as enterprise, where family manages it and capital transferred within the family. Researches note that family businesses have lots of advantages: management flexibility, high owner motivation, close connection with local culture (Hallak, R., Brown, G., and Lindsay, N, 2014) at the same time there are challenges related to generational continuity and access to financing (Sharma, P., Chrisman, J.J., & Chua, J.H, 2001).

In Uzbekistan family business traditionally occupies a significant part of economy, especially in the field of hospitality and crafts (Askarova, 2020). Studies show that family business in tourism contribute to: Creating a unique tourist experience. Family hotels and restaurants express the atmosphere of Uzbek Hospitality.

Protection of cultural traditions. The craft dynasty, such as the descendants of the Ceramist of the Rishton School, contributes to the development of cultural tourism (Karimov R., 2019).

Economic growth of areas. Small family hotels and cafes support local production and provide jobs (Tursunova, 2023). World experience of family business in tourism

Family apartments, boutique hotels, restaurants, craft workshops

In Europe, family hotels play an important role in the hospitality industry. For example, in Italy, hotels run by a family generations form a stable tourist flow (D, 2014). Relais Borgo Santo Pietro Boutique Hotel (Italy) combines family traditions of hospitality with modern trends in Ecotourism.

Inherited restaurants are the hallmark of gastronomic tourism. Ostaria Franceskana (Italy), run by the Botura family, received three Michelin stars due to its authenticity and family traditions (Smith, 2020). In Japan, the Oweria restaurant established in 1465 continues the traditions of the restaurant, family management (Tanaka, 2018)

Craft ventures contribute to the protection of cultural heritage. In France, the family factory Les Oliveads continue to produce traditional provincial textiles. (Dubois, 2019) In India, a dynasty of the craftsmen of Jaipur holds the secrets of making batiks and hand embroidery (Chakravarti, 2021).

Cultural and social norms: Family businesses in Uzbekistan are shaped by cultural practices that emphasize family importance, often affecting their management structures. These criteria can affect the way these businesses are structured and how they respond to external pressures such as market changes and competition.

Role in local economy: Research suggests that FOBS contributes significantly to manufacturing jobs, increasing domestic production and promoting entrepreneurship in Uzbekistan’s economy. For example, retail and agricultural sectors, which often dominate fobs, provide several goods and services that consume domestically.

There are some features of family-owned businesses in Uzbekistan.

First one is: Ownership and Control: Family-owned businesses in Uzbekistan are primarily in areas such as retail, manufacturing and agriculture, which create a major part of the informal (Bukhareva, S., and Jumanyazov, S, 2018). The structure of these businesses is often hired, with major management positions with family members (Safarov, 2017). Second one is: Cultural References: The importance of the family in the Uzbek Society has a direct impact on how business goes on. Cultural criteria around family relations, such as collective decision making, help to shape the operational dynamics of these businesses (Ibragimov M. , 2021). This feeling of family obligation can support and obstruct the development of the business, especially when the younger generation opposes or challenges traditional management practices. Third one is: Job Creation: Research (Davronov, M., Turgunov, A., and Kholikov, M., 2021) Highlights the important role of family businesses in job creation in Uzbekistan, especially in rural areas where they appoint local communities in areas such as agriculture and trade. Family businesses also provide opportunities for women and minorities who may not have access to large corporate networks (Azimov, A., and Matokvobov, 2019) And the last one is: Economic Development: Family businesses contribute significantly to economic diversification in Uzbekistan. Their flexible structure allows them to quickly optimize for market changes, which create development opportunities even in challenging economic conditions (Nematov, 2018). Additionally, the government’s reforms, such as tax break and easy access to finance, have increased the development of family businesses (Shukurov, 2020) with the aim of supporting SMEs.

Research methodology. In this study, a quantitative method approach has been adopted to develop a holistic understanding of the impact of family businesses on tourism development in Samarkand. The quantitative approach has assessed economic contributions, customer satisfaction, and community perceptions.

Surely it has been conducted. The purposive methos has been applied to find respondents. Total 103 respondents mainly from Samarkand (about 90%) have taken the survey, all respondents were either CEO/founder, director, or manager of family-owned businesses.

