COMMODIFICATION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT: HOW COULD WE PRESERVE THE CULTURAL AUTHENTICITY IN BUKHARA?

Mukhtorov Abdurakhmon Shavkatovich
Management Development Institute of Singapore in Tashkent
https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15743025

Abstract. *This research explores the impact of tourism-driven commodification on the cultural authenticity of Bukhara, a UNESCO World Heritage site renowned for its historical and architectural significance. Despite extensive studies on history and cultural value of Bukhara, limited attention has been given to how modern tourism practices threaten the preservation of its authentic heritage. The study emphasizes the importance of safeguarding traditional structures, symbols, and cultural identity in relation to the aspects of commercial development.*

Keywords: *management, tourism and hospitality, cultural authenticity, UNESCO, cultural heritage.*

Introduction.

Despite a plethora of research on the history and culture about Bukhara, little is known about preservation of its cultural authenticity from commodification for tourism development purposes. Bukhara is considered ancient city thanks to its great history, rich culture and the architecture. Even because of its particular old monuments, mosques, fortress and other destinations with historic structures, Bukhara has been recognized as a UNESCO World heritage site. However, actions in commodification of cultural heritage sites in order to develop tourism industry, which are affecting on the cultural authenticity and uniqueness of ancient Bukhara. There are very few studies in preservation of heritage sites and cultural authenticity of Bukhara. When it comes to discuss about authenticity, (Berman 1970) confirms that aspects like identification, autonomy, individuality, self-growth, and self-realization are all included in the complete development of authenticity. This means that cultural authenticity is another main element, which must be considered as a momentous treasure of each nation, as it is demonstrates the reality, uniqueness of the culture. In other words, instead of preserving the cultural authenticity in Bukhara, ancient houses in historic center are either being sold or destructed, lands around and nearby the historic zones are commodified for new hospitality projects, modern architectural designs and ornaments are being used on ancient structures and certain old buildings are being destructed and replaced with touristic zones. The study could be consequential and momentous in order to remind people that the real historic authenticity, cultural heritage and uniqueness must be preserved for future generation regarding the case of Bukhara. Moreover, to give options for preservation of heritage sites in Bukhara. As there are hundreds of architectures which located neatly to one another, thus constructing various hotels nearby or even destroying them in order to create amenities for visitors will lead to an instant loss of cultural authenticity. Additionally, it would be proper to claim that modern constructions and buildings around historic center are hiding the old view of the monuments and ancient establishments. Indeed, tourists are concentrated on the real historic elements of the cultural heritage. According to (Richards, 2002), because they have unique qualities that reflect the rich

fabric of history, way of life, and surroundings, cultural attractions are essential components of any travel destination. They work as fascinating tourist attractions that provide guests an insight into the distinctive history and customs of a location (McKercher, 2004). Cultural attractions are truly priceless resources for learning about the myths and traditions that have molded societies over time. They offer invaluable opportunities to grow, learn, and acquire a sincere respect for the cultures of other people. These attractions also allow tourists to actively participate in local customs, engage with the community, and take in intriguing cultural acts, so they're not just for spectators. Our comprehension and admiration of many cultures are enriched by these real and immersive experiences, which also leave with deeply meaningful memories. It is imperative to endeavor towards conserving the greatest amount of history and historical structures for the benefit of both the current and future generations, even though it may not be feasible to save all of them.

Regarding the discussion of the research's objectives, there may be numerous ones. Prioritizing the preservation of Bukhara's cultural authenticity is the primary goal of this research. As a historic city with a fascinating past that is significant worldwide, Bukhara is highly valuable historically and is recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage site. Also, the study intends to guarantee the preservation of Bukhara's distinctive cultural legacy for upcoming generations. The goal of the research is to examine successful global preservation initiatives, with a particular emphasis on instances from other countries where cultural heritage has been successfully preserved. Through an analysis of these cases, particular strategies that have been effective in preserving historical sites of Bukhara can be identified. These tactics guarantee the long-term preservation of these architectural gems and uphold their relevance as priceless historical sites. This study seeks to understand the ways in which locals, officials, and tourists value and view Bukhara's cultural history. Through an analysis of their perspectives and encounters, it can assist to acquire a deeper understanding of the importance and influence of Bukhara's cultural legacy on various parties and individuals. Recognizing the importance of Bukhara's cultural legacy to its stakeholders would enable to better understand these points of view.

