

# TOURISTS, RESIDENTS, AND STAKEHOLDERS' PERCEPTIONS OF COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM IN CENTRAL ASIAN COUNTRIES

*Doctorate Thesis in Tourism, Economics and  
Management by Gulnoza Usmonova*







Tourists, residents, and stakeholders' perceptions of  
community-based tourism in Central Asian countries

Thesis

By

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## Dedication

I dedicate my thesis to my beloved family. To my wonderful daughter Zarina, who was 8 months old when I started this journey, who had shown great courage and patience when I had to be away from her to complete my semesters, field trips and numerous conferences. I am very much thankful for her love and support and how she grows alongside me as I grow in Academia.

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Thank you to everyone who has contributed to making my PhD a reality.



## Declaration

This thesis is my own work, and it has not been submitted in any manner for another degree or diploma at any university or other tertiary education institution. When information was taken from someone else's published or unpublished work, it was acknowledged in the text and a list of sources was provided.



## List of Publications

### Book chapters:

Alieva, D., Usmonova, G., and Aktamov, Sh. (2021). Intervenção social através do desenvolvimento do turismo comunitário: Caso do Usbequistão. In Fialho, J. (Ed.), Manual para a intervenção social. Lisbon: Edições Sílabo. ISBN: 978989-561-187-4.

### Journal articles:

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### Conferences:

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Alieva, D., Usmonova, G., and Sorokin, D. (2019). Analysis of readiness of some touristic objects of Tashkent for tourism flow growing. Round table proceedings on "The sphere of service, tourism and hospitality: sustainable development and innovation", Tashkent, September 13th.

## Table of Contents

DEDICATION.....	4
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	5
DECLARATION.....	6
LIST OF PUBLICATIONS.....	7
RESUMEN.....	12
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION.....	19
1.1.SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH ON CBT.....	20
1.1.1. RESEARCH IN CBT.....	22
1.1.2. RESEARCH ISSUES.....	23
1.1.3. A CRITIQUE OF CBT LITERATURE.....	24
1.1.4.CBT CONCEPT DEBATES.....	25
1.1.5. CONTEXTUAL DEFINITION.....	27
REFERENCES.....	30
CHAPTER 2.....	34
SUSTAINABILITY PERCEPTIONS OF COMMUNITY BASED TOURISM BY STAKEHOLDERS IN CENTRAL ASIA.....	34
2.1. INTRODUCTION.....	35
2.2. LITERATURE REVIEW.....	36
2.2.1 COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM.....	36
2.2.2. COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM IN CENTRAL ASIA.....	37
2.3. METHODOLOGY.....	39
2.3.1. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY.....	39
2.3.2. DATA COLLECTION.....	39
2.4. RESULTS.....	40
2.5. LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH.....	42
2.6. CONCLUSIONS.....	42
REFERENCES.....	44
CHAPTER 3.....	47
YURT INVITED: COMBINING TOURISTS AND STAKEHOLDERS PERCEPTIONS OF SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM IN CENTRAL ASIA.....	47
3.1. INTRODUCTION.....	48
3.2. LITERATURE REVIEW.....	50
3.2.1. COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM.....	50
3.2.2. TOURISTS' PERCEPTIONS OF CBT.....	51
3.2.3. TOURISTS' SUSTAINABILITY PREFERENCES AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT.....	52
3.2.4. COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM IN CENTRAL ASIA.....	53



3.3. METHODOLOGY .....	56
3.3.1. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY .....	56
3.3.2. THEORETICAL MODELLING .....	56
3.4. RESULTS.....	57
3.4.1. DATA COLLECTION AND INSTRUMENTS .....	57
3.4.2. EXPERTS' AND STAKEHOLDERS' PERCEPTIONS.....	59
3.4.3. TOURISTS' PERCEPTIONS.....	62
3.4.4. SEM RESULTS .....	64
3.5. DISCUSSION .....	67
3.6. CONCLUSION.....	69
3.7. LIMITATIONS AND IDEAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH .....	71
REFERENCES .....	71
CHAPTER 4.....	80
THE EFFECTS OF YOUNG RESIDENTS' IMAGE AND SATISFACTION WITH TOURISM ON MIGRATION INTENTIONS .....	80
4.1. INTRODUCTION .....	81
4.2. TOURISM IMAGE AMONG RESIDENTS .....	83
4.3. RESIDENTS' TOURISM SATISFACTION AND MIGRATION .....	84
4.4. MIGRATION AND YOUTH.....	85
4.5. COUNTRY PROUDNESS (SELF-IMAGE) AND MIGRATION .....	87
4.6. DATA SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY .....	88
4.6.1. RESEARCH AREA.....	88
4.6.2 DATA SOURCES.....	89
4.6.3 THEORETICAL MODEL .....	90
4.7. RESULTS.....	91
4.7.1. SEM RESULTS .....	91
4.7.2. SEMANTIC NETWORKS ANALYSIS RESULTS .....	94
4.8. DISCUSSION .....	100
4.9. CONCLUSION.....	101
5. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH.....	103
REFERENCES .....	105
CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSIONS .....	111
5.1. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH.....	117
REFERENCES .....	118
APPENDIX.....	122

