

## EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF CULTURAL AND ECO-TOURISM ON YOUTH AWARENESS OF HERITAGE AND SUSTAINABILITY

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### ABSTRACT

The study explores the role of various types of tourism, particularly cultural and eco-tourism, in enhancing a sense of national identity and appreciation among the youth. It examines how integrating these forms of tourism into educational frameworks can deepen students' understanding of their national heritage, encompassing both cultural and natural dimensions, and promote a stronger connection to their cultural and environmental surroundings. The authors employ a comprehensive literature review alongside case studies of successful cultural and eco-tourism initiatives, utilizing statistical methods to analyze survey data. The findings suggest that cultural tourism, enriched with ecological elements, significantly enhances youth engagement with cultural landmarks and natural landscapes. The study concludes that incorporating cultural and eco-tourism into educational programs offers a valuable approach for fostering an informed and culturally aware generation. By promoting a holistic connection to cultural heritage and natural environments, this approach supports the development of environmentally responsible and heritage-conscious individuals.

**Keywords:** cultural tourism, patriotism, youth, attractions, outlook, educational programs.

### INTRODUCTION

Today, cultural tourism is a promising and topical direction growing in popularity. It invites young people to dive into the history of the past, expand their horizons, and experience unforgettable emotions (Borodkin, 2023; Gabidullina et al., 2020). The main objective of cultural tourism is to visit places of interest. This includes visiting cultural and historical monuments and architectural buildings and exploring and communicating with the peoples of the world. The key characteristics of cultural tourism include:

- the uniqueness of the architectural object, i.e., the genius idea of the object's construction,
- the importance of the site in a time of historical significance,
- the great value of the object for cultural traditions that still exist today (Berezovaia, 2019, p. 201).
- We are witnessing a rise in the number of tourists interested in cultural tours. A tourist on vacation will always allocate a few hours of their time to visit unique historical places (Ivanova et al., 2019, p. 55).

The advantages offered by the development of cultural tourism include:

- cultural tourism has a positive economic impact on the destination and can help underserved areas to thrive,

- the profits generated by cultural tourism can improve the social welfare of local communities,
- cultural tourism contributes to the preservation of traditional culture, allowing local people to maintain their cultural practices (Tokmurzayev et al., 2022),
- cultural tourism helps destinations market themselves and compete with the more competitive ones (Anokhina et al., 2020).

Cultural tourism, which involves the exploration of heritage, traditions, and historical landmarks, presents significant opportunities for enhancing educational experiences (Guliaev, 2019). Incorporating cultural tourism into education can play a crucial role in shaping students' global awareness and intercultural competence. Exposure to different cultural practices and historical perspectives encourages critical thinking and open-mindedness, essential skills in the increasingly interconnected world. As students experience the richness and diversity of their own and others' cultures, they are better equipped to navigate and contribute positively to a multicultural society. Thus, cultural tourism enriches students' educational journeys and helps cultivate informed, culturally engaged citizens. It is also important to note the impact of eco tourism. Eco tourism, when combined with cultural tourism, provides a holistic approach to patriotism by nurturing an appreciation for both cultural heritage and natural landscapes. This integrated approach fosters a sense of responsibility for preserving all aspects of national heritage. The study seeks to investigate how cultural tourism can contribute to fostering patriotism among young people, focusing on how incorporating cultural tourism into educational systems can deepen students' appreciation of their cultural heritage and strengthen their sense of national identity.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

### *Methods*

Our study employed a literature review method. We reviewed existing literature on cultural tourism, patriotism, and youth education. Sources included academic journals, books, dissertations, and reports, which provided a theoretical foundation and contextual background for the study. This review helped identify key concepts, trends, and gaps in current research, informing the study's design and guiding the development of research questions.

Several case studies of successful cultural tourism initiatives were examined to illustrate how cultural tourism can effectively promote patriotic education. These case studies were selected based on their relevance, scale, and documented outcomes, providing concrete examples of the strategies and impacts discussed in the research. The case studies also included eco-tourism initiatives that highlighted sustainable practices. This approach helped underscore the role of environmental conservation in fostering a comprehensive patriotic identity among students.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Cultural tourism helps preserve cultural objects and heritage. Cultural tourism also allows the younger generation to learn more about the culture and traditions of their people. It teaches why the memorable places of one's homeland need to be preserved and protected (Afonin, 2006, p.74). The popularity of cultural tourism is illustrated in Figure 1.