Theoretical Background. Everywhere in the globe has heritage, and every place has its own distinct cultural past. Numerous areas have realized the importance of their cultural history and have used it to their advantage to use tourism to further economic development. According to Timothy, D. J. (2014) nowadays heritage tourism is incredibly popular and draws travelers from all walks of life. By delving into a location's history, customs, and well-known locations, it enables visitors to really experience and comprehend the cultural significance of that location. Also, Timothy, D. J. (2014) claims that it's a wonderful opportunity for communities to showcase their legacy, supporting cultural exchange through tourism while also protecting their practices and generating economic benefits. At the same time, there are certain similar initiatives are being conducted in ancient Bukhara. However, in order to contribute the growth in the economy there are certain norms that must be followed undoubtedly. As Maksimovich, M. (2019) argues that representing the authentic beliefs and habits of its people, heritage and culture are the fundamental elements of each nation. Within that nation, they delineate the identities and customs of the people. Admittedly, it is very essential for every country to promote their economic status in order to keep up with the global standards. Nonetheless, Maintaining the cultural validity of cultural heritage sites requires routine monitoring. We can guarantee that these locations remain in their current state and that future generations have easy access to the customs

and values of their forefathers by regularly monitoring and evaluating these locations (Maksimovich, M. (2019). Authenticity and cultural value of Bukhara region must be preserved and safeguarded including priceless historical sites, which can guarantee that the cultural identity is maintained for the benefit and instruction of coming generations. However, it would be proper to claim that that ancient houses in historical streets of Bukhara are being converted into hotels and hospitality zones, certain elements and structures historical monuments are being decorated with modern lightings and lands around Historic center of Bukhara are being commodified for new modern tourist projects and skyscrapers which in turn would obstruct the authentic view of Bukhara. Notably, in official website of "UNESCO" it can be found that "Historic Center of Bukhara" is in the World heritage list, which can be very spectacular fact, which means that preservation of its authenticity is a great responsibility. In order to be truly authentic, we must fully accept who we are as individuals, make our own decisions with confidence, express our special traits and qualities without holding back, actively pursue personal development and improvement, and, in the end, come to a profound understanding and acceptance of who we really are (Berman 1970). According to Jenks (1993), a group of people's common experiences, customs, and cultural symbols are remembered and preserved through the process known as collective memory. It resembles a meaningful and contextual system of signs and symbols that have been accumulated through time and have cultural importance. With the case of Bukhara, city preserves and transmit its cultural values and traditions from one generation to the next through collective memory, these symbols are important to the members of those communities and serve as a means of connecting with, understanding, and passing on cultural heritage. As Chronis (2012) confirms that the background for the stories created by tourism providers, the natural and man-made surroundings have a significant impact on how visitors view and relate to a location. In fact, it means that local culture, traditions and a way of life in Bukhara will share deeper understanding for tourists. Meanwhile, Andriotis (2011), argues that using historically correct techniques and materials to restore or preserve buildings and objects is directly linked to the objective authenticity that tourists seek for in their experiences. This indicates that travelers want an experience that accurately captures the historical background of a location. An object's physical attributes, such as its elegance, form, patina, and minute details, add to its cultural and historical value (Gell, 1998). To be more precise, an object's visual characteristics helps to comprehend and value its cultural and historical significance. More than merely its functional form defines an object's shape. Whether it's the overall design or particular details, its beauty mesmerizes and captures our attention. A certain culture or historical period's values can be symbolized and meanings conveyed by the shape. Bickford, A. (1981) claims that the patina a term for the surface aging or weathering that occurs naturally adds depth and authenticity to the piece and serves as a constant reminder of its temporal and historical evolution. A closer look at the object's exquisite craftsmanship and detailed decorative components, among other aspects, will reveal its cultural and historical significance. Heritage resources have a sense of realism, significance, and emotional impact because of their cultural and historical links (Timothy, 1997).