## List of Tables and Figures

Scheme 1 Organization of literature in the current research.....	22
Scheme 2 Study Approach.....	50
Table 1 Topics discussed by CBT experts .....	59
Table 2 Mean and standard deviation of the sustainability perceptions.....	62
Table 3 Means and standard deviations of the item constructs.....	63
Table 4 Results of CFA reliability and validity .....	65
Table 5 Correlation matrix of latent variables.....	65
Table 6 Hypothesis testing results .....	66
Table 7 Results of CFA reliability and validity .....	92
Table 8 Correlation matrix of latent constructs.....	93
Table 9 Hypotheses testing results .....	94
Table 10 Participant Responses .....	95
Table 11 Key words .....	97
Table 12 Outcomes of the study.....	112
Figure 1 International tourist arrivals in Central Asia (The World Bank, 2020). 54	
Figure 2 Theoretical model .....	57
Figure 3 Semantic networks extracted from experts' opinion (a – challenges; b – opportunities) .....	60
Figure 4 Results of the structural model.....	66
Figure 5 Theoretical model.....	91
Figure 6 Results of the model.....	93
Figure 7 Semantic network of key concepts and ideas from in-depth interviews .....	98
Figure 8 Semantic network of concepts of those with no intentions to migrate	99
Figure 9 Semantic network of concept present in answers interviewees willing to migrate .....	100
Picture 1 Geographic map of the Republic of Uzbekistan.....	89



## Resumen

Esta tesis se suma a la investigación del turismo comunitario al explicar y comprender la idea básica de CBT sostenida por expertos, identificando puntos de acuerdo sobre el concepto desde los puntos de vista de las principales partes interesadas y sugiriendo futuras direcciones efectivas de desarrollo. La aplicación de la participación de las partes interesadas se lleva a cabo en los países de Asia Central. En principio, se prevé que los resultados puedan ser utilizados por los países en desarrollo para el desarrollo de CBT. Los hallazgos revelaron el significado y los principios básicos del turismo comunitario, sus beneficios e inconvenientes, así como las principales medidas a tomar y los criterios de evaluación efectivos. Si bien existen puntos en común en el consenso sobre la CBT, se debe tener en cuenta el carácter distintivo de cada comunidad al implementar el desarrollo, de acuerdo con los hallazgos de la investigación de los puntos de vista de la comunidad. Esto es notablemente similar a lo que Sirakaya et al. [1] descubrieron en su investigación sobre el apoyo de las personas al desarrollo turístico. Sus hallazgos indicaron características que influyen en el apoyo de los ciudadanos al desarrollo turístico que fueron comparables a los hallazgos del presente estudio. Cada ubicación, por otro lado, tiene su propio conjunto de circunstancias únicas que deben abordarse para aumentar el apoyo local para el desarrollo turístico [2]. El proceso de análisis y planificación de recursos constituyen las fases iniciales que se destacan en este estudio. Otras etapas mencionadas en este estudio fueron la sensibilización de la comunidad, particularmente en relación con la sostenibilidad y las ventajas turísticas; desarrollar un programa educativo para la comunidad; y obtener orientación y apoyo profesional.

Esta tesis explora los beneficios comunitarios y de la participación de los actores sociales como componentes necesarios para la gestión sostenible; de lo contrario, el turismo comunitario no puede tener una alta probabilidad de ser exitoso. Además, los resultados de esta tesis respaldan la conclusión de que el énfasis comúnmente puesto en la rentabilidad económica debe equilibrarse con un alto empoderamiento de los agentes locales [3]. Los puntos de vista y la retroalimentación de las partes interesadas deben medirse periódicamente para llegar a un acuerdo sobre las vías de crecimiento futuras.

Estas perspectivas combinadas ofrecen una visión para el turismo comunitario en los destinos emergentes en general, pero particularmente en las comunidades investigadas en esta tesis de Asia Central. En sí mismo, llevar a cabo una investigación y desarrollar una visión para el CBT es el primer paso hacia una empresa de turismo comunitaria sostenible. Finalmente, esta tesis tiene como objetivo abordar un problema de investigación para el sector turístico como la evaluación de la percepción de sostenibilidad de la CBT por parte de la comunidad, los turistas y la correlación de la imagen del país con las intenciones de los jóvenes de migrar en la era del desarrollo turístico en Asia Central.