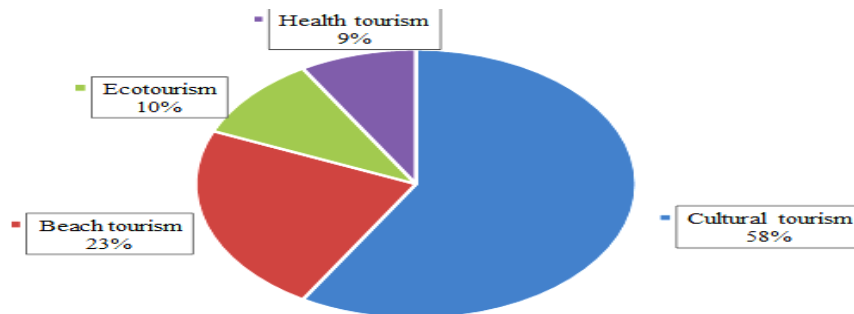


Figure 1. The share of cultural tourism among other types of tourism

Cultural tourism is easier to organize and set in motion compared to other types of tourism. Cultural tourism is available to everyone; one only needs to choose a specific theme and route. Speaking of the benefits of cultural tourism, there are many positive aspects, ranging from a cultural perspective on recreation to gaining new experiences. More than 59% of respondents favor cultural tourism over beach, eco, and health tourism. Cultural tourism represents tourists' interest in cultural and historical values. The development of cultural tourism allows people to increase their level of education and enhance their spiritual potential. A classification of cultural tourism is provided in Figure 2.



Figure 2. Classification of cultural tourism

Eco-cultural tourism is characterized by an interest in preserving and promoting local cultures and values and participation in other cultures' traditional ways of life. The study also reviewed cases where cultural tourism initiatives incorporated eco-tourism principles, showing that environmentally conscious tourism amplifies respect for historical and natural landmarks alike.

Integrating eco-tourism with cultural tourism not only benefits local economies but also encourages sustainable practices that protect both cultural landmarks and natural resources, ensuring they remain for future generations.

Creative tourism is characterized by a keen interest in creativity and spiritual development.

Experience tourism is characterized by an interest in full immersion based on the circumstances and learning experientially about cultures.

Thematic tourism is more narrowly specialized, targeting specific areas of interest subdivided into thematic groups.

Art tourism focuses on objects of arts and culture.

Event tourism is aimed at visiting the sites of historical events.

Finally, heritage tourism is associated with visits to important historical and traditional sites that hold great cultural and historical value. The types of cultural tourism are listed in Figure 3.



Figure 3. Types of cultural tourism

Business and learning tourism is characterized by the organization of groups of people pursuing a common goal. Typically, it involves professional activities. These are usually trips to conferences, fairs, or seminars (Kolpashchikova, 2011, p. 73).

Specialized cultural tourism features a purposeful journey to get acquainted with intangible and spiritual culture. Usually, such a trip includes visiting architectural monuments, unique buildings, cathedrals, and city landscapes. On such a trip, one can also learn about unique flora and fauna.

Non-specialized cultural tourism refers to a purposeful journey, through which the person learns about the high culture of the people who were able to influence world history. The tourist gets acquainted with world culture, politics, economics, and the way of life (Chernenko and Kolpashchikova, 2012; Moiseeva, 2012). There are two more distinct varieties of cultural tourism (Figure 4).

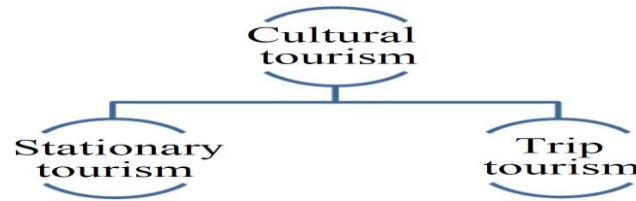


Figure 4. Varieties of cultural tourism

Stationary tourism implies the tourist's stay in a single city, settlement, or recreational center.

Trip tourism is characterized by visiting several cultural centers or cities with unique attractions arranged in an itinerary for convenience (Vetitnev et al., 2019, p. 74).

Cultural tourism in the global context is a factor and a tool for the rapprochement of peoples and cultures, stopping conflicts and fostering respect for one's culture and other equally unique cultures.

Cultural tourism is going through difficult times. The reason for this is the general commercialization that has covered all spheres of society. In the current times of crisis, it is vital to seek effective measures for the development of long-term programs aimed at creating new promising areas of cultural tourism. The urgency of cultural tourism development is apparent. In the future, cultural tourism will become a priority for tourism development in Russia (Maksiutina, 2010). Also, balancing cultural tourism with eco-tourism principles helps mitigate negative impacts, ensuring that tourism doesn't harm natural settings that are integral to cultural sites

Cultural tourism expands a person's horizons and enriches them with new knowledge; it is more than just travel and recreation. Cultural tourism is also a mobile sphere: it is impossible to spend time in one place. Thus, it requires some form of physical activity.

Cultural tourism can be closely integrated with educational programs to enhance learning experiences by providing students with practical, real-world opportunities to engage with their nation's history, culture, and traditions. By incorporating cultural tourism into the curriculum, educators can facilitate experiential learning, where students not only learn about historical events, cultural practices, and architectural heritage from textbooks but also experience them firsthand through guided tours, visits to cultural sites, and participation in local festivals. This approach enriches the educational process and fosters a deeper emotional connection to the material, strengthening students' sense of national identity and patriotism.