In short, an object becomes more than just a physical object when it qualifies as a heritage resource. It has significance and authenticity since it stands for something significant from the past. Another crucial argument has been stated by Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, (2005) that heritage objects lose their vitality and relevance when they are routinely replicated, mass-produced in vast quantities, or presented in a stereotyped or exaggerated way. This occurs as a result of their disconnection from

their initial historical and cultural connotations, which makes it harder for them to build sincere, intimate connections with individuals. In other words, culture, customs, and significance of Bukhara are preserved in heritage goods, making them special and priceless. Still, the originality and genuine significance of these structures are lost when they are oversimplified, overstated, or mass-produced. The historical and cultural settings that originally constituted their uniqueness fade from their memory. Miles (2002), adds that Memorial sites are able to elicit significant feelings of respect or empathy through the effective communication of their content. As in such way that arouses sentiments of respect or empathy. These sites elicit an emotional response from visitors and prompt them to consider the value of the occasions or individuals being remembered through careful design and storytelling.

Research questions and objectives.

The study contains specific research questions as well as objectives respectively.

1. *How did commodification of cultural heritage impact and is impacting on the cultural authenticity of Bukhara region?*

This the primary question which seeks for the exact outcomes of commodification the cultural heritage of ancient Bukhara region. Notably, with the rise of tourism and the commodification of cultural heritage, there has been a shift in the way the cultural elements of the Bukhara region are perceived and experienced.

2. *How could we preserve the cultural authenticity of Bukhara?*

As this question reveals the justified reasons for preservation of cultural authenticity from commodification in ancient Bukhara. Thus, actual reasons can bring actual option in order to mitigate the issue.

Main aim for this can undoubtedly be supporting the importance of cultural authenticity of Bukhara. As destinations that are in the world heritage list of “UNESCO” must not lose their authenticity, which must be preserved for future generation. To support specific recommendations based on global cases and standards would be another main objective of this research. Moreover, analysis of views, thoughts and feelings of stakeholders in Bukhara is another aim of this study, since it would be straightforward that how they act or influence on commodification. In fact, these queries may attract combination of surveys, case studies and other similar methods.

Methodology.

Qualitative methodology for the research.

The research will be conducted in a qualitative method with interpretivism paradigm. As the goal of qualitative research is to analyze and understand the depth and complexity of the phenomenon. It involves investigating the individualized interpretations and meanings that people give to their experiences. According to Gerring, J (2017), although social and political analysis has long employed qualitative methodologies, it is only recently that these methods have been carefully examined and thought through. Philosophers, logicians, and historians' writings provided the foundation for the first conversations regarding qualitative approaches in the 19th century. Meanwhile, the cultural heritage of Bukhara and how tourism impacts its authenticity will be investigated using qualitative research techniques. The use of qualitative research techniques to investigate the cultural authenticity of Bukhara in the context of tourism is relatively new, despite the fact that these techniques have long been employed to examine cultural phenomena. The underlying meanings and social conditions that influence how cultural authenticity is perceived and preserved in Bukhara will be uncovered through qualitative study. Furthermore, investigating the

opinions and subjective experiences of local communities, as well as their perspectives on how tourism and the commodification of cultural property may affect the authentic representation of their customs and way of life, may constitute further qualitative methodology statements. Observation is an essential tool for gathering information and comprehending the cultural dynamics of the area when doing a qualitative study of Bukhara. It would be simple to see and document directly how individuals act, communicate, and carry out their customs in daily life (McKechnie, 2008).