La tesis consiste en tres estudios respectivos que se desarrollan en el área de Asia Central: Uzbekistán, Kazajistán, Tayikistán, Kirguistán y Turkmenistán.

**El estudio 1 (Capítulo 2)** “Percepciones de sostenibilidad del turismo basado en la comunidad por parte de las partes interesadas en Asia Central” se centró en el turismo comunitario (CBT), con el objetivo principal de analizar los beneficios que una comunidad podría obtener o percibir como resultado del turismo. La CBT puede ser un instrumento fuerte para mejorar los estilos de vida de quienes residen en el país de destino y combatir la pobreza en Asia Central. La investigación ofrece una visión general de la CBT como concepto, así como los datos recopilados en el campo sobre las evaluaciones de las partes interesadas sobre la viabilidad a largo plazo de la CBT. Los datos se utilizaron para establecer objetivos para la planificación de la sostenibilidad y para proponer una estrategia de acción de desarrollo turístico sostenible.

**El estudio 2 (Capítulo 3)** “Yurt Invitado: Combinar las percepciones de turistas y partes interesadas sobre el turismo comunitario sostenible en Asia Central” se centra en las opiniones de visitantes y partes interesadas involucradas en el turismo basado en la comunidad (CBT) en países de Asia Central (como Kazajistán, Uzbekistán, Kirguistán, Tayikistán y Turkmenistán) como fuente de desarrollo sostenible. Se utilizan dos técnicas complementarias en el estudio. Primero, se utilizó un enfoque de entrevista en profundidad con dieciséis expertos seleccionados y partes interesadas en la región junto con el análisis de la red semántica para definir los principales desafíos y oportunidades que enfrenta el CBT como un habilitador de desarrollo sostenible, teniendo en cuenta las percepciones de la sostenibilidad de los interesados. En segundo lugar, se realizó una encuesta a 125 turistas de la región para evaluar las impresiones de la sostenibilidad de los turistas. El impacto de las elecciones de sostenibilidad de los visitantes y la interacción con las comunidades locales en las percepciones de sostenibilidad se investiga utilizando un modelo de ecuación estructural. Al identificar las trampas de las prácticas y determinar los desafíos para la política turística, este estudio destaca la utilidad de un enfoque combinado de las percepciones de las partes interesadas y los turistas para abordar las oportunidades de la CBT que puede mejorar la calidad de vida de la comunidad turística en Asia Central. Los hallazgos muestran los beneficios de la comunidad, así como las perspectivas futuras para obtener aún más beneficios de las actividades turísticas en el contexto de la planificación turística a largo plazo.

**El estudio 3 (Capítulo 4)** “Los efectos de la imagen de los jóvenes residentes y la satisfacción con el turismo en las intenciones de inmigración” explora los vínculos entre las intenciones de migración jóvenes, la imagen del turismo y la satisfacción con la vida. Los resultados sugieren que la imagen turística del país media el vínculo entre la satisfacción con la vida y las intenciones de migración,



es decir, aquellos que tienen una percepción negativa de la buena influencia del destino en el turismo tienen un mayor impacto de la satisfacción turística en sus planes de migración. Los hallazgos destacan la necesidad de centrarse en la imagen turística de los residentes de las áreas turísticas menos desarrolladas para mejorar su capacidad para reclutar el talento local para el desarrollo del turismo. Es de esperar que los hallazgos de los estudios de esta tesis informen futuras investigaciones sobre el turismo comunitario en general, así como ayuden en la implementación de un turismo efectivo basado en la comunidad. Algunos elementos de la tesis se han publicado o están en proceso de ser publicados en las actas de conferencias y revistas arbitrarias para mejorar la investigación del turismo comunitario.