Despite the advantages of this methodology, it has its own limitations:

- Due to the specific socio-economic conditions of Samarkand, the results may not be completely relevant to other regions of Uzbekistan.
- Data will be collected through interviews and surveys where the participants give their self-reported data subject to individual biases.
- Lack of access to financial data because some businesses may not be willing to disclose it results in the restriction of quantitative analysis.

Analysis results. In order to look deeper into the respondents’ demographic distribution, a frequency analysis was carried out, on the basis of the regional origin of the respondents. This would help reveal the geographical representation of the sample, and thus would serve to put the

conclusions in the right regional context. The results are presented for consideration in table 1.

Table 1. Frequency analysis of respondents according to regions

Which region are you from?		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Bukhara		4	3,9	3,9	3,9
Jizzakh		1	1,0	1,0	4,9
Navoiy		1	1,0	1,0	5,8
Samarkand		87	84,5	84,5	90,3
Tashkent		8	7,8	7,8	98,1
Khorezm		2	1,9	1,9	100,0
Total		103	100,0	100,0	

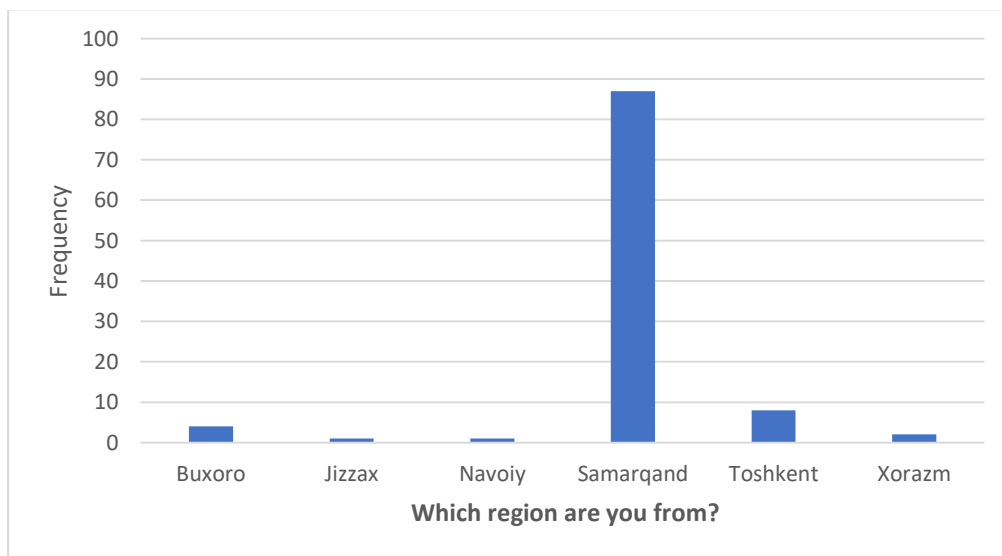


Figure 1. Frequency table of respondents according to region

The table 1 shows the geographical distribution of the respondents according to the region they came from. There was a total of 103 respondents, and the results show how the respondents are distributed across six regions of Uzbekistan.