Observation and Interviews in Qualitative Methodology.
In qualitative research, observation entails immersing oneself completely in the subject matter and actively monitoring every element of tourist in Bukhara and cultural heritage. This could be observing the interactions between locals and visitors at historical monuments, sites, traditional craft workshops, or community gatherings. By paying close attention, one will have the chance to record specific details and gain a deep comprehension of the subtle cultural differences that exist in Bukhara. It will be simple to fully immerse oneself in the environment and pay great attention to the customs, interactions, and behaviors of the local population using this qualitative method as well. Understanding these details will helps to gain a deeper understanding of unique cultural heritage of Bukhara and the ways that tourism influences it. This method can also help having a direct experience with how tourism impacts the authenticity of the place, which will help to understand the complex relationship between cultural heritage and the tourism industry more thoroughly.

Moreover, structured and unstructured interviews can be another methodology in qualitative research. According to (Bryman, 2008), to gather in-depth information this is one of controlled ways of qualitative methods. Interviews will be conducted with numerous interviewees that might be more than 15 people including members of certain organizations, thus interview questions related to the definition of cultural authenticity, impact of tourism on the cultural authenticity, need for preservation of cultural heritage, the current and possible outcomes of commodification and similar needed topics will be discussed.

List of proposed interview questions:

How do you define the cultural authenticity in Bukhara?
How tourism industry is being developed in the region?
How commodification impacted on the cultural authenticity in Bukhara?
What are the potential outcomes in the future?
What is the influence of tourism on culture?
How commodification impacted on tourism?
How commodification impacted on economy?
What are your concerns regarding the preservation of cultural heritage?
What kind of the strategies must be followed to cope with the issue?
What are other challenges that must be considered?

Notably these are possible queries will be forwarded to the stakeholders of ancient Bukhara comparatively, which are mainly government officials, cultural organizations, local residents, hotels, tour operators and tourists. It is intended to learn about the perspectives of government representatives, tour operators, and other relevant stakeholders regarding cultural authenticity of Bukhara, sustainable tourism practices, and the opportunities and challenges associated with

conserving and promoting the city's cultural heritage through interviews. It is essential to learn more about their approaches to controlling the increase of tourism while guaranteeing the authentic and respectful preservation of cultural heritage in ancient city.
The primary goal of these interviews is to selectively interact with Bukhara locals, including citizens, craftspeople, cultural practitioners, and community leaders. Because it helps investigate experiences, attitudes, and views about the growth of tourism, how it affects local customs, and how it contributes to the preservation of cultural authenticity. Interviews with members of the local community provide clarification on their participation, worries, and goals related to the commercialization of their cultural heritage. It will also be revealed how locals view and handle the chances and problems brought about by tourism-driven commodification, including the possible erasure of customs and the effects on society.
Interviews with travelers who visit Bukhara are also crucial. These interviews can offer insightful information on the reasons behind visitors' decisions, their expectations for the trip, and their perceptions of the region's historical sites and customs. Because of this, it would be simple to investigate whether visitors are aware of and comprehend the possible commodification of cultural heritage in Bukhara and how their choices and preferences as customers could either support or contradict the commodification process. Comprehending the viewpoints of tourists is imperative in assessing the demand-side elements that propel or resist the commercialization of cultural assets in Bukhara.

Ethics.

When it comes to discuss about ethical norms as well as considerations, the way a study will be done with regard to the participants or those who may be affected by it, is one of the ethical aspects of research. Due to the fact that it entails determining if the methods used in the research are suitable and morally acceptable. According to (Wynaden. D, 2001) by following the proper ethical guidelines, harm can be avoided or minimized. All the norms concerned with the politics, economics, sociology and other similar spheres will be followed respectively according to global and Uzbekistan standards. Moreover, the privacy of the participants will be protected according to their requirement. Also, the topic as well as the purpose of the study will be explained to the participants. Regardless the cultural differences and various thoughts of the people, their responses will be considered subjective for the sake of the research which will remain confidential. Furthermore, the research is for preserving the cultural authenticity from numerous commodification actions, which be conducted by following the ethics of political rules and regulations.

Resources and access.