### **Los objetivos de la tesis**

El marco de la tesis está influenciado por los antecedentes recogidos en la literatura vinculada a la noción teórica del turismo comunitario (CBT), como concepto útil para promover el turismo en los países de la región del Asia Central. Como resultado, a partir de la identificación de áreas potenciales de interés para el objetivo del desarrollo del turismo comunitario, los objetivos específicos de la tesis son los siguientes:

1. Conocer qué opinan los expertos sobre la planificación turística comunitaria y en qué coinciden.
2. Comprender y evaluar la percepción de la sostenibilidad del turismo comunitario a través del prisma de múltiples partes interesadas.
3. Utilizando la experiencia y los conocimientos de los expertos como base, investigar los criterios utilizados por las partes interesadas en la evaluación del turismo sostenible basado en la comunidad.
4. Explorar los puntos de vista de las partes interesadas sobre el crecimiento del turismo basado en la comunidad, incluidos los responsables de la toma de decisiones, las empresas, los visitantes y los miembros de la comunidad.
5. Analizar la percepción, satisfacción del desarrollo turístico con interrelación con la imagen país y la migración entre los jóvenes
6. Crear un terreno común entre los principales interesados y especialistas en el desarrollo del turismo de base comunitaria.
7. Explorar oportunidades futuras para el desarrollo del turismo comunitario.

A partir de la revisión de la literatura realizada sobre la percepción de la CBT, la tesis analiza y evalúa la percepción que los actores tienen sobre la CBT en los países de destino, y detecta los problemas que enfrentan los actores mientras trabajan en el sector, específicamente:

1. Se lleva a cabo una investigación con un método mixto, con el objetivo de comprender el estado de la CBT en Asia Central desde la perspectiva de las partes interesadas;
2. Se analizan los problemas que enfrentan los agentes clave en sus actividades de CBT;
3. Se proponen direcciones para el diseño de políticas para asegurar la participación de los residentes locales en el CBT en condiciones justas y razonables.

## **Metodología**

La tesis aplica un método mixto que incorpora datos tanto cualitativos como cuantitativos. Para el Estudio 1 y el Estudio 2 (Capítulo 2 y Capítulo 3) se recopilaron datos a través de varios trabajos de campo in-situ en los países del Asia Central, y se realizaron una serie de entrevistas para el Estudio 3 (Capítulo 4). Se utilizó una técnica de modelado de ecuaciones estructurales, probando el modelo teórico para identificar la influencia de las preferencias de sostenibilidad de los turistas y su participación con las comunidades locales en las percepciones de sostenibilidad. Este método cuantitativo se combina con un análisis de contenido de entrevistas en profundidad con una muestra de actores locales del CBT en la región. Además, el análisis de contenido se basó en el análisis de redes semánticas como instrumento para ampliar los aspectos del análisis a una perspectiva tanto cuantitativa y cualitativa. Los resultados destacan los beneficios que recibe la comunidad, así como las oportunidades futuras para obtener más ventajas de las prácticas turísticas en el ámbito de la planificación del turismo sostenible.

## **Conclusiones**

Los hallazgos destacan claramente la importancia y los principios básicos del turismo comunitario, así como sus beneficios e inconvenientes, proponiendo las primeras medidas que se deben tomar para un desarrollo exitoso, y los criterios de evaluación efectivos que se deben aplicar en la práctica. Aunque hay paralelismos en el acuerdo con respecto a la CBT, se debe reconocer la singularidad de cada comunidad al buscar el desarrollo, de acuerdo con la investigación de los puntos de vista de la comunidad.

Los estudios aportados por esta tesis encontraron que varias características son relevantes para muchos proyectos de CBT, de acuerdo con otros estudios académicos que argumentan que ningún conjunto de circunstancias favorables permite que prosperen todas las iniciativas de CBT [4; 5; 6; 7]. En esta línea, Dodds et al. [8] han presentado los temas básicos en torno a los factores de éxito y los desafíos de la CBT. Los resultados de este estudio respaldan las

conclusiones de esta tesis, al ofrecer una técnica para evaluar y comparar proyectos de CBT a partir de los siguientes factores clave:

1. Participación e Involucramiento de la Comunidad.
2. Experiencia de co-creación por parte de la comunidad local y el turista.
3. Gestión local y sentido de propiedad.
4. Formación de una imagen país positiva entre los residentes.
5. Participación de los jóvenes residentes en el desarrollo turístico.
6. Aumentar la conciencia sobre la sostenibilidad de la CBT entre residentes y turistas.
7. Centrarse en la sostenibilidad a largo plazo en CBT.

Los hallazgos sugieren que las perspectivas y demandas de los visitantes y las partes interesadas son similares, en el sentido de que se necesitan actividades más convincentes hacia la sostenibilidad. Es decir, el desempeño en cuanto a la sostenibilidad de CBT en las naciones de Asia Central puede mejorarse más allá de los estándares actuales de gestión ambiental, social y financiera [9].