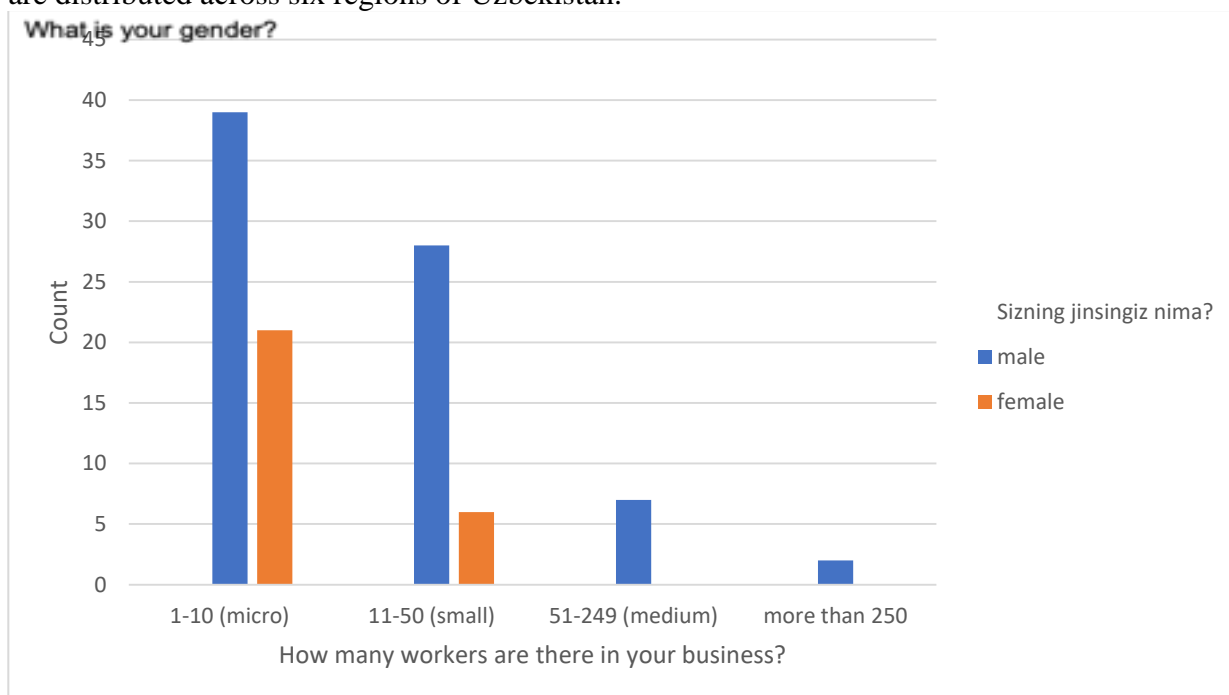


Figure 2. Crosstabulation figure of gender of respondents by number of employees in the organization.

Most respondents 87 persons, or 84.5%-are from Samarkand; that indicates very high density in survey respondents within this study region as Samarkand is main research target.

On the other hand, very little representation is given by other regions. 7.8% respondents are from Tashkent, followed by 3.9% Bukhara, 1.9% Khorezm, and 1.0% each from Jizzakh and Navoiy. As the number of respondents is very low from these regions, it is bound to limit the representation of the survey result experiencing the larger population of Uzbekistan.

The presented cross-tabulation expounds upon the interaction of gender with the size of the business in which respondents were employed. The Case Processing Summary asserts that the data of all 103 respondents (100.0%) were valid, with no missing values; therefore, rendering the analysis reliable and complete. The classification for the size of businesses was as follows, based on the number of employees:

Micro enterprises (1–10 employees)

Small enterprises (11–50 employees)

Medium enterprises (51–249 employees)

Large enterprises (more than 250 employees)

About Micro Enterprises (1–10 workers).

The largest number of respondents were included in this category (60 out of 103 respondents, or 58.3%), showing that micro businesses are the dominant enterprise type among the participants. Thirty-nine males and 21 females make for a relatively more gender-balanced aggregation than other categories in this group, with again a male majority.

About Small Enterprises (11–50 workers).

Thirty-four subjects (33.0%) reported working in small-scale enterprises. In this group, 28 were male, and 6 were female, indicating a sizable gender gap. Even though women are still in small-scaled businesses, their representation is considerably lower than that of men.

About Medium Enterprises (51–249 workers).

Only 7 respondents (6.8%) indicated that they worked in medium enterprises, all being male. The complete absence of female respondents in this category might reflect existing gender inequalities in employment at medium-sized enterprises, or relatively limited jobs might have been accessible to females in the sampled population.

About Large Enterprises (More than 250 Workers).

This category witnessed the least number of respondents (2 individuals, 1.9%, both males). Again, female representation was absent, reinforcing the trend of declining female participation as the size of the enterprise enlarged.

Conclusion and recommendations. The present research investigated the major role of family businesses in shaping the local tourism landscape of Samarkand. The study provides an extensive insight into the economic, social, and cultural contributions of such family-owned enterprises to sustainable development within the region. By means of a quantitative data, the study established that family businesses are strongly rooted in the culture of Samarkand with great potential for promoting unique, authentic, and community-oriented tourism experiences.

Family businesses not only offer personalized services while maintaining cultural traditions, but also create employment and develop infrastructure. Although the businesses may be fairly small, they still make a significant contribution to the local economy through supporting local suppliers, reinvesting in the community, and bringing in tourists who appreciate authentic Uzbek hospitality.