In order to conduct research in the area, Bukhara provides an easy access in most aspects. Starting from destinations like ancient monuments, “Historic Center”, “Lyabi-Khavuz Ensemble” and including local touristic sites, hotels and ongoing projects, it will be straightforward to collect momentous data. Moreover, according to support of supervisor it has been recommended to focus on the official “UNESCO” resource together with related scholars of this subject. More realistic findings will be collected with the combination of these formal resources.

Timetable for completion.

Duration (Timeline)	Activity	Remarks
One month	Observation of heritage site.	Visiting and observation of cultural heritage sites in ancient Bukhara. Processing other data collection procedures.
One month	Interview.	Conducting interview session according to the timetable for data collection.
Two months	Data analysis.	Analyzing the collected data appropriately, by using other official resources.
One month	Report	Reporting the statements according to the analysis.
One month	Review	Reviewing as well as finalizing core elements of the study together with recommendations of the colleagues.

REFERENCE

1. Berman, M. 1970 The Politics of Authenticity. London: Allen & Unwin
2. Richards, G. (2002). Tourism attractions systems: Exploring cultural behavior. r. Annals of Tourism Research, 29(4), 1048-1064.
3. McKercher, B., Ho, P. S. Y., & du Cros, H. (2004). Attributes of popular cultural attractions in Hong Kong. Annals of Tourism Research, 31(2), 393–407.
4. Timothy, D. J. (2014). Contemporary Cultural Heritage and Tourism: Development Issues and Emerging Trends. Public Archaeology, 13(1-3), 30–47. doi:10.1179/1465518714z.00000
5. Maksimovic, M., & Cosovic, M. (2019). Preservation of Cultural Heritage Sites using IoT. 2019 18th International Symposium INFOTEH-JAHORINA (INFOTEH). doi:10.1109/infoteh.2019.8717
6. Berman, M. 1970 The Politics of Authenticity. London: Allen & Unwin
7. Jenks, C., ed. 1993 Cultural Representation. London: Routledge
8. Chronis, A. (2012). Between place and story: Gettysburg as tourism imaginary. Annals of Tourism Research, 39(4), 1797–1816. doi:10.1016/j.annals.2012.05
9. Gell, A. (2013a) Art and agency: An anthropological theory. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
10. Andriotis, K. (2011). Genres of heritage authenticity. Annals of Tourism Research, 38(4), 1613–1633. doi:10.1016/j.annals.2011.03.001

11. Bickford, A. (1981). The Patina of Nostalgia. Australian Archaeology, 13(1), 1–7. https://doi.org/10.1080/03122417.1981.12092815
12. Timothy, D. J. (1997). Tourism and the personal heritage experience. Annals of Tourism Research, 24(3), 751–754. doi:10.1016/s0160-7383(97)00006-6
13. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, (2005) From ethnology to heritage: The role of the museum. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/238714489_From_Ethnology_to_Heritage_The_Role_of_the_Museum (Accessed: 30 March 2024).
14. Miles, W. F. S. (2002). Auschwitz: Museum Interpretation and Darker Tourism. Annals of Tourism Research, 29(4), 1175–1178. doi:10.1016/s0160-7383(02)00054-3
15. Gerring, J. (2017). Qualitative Methods. Annual Review of Political Science, 20(1), 15–36. doi:10.1146/annurev-polisci-092415-024158
16. McKechnie, L. E. F. (2008). Observational research. In L. M. Given (Ed.), The Sage encyclopedia of qualitative research methods (pp. 573–577). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
17. Bryman, A. (2008) Social research methods. Oxford university press
18. Orb, A., Eisenhauer, L., & Wynaden, D. (2001). Ethics in Qualitative Research. Journal of Nursing Scholarship, 33(1), 93–96. doi:10.1111/j.1547-5069.2001.00093.x
19. Bukhara (2024) Encyclopædia Britannica. Available at: https://www.britannica.com/place/Bukhara (Accessed: 02 March 2024).
20. Historic Centre of bukhara (no date) World Heritage Journeys of Europe. Available at: https://visitworldheritage.com/en/eu/historic-centre-of-bukhara/e945ea8f-7239-4241-8706-4f15f8ffda84 (Accessed: 02 March 2024).