Por un lado, las partes interesadas afirmaron que son necesarios una protección ambiental más sólida, unas implicaciones socioeconómicas más amplias para los residentes locales, el desarrollo del capital humano, el fomento del espíritu empresarial local, y la provisión de servicios financieros locales. Las opiniones de los turistas, por otro lado, se ven influenciadas considerablemente por las opciones que se ponen a su disposición para el desarrollo del turismo sostenible, lo que también afecta su disposición a participar en la cultura y las costumbres locales. Como resultado, es obvio que los visitantes se preocupan por contribuir al crecimiento del turismo a largo plazo, y las empresas y los destinos de CBT deben participar activamente para satisfacer las demandas de gestión de la sostenibilidad de los visitantes [10].

Las elecciones de los turistas por artículos de CBT ecológicos tienen un impacto en su propensión a relacionarse con las comunidades locales y contribuir al desarrollo local. Los turistas, por otro lado, quieren conectarse y experimentar la "diversidad" que conduce al crecimiento de la comunidad [11]. Como resultado, en algunos aspectos, la responsabilidad de combatir el crecimiento insostenible y la pobreza en los lugares de destino puede alejarse de las organizaciones turísticas y dirigirse hacia los pasajeros [12].

Las percepciones de sostenibilidad entre los turistas y las partes interesadas en las diferentes naciones de Asia Central no son uniformes: Uzbekistán y Kirguistán tienen los niveles más altos, y Turkmenistán tiene los más bajos. Esto podría estar relacionado con la poca conciencia de destino de las naciones de Asia Central, lo que enfatiza la necesidad de desarrollar técnicas publicitarias competitivas y marcas de destino [13].

Además, las preferencias de los visitantes por las prácticas sostenibles del CBT se reflejan en su disposición a gastar más en artículos con certificación ecológica



[14]. Así pues, los visitantes están más dispuestos a aceptar un aumento de precio si están de acuerdo con el objetivo a largo plazo de los pagos y disfrutan de una experiencia significativa [15]. Además, los hallazgos muestran que el uso de los servicios de CBT no siempre se asocia con excursiones de mochileros o de bajo costo, lo que indica que los viajeros que valoran la comodidad también están interesados y eligen instalaciones de CBT respetuosas con el medio ambiente, lo que indica que la autenticidad y la sostenibilidad ya no son opciones "baratas". Esto demuestra que los operadores turísticos tienen a su disposición claras oportunidades para modificar sus ofertas con el fin de satisfacer las preferencias de sostenibilidad de los visitantes; y por otra parte, las organizaciones de gestión de los destinos del Asia Central deberían adoptar campañas promocionales para fomentar el comportamiento turístico sostenible de las partes interesadas.

## Referencias

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# Chapter 1. Introduction



## 1.1. Significance of the research on CBT

The fundamental focus of this thesis is on defining the meaning and perceived appropriateness of community-based tourism techniques. The research's analysis implies on developing world, particularly Central Asia. The study employs a variety of methods and is explanatory. It is guided by a consideration of stakeholders and community representations and aims to create empirical generalisations regarding community-based tourism.

Several tourism-related organizations across the globe advocate "individuals" in the "community" as the "center" of tourist growth. These pressures spawned the notion of "community-based tourism." The UNESCO initiative "Integrated Community Development and Cultural Heritage Site Preservation in Asia and the Pacific," or LEAP [1], is an example of this concentration. Pearce and Moscardo [2] noted that the idea of "tourist community relationship" is regularly referenced in research planning papers and is frequently accorded priority position in the list of international, regional, and local tourism research agendas.

There are numerous and varied factors that justify and shape this topic of research. In today's tourism, focusing just on economic development delivers an imperfect view of the phenomenon's complexity. Although tourism has become such an important component of modern societies, it requires extensive research and analysis if its significant social and economic advantages are to be realized and promoted in a way compatible with humanity's objectives [3].

Ritchie's [4] forecast of impending shifts in tourism has led to the rise of community-tourism viewpoints. Ritchie went on to say that in the future, tourism will place a greater emphasis on resident-responsive tourism, transnational cultures, and demography changes. One of the nineteen tourist concerns that arose from the conceptualizing of an advisory group in the region was the importance of the tourism community link [5]. The advisory group projected that more resident responsive tourism would be required, which would entail more progressive engagement in tourist decision-making by destination society's collective action [5].