Statistics indicate that about 60% of young people cannot imagine a vacation without bad habits. Cultural tourism can undoubtedly remedy that. Cultural tourism can diversify a person's life and help to strengthen their physical state, nurture their spiritual personality, and fill their life with new emotions and acquaintances.

Russia's social, political, spiritual, and economic development is largely determined by human capital; it is impossible without the effective use of innovative, intellectual, and creative potential possessed by today's youth. Whatever the youth are filled with spiritually now, they will give back after a time. In this context, cultural tourism is the only resource allowing to properly influence the inner world of a person (Verkhovkyh, 2012, p. 20). Therefore, the issue of nurturing a patriotic personality has now become particularly acute.

The cultivation of patriotism has become an important and highly prioritized problem today. It is imperative to raise the young generation in the spirit of patriotism and to instill love for the motherland from childhood. It is vital to inculcate patriotism based on traditions, history, and mentality.

*Patriotism implies:*

a feeling of attachment to one's place of residence, small homeland, and country of residence,

a sense of obligation to the country of residence expressed in the willingness to sacrifice one's interests for the good of the state,

an integral part of any social organization, the disintegration of which is the beginning of the organization's collapse, an opportunity to revitalize the country as a world power.

Nurturing feelings of patriotism is essential for the upbringing and socialization of the younger generation. Patriotic education creates the foundation for social integrity and cohesion, the reproduction and development of the country's labor and intellectual resources, and the trend of the formation of a strong state (Nasibova, 2015).

All-Russian and international events aimed at patriotic education of the younger generation are often held in Russia. *This includes several festivals:*

All-Russian festival of youth creativity "I was lucky to be born in Rus!",

All-Russian festival of military-patriotic songs "Crimean Wave 2016",

All-Russian Children's Festival "Christmas Tree 'Cossack Circle'",

International contest-festival of children's and youth creativity "Roads of Memory, Roads of Peace – Parade of Arts", etc.

Great popularity is enjoyed by military-historical reenactment:

International festival of annual military-historical reenactment "Kulikovo Field",

All-Russian youth historical quest "Battle for Sevastopol",

Interregional festival of historical reenactment "Archer", etc.

*The same applies to civil events:*

All-Russian action "Day of the Unknown Soldier",

All-Russian action "Day of Heroes of the Fatherland",

All-Russian action "We are Citizens of Russia!", etc.

Cultural tourism is an effective tool for fostering patriotism in the youth environment that satisfies cognitive, spiritual, and recreational needs (Chudnovskii, 2019, p. 108).

I.N. Nasibova (2015) argues that patriotism is an important stage in the upbringing of a child, as it can teach and provide the knowledge necessary to function in today's world: "As there is no person without self-love, so there is no person without love for the fatherland, and this love gives education the right key to the person's heart and a powerful support to fight against their bad natural, personal, family, and ancestral tendencies" (p. 80).

Many Russian thinkers present different points of view on patriotism as the core component of the Russian idea capable of providing a civilizational breakthrough.

Patriotism is a continuous journey towards a new worldview, the spiritual development of society, universal moral precepts, tolerance and respect for other peoples, respect for the feelings of believers, goodness, justice, truth, and universal dignity. It is essential to begin to form and educate a highly moral and socially active personality with a clearly expressed civic position from a young age. The younger generation has to realize that patriotism is a sense of pride and love for one's fatherland, a source of strength and courage for one's people, the national pride and dignity of the nation. Therefore, the loss of patriotism leads to the loss of the nation.

As of today, the situation regarding patriotism and youth is alarming. This is evidenced by the reports of the survey "Migration of young people in Russia". The frightening fact is that 75% of respondents responded positively to the question "Do you plan to move to another country?" and only 25% replied "No". We can conclude that patriotism and love for the homeland are low among the young generation (National Atlas of Russia, n.d.).

Cultural tourism can profoundly contribute to the development of patriotic upbringing and the spiritual and moral potential of the younger generation.

## CONCLUSIONS

- Cultural tourism, along with other forms of tourism like eco, historical, and event-based tourism, plays a critical role in shaping youth identity and fostering patriotism. By immersing young people in historical landmarks, cultural traditions, and natural landscapes, tourism broadens their understanding of national heritage and instills a deep appreciation for the diversity and richness of their country. Each type of tourism contributes uniquely.
- The integration of cultural and ecotourism is particularly impactful. Together, they foster a comprehensive form of patriotism that not only values the preservation of historical and cultural sites but also encourages sustainable practices to protect natural ecosystems.
- In conclusion, by combining diverse forms of tourism, especially cultural and eco, educational programs can cultivate a generation that values and protects both the cultural and natural wealth of their nation. It expands the range of interests, compellingly demonstrates the importance of the intellectual development of young people, and makes them feel part of nature and the cultural social space.

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