Nevertheless, there are still some challenges. Access to finance, generational transition, limited digital literacy, and lack of scalability remain constraints on growth. Addressing such issues through appropriate policy measures, capacity development programs, and technological support infrastructure will be pivotal.

In general, this study confirms that family businesses are not merely economic actors, but cultural custodians of sustainable tourism. By recognizing and encouraging their contribution while maintaining the sustainability of the local economy, other stakeholders can improve and promote Samarkand in the global marketplace as a tourist destination while safeguarding the heritage for posterity.

Recommendations

Based on the research findings and challenges, there are some recommendations:

- Government support: Establish special funds and tax incentives for family-owned businesses in tourism, especially those focused on cultural heritage.
- Training/Education: Family business owners should be trained in digital marketing, financial literacy, sustainable tourism practices, etc.
- Networking opportunity: Facilitate cooperations between family businesses, tourism associations, and international partners in order to expand their marketing reach and share knowledge.
- Considerations for policy: Ensure family-owned businesses gain the full consideration in the development strategies and policy frameworks at the national and regional level for tourism.
- Further studies: Future studies could target other regions of Uzbekistan or make a comparison of different types of tourism enterprises, or analyze the sustainability and intergenerational success of family businesses.

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<p>M.Vafoqulova</p> <p>Oilaviy biznesning Samarqandda turizmning barqaror rivojlanishidagi o‘rni</p> <p>Annotatsiya. Ushbu maqolada Samarqand-da turizm rivojlanishiga oilaviy bizneslar-ning ijtimoiy-iqtisodiy hissasi tahlil qilinadi. 103 nafar respondent ishtirokidagi miqdoriy so‘rov usullari qo‘llaniladi. Tadqiqot ular-ning ish o‘rinlari yaratish, madaniy merosni saqlash va turizm o‘shishidagi muhim rolini ko‘rsatadi hamda moliyalashtirish, avlodlar davomiyligi va raqamli ko‘nikmalar kabi muammolarni ta’kidlaydi.</p> <p>Kalit so‘zlar: Samarqand, turizm, oilaviy biznes, barqaror turizm, madaniyat, merosni saqlash, iqtisodiy o‘shish, KOB, O‘zbekiston, mahalliy rivojlanish, tadbirkorlik.</p>	<p>М.Вафокулова</p> <p>Роль семейного бизнеса в устойчивом развитии туризма в Самарканде</p> <p>Аннотация. В данной статье анализируется социально-экономический вклад семейных предприятий в развитие туризма в Самарканде. Используются количественные методы опроса с участием 103 респондентов. Исследование показывает их ключевую роль в создании рабочих мест, сохранении культурного наследия и росте туризма, а также отмечает такие проблемы, как финансирование, преемственность и цифровые навыки.</p> <p>Ключевые слова: Самарканд, туризм, семейный бизнес, устойчивый туризм, культура, сохранение наследия, экономический рост, МСП, Узбекистан, местное развитие, предпринимательство.</p>
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MODERN APPROACHES TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF CULTURAL TOURISM

Abstract. This article examines modern approaches to the development of cultural tourism. Due to the diverse interpretations of tourism, its social, economic, and cultural significance is explored. The study highlights the tourism system and factors affecting its growth, new initiatives — tourist destinations, demographics of incoming visitors, opportunities for space tourism, the role of online maps, and the impact of climate change on travel. It also analyzes practical research in Europe, Africa, and Latin America, including management, economic development, sports tourism, hotel industry growth, and restoration of historical monuments.

Keywords: tourism development, sustainable tourism, visitor demographics, space tourism, climate change, tourism innovation, and cultural heritage.

Introduction. Following the 2023 referendum, Uzbekistan has witnessed significant growth in its tourism sector. Key drivers of this development include increased investments, improved infrastructure, and a renewed focus on cultural and business tourism. The government has prioritized the modernization of transportation systems, restoration of historical sites, and the creation of new tourist routes beyond traditional destinations like Tashkent, Samarkand, and Bukhara. Ecotourism is also on the rise, supported by the development of national parks and nature reserves. The easing of visa policies and an increase in visitors from China and CIS countries further demonstrate Uzbekistan’s commitment to becoming a major international tourist destination. These initiatives collectively highlight tourism as a vital component of the nation’s economic development strategy.

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