Due to a number of issues, analyzing and studying tourism and the community is not a simple task. Different community views regarding tourism development and expansion, according to Jamal and Getz [6] and Kneafsey [7], create worries that community-driven planning process may be an unattainable goal. True engagement, according to Walker, Mitchell, and Wismer [8], is often extremely weak at the local level, providing impacted communities authority and a role in choices, as well as acknowledging variety within and across social groupings. The "culture and economy" strategy, according to Kneafsey [7], is not implemented by a single actor, but rather comes from the cumulative activities

of multiple individuals acting at various geographical scales with often opposing goals. Furthermore, research suggests that some segments of the community are uninterested in emerging expansion. Local development has also traditionally been influenced to a significant extent by the actions of individual private businesses in the community who make decisions based mostly on market forces [9]. Individuals can get first-hand knowledge of the greater world and exchange information about their views, goals, viewpoints, cultures, and politics through travel, according to D'Amore [10]. Furthermore, growth chances are frequently crucial in rural regions, which are becoming progressively exotic owing to their goods and lifestyles. Some visitors are drawn to rural areas because of the marketing of idealized, iconic cultural landscapes depicting a slower pace of life [7]. This tendency may be linked back to a nineteenth century fascination with vanishing rural cultures, and certain segments of the tourist market are still enthralled by the concept of "genuine" or "authentic" vacations [11;7].

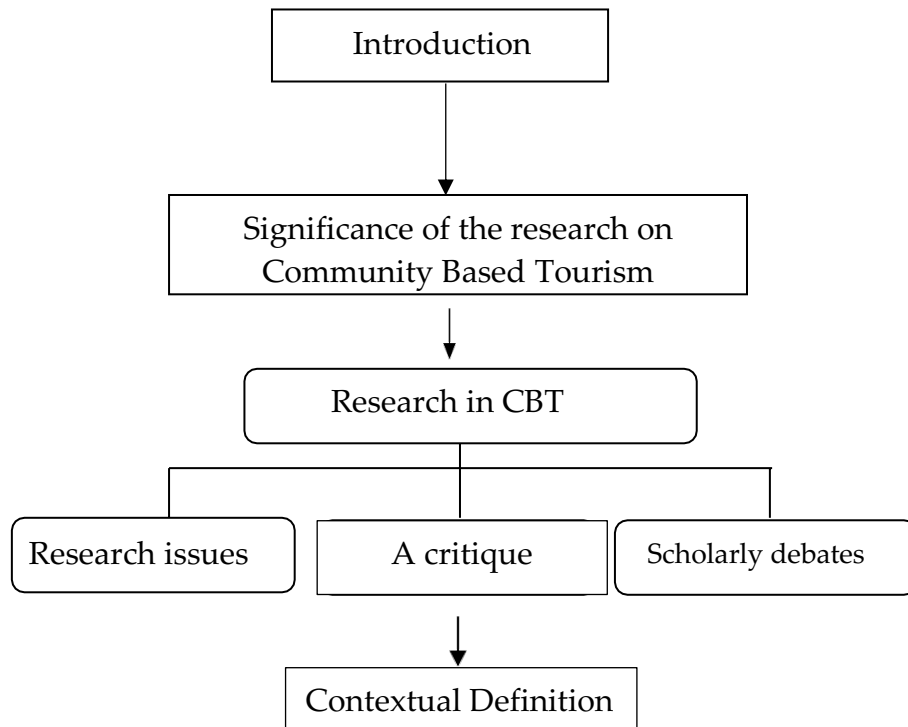
Furthermore, as an international social fact, tourism, according to Dann [5], becomes an instrument of exterior restriction that may overpower both visitor decision and target communities' desires. As a result, proof indicates that tourism may not be the best form of income for emerging locations. As previously stated, a number of economic, sociocultural, environmental, and political issues have been highlighted, all of which serve to both confront and incorporate tourism as a growth strategy in the world's developing countries [9].

Furthermore, as Jamal and Getz [6] pointed out the importance of a comprehensive and community-based approach to strategic alignment and management for tourism development has been highlighted, the job of putting sustainable tourism into practice remains challenging.

Hawkins [12] identified a few research problems in the arising subject area of tourism planning that can guide current tourism research as 1) identifying steps to guarantee that tourism development is in accordance with the local community's socio-cultural, ecological, and heritage goals, as well as any other related desires; 2) looking for innovative ways to encourage civic engagement in the financial advantages of tourism development; and 3) comprehension of resident perceptions, values, and objectives concerning tourism's place in the community.

The issue of tourism and communities certainly has a great lot of intricacy as well as significant research and application opportunities. In summary, the field has current relevance, a wide range of applications, and a plethora of unanswered problems that demand more investigation. These opening remarks should be expanded upon in order to indicate the research requirements and opportunities in this field in greater depth. As indicated in Scheme 1, this will be accomplished by considering the following subjects:

Scheme 1 Organization of literature in the current research



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### *1.1.1. Research in CBT*

Existing community research was divided into two groups by McCool and Martin [13], with a distinction made in terms of the unit of analysis. The first entails community research. These studies analyze local residents' reactions to tourism and utilize the total level of agreement as a measure of industry support. In terms of macro level community qualities, such as the host/guest ratio or the extent of tourism in the local economy, influences on locals' impressions are explored. Communities in this group are generally characterized in terms of geography or politics. The second group focuses more on the characteristics that define individual responses. People describe that it must be a pursuit for variability at the personal level of the participants and evaluates the impact of individual characteristics (sociodemographic variables) that could impact



perceptions to or opinions on tourism in terms of age, revenue, community belonging, and financial reliance, dependence on business gain. Although some research target both communal and personal concerns, this is the rarity rather than the rule. Researchers pointed out that while doing individual level analysis, characteristics like community involvement must be taken into consideration. Many scholars emphasize that growing tourist activity and dependency has both beneficial and bad repercussions [14].

Residents', community, tourists', sentiments on tourism growth within a region can vary enormously based on such variables as the extent of tourist development, perceptions of advantages, and the destination's overall viability, according to Jamal and Getz [6]. Furthermore, Pretty, Hine, Richardson, and Blake [15] pointed out that, while there have been multiple studies looking at people' attitudes on the area's tourist growth, the data collected from various stakeholders is still limited. Studies have revealed that a perception toward local community-based tourism development fluctuates depending on whether they are company owners, planners, legislators, developers, employees, locals, tourists, or members of various groups, according to Davis and Morais [14].

In order to run a successful methodological framework, Dann [3] stated that fundamental research is required to determine community and tourist objectives. Furthermore, MacIntyre [16] suggested that we do need a rethinking on difficulties, arguing that existing solutions don't really function in today's modern economy to make community tourism feasible. In community tourism research, there are still certain gaps to be addressed.

As a result, numerous essential stakeholders should be more prominently featured in community tourism research. This is a crucial aspect of the current study, and it will be emphasised in the investigations that is conducted in this thesis.

### *1.1.2. Research issues*

Many scholars emphasize that growing tourist activity and dependency has both beneficial and bad repercussions [14]. The next section discusses community-based tourism research problems.

In the tourism literature analyzed by Jamal and Getz [6], there are several examples of public-private collaboration initiatives and community engagement in local tourist planning and destination administration. These studies highlight the need of incorporating key stakeholders and fine-tuning procedures for shared decision-making on destination planning and management concerns in a community-based context. Representatives from diverse stakeholder groups,

according to Jamal and Getz [6] should be included in the planning process at an early level. Several scholars have also pushed for collective decision among key stakeholders and agreement in this process as vital concepts for achieving economically and socially suitable tourist development.

Wearing and McDonald [17] proposed a larger and more abstract framework for understanding community-based approaches to ecotourism, and more especially the role of middlemen play, in Papua New Guinea. They proposed that varied worldviews and behaviors brought by development organizations, tour operators, and visitors, should be considered when understanding community tourism development. This notion is obviously linked to the concept of social representations or daily contexts, and this type of guiding system will be employed to assist in the design and interpretation of research investigations.

Yuksel et al. [18] proposed that study emphasis on variations in ideas and concerns amongst the various stakeholders' groups since the complex and conflicting viewpoints of people's views should not be overlooked. McCool et al. [13] also stated that a wide definition of stakeholder viewpoints would aid in determining stakeholder differences and similarities, as well as serve as the foundation for future tourism industry conversation.

This evaluation of research concerns aided in the development of the thesis in the following ways:

- The developing, emerging destination is the emphasis [19].
- The communities chosen are in the early stages of tourism development and shaping destination image (low-medium level) [20].
- The studies that attempt to explore multi stakeholder perspective of community-based tourism meaning, concept, and implementation [21].
- Previous evidence, specifically successful CBT destinations, will be one of the topics explored [22].

### *1.1.3. A critique of CBT literature*

In the evaluation of the literature on community-based tourism, the researcher agrees with Pearce and Moscardo [2] that more community-oriented tourism research is needed to lead to effective community tourism practice, particularly in emerging destinations. Initially, this study looks for success criteria for CBT in underdeveloped nations. There are also new research studies that aim to achieve this goal [23;24;25]. More study and publishing in this area, however, is still required to meet the expanding demands of community-based tourism development in underdeveloped countries. Researchers should concentrate on

'how to properly manage community-based tourism,' rather than how good CBT can be.

Community tourism is viewed as a viable method to sustainable tourism by many tourism researchers. However, Woodley [26] made the well-known assertion that "CBT is a requirement for sustainable tourism." This may be claimed that community tourism should be implemented at all stages, or in other words, continually, in order to achieve a sustainable tourist goal.

Rather than criticizing outsiders or the business sector for the negative repercussions of traditional tourist patterns, a new stream of community-based tourism literature focuses on cooperation and collaboration [17]. In conclusion, the literature on community-based tourism appears to be heading in the right direction because it:

- focuses on residents and their diversity, as well as the dimension of community involvement;
- emphasizes the importance of stakeholder study;
- sees future paradigm prediction as an important issue;
- studies more in developing countries areas rather than developed world areas, though studies in these emerging destination contexts are still few, particularly in Central Asia;

To understand whether or not community-based tourism is practical, input from each main group involved such as the community, the decision maker, the operator, and the visitor should be established. Nevertheless, each group cannot be seen as homogenous and there are sub-groups within a group, who might see the world differently. This issue should not be neglected; therefore, the understanding of "social representations", which is one of the study's frameworks might be useful to gain each group's insights.

#### *1.1.4.CBT concept debates*

Some scholars and supporters to the alternative tourism phenomenon hold a radical agenda not only to disrupt an inequitable, unjust, and unsustainable tourism system, but also view of such initiatives as a trigger for a more ethical form of globalisation [27]. According to Murphy [3], one of the paradoxes of tourism is that it contains the seeds of its own demise. A dilemma has arisen as a result of the operating models that have been given to rural and remote region populations. This is because rural and remote populations have limited options for operating models other than the prevailing western models. Regional tour operators tend to consider their own communities as the 'other' to be exploited as a result [17]. According to Hall [28] there is a misconception that tourism readily creates cash and jobs. In this regard, it has been reasoned that CBT strategies and principles should proceed to prioritize and be directly relevant to (and holistic way support) representatives of disadvantaged communities within

an equitable and social justice framework at both the global and local levels; it should also spread to all tourism markets. The CBT should endeavor to localize the tourist sector's ownership and management. While CBT should impact and constrain the entire tourism sector (and society) to improve community control of and benefit from tourism (in comparison to more powerful/wealthy groups of society), it should effect and regulate the entire tourism sector (and society) to improve local authority of and receive support from tourism (in comparison to more powerful/wealthy groups of society) [29].

While local management is a key component of CBT, it is sometimes overshadowed by participants' real abilities to run tourist enterprises. Mtapuri & Giampiccoli [30] and Ramsa & Mohd [31] suggest that CBT should be managed and run by communities, as in Bunzinde, Kalavar, and Melubo's [32] findings that autonomy and community well-being are linked. "*Community empowerment should give individuals with the resources, opportunities, language, knowledge, and skills to strengthen their capacity to decide their own destiny and engage in topics that touch their lives,*" writes Ife [33].

There is debate over the importance of government and private sector funding for CBT, but regardless of one's point of view, it is apparent that CBT need support in the long run, whether from the public or private sectors [30]. Costa Rica has long been recognized for ecotourism, which includes anything from luxury eco-lodges to adventure sports outfitters and environmental conservation projects with a tourist component, as well as the inclusion of day visits to rain forests and canopy tours in bigger resort developments. In 2008, the Costa Rican Tourism Board (ICT) established a marketing strategy aimed at promoting rural tourism, recognizing the positive impact it may have on rural communities. Two non-governmental organizations, ACTUAR and COOPRENA, function as community tourism operators, marketing packages to rural communities via websites, brochures, and a handbook (*Authentic Costa Rica: The Guide to Rural Community Tourism* [34]) that lists almost 60 CBT businesses around the nation. Namibia, Thailand, and Uganda all have similar NGOs [35]. Guatemala has also committed to giving Mayan people with skills training by offering intensive tourism courses in rural regions through the tourism board [36] that enable local community organisations and individuals to manage tourist projects. "The possibility arises that community-responsive tourism becomes tourist promotion geared at people who aspire to become responsive," Ryan and Montgomery [37] cautioned. It may not be dissimilar to other types of tourism [38]. Taylor [38] suggested that individuals in the community who stand to benefit the most from tourist growth are skilled at selling themselves and others. This is an inner approach to the community rather than an outside endeavor, which may be more politically expedient, look more powerful, and be more acceptable. It might also lead to an increase in conflict within the community.



In conclusion, the practical community-based tourism debate is fraught with complexities and uncertainties, and most of it is performed without a specific research objective. These viewpoints add to the study in this thesis by influencing the selection of case studies to ensure that they differ in setting features and applicable challenges.

#### *1.1.5. Contextual definition*

“Community” term is used in tourist research to refer to a “body of individuals residing in the same location,” as defined by the compact Oxford dictionary and mentioned in Jamal and Getz's study [6]. However, according to Burr [39] (quoted in Pearce and Moscardo,[2]), the idea of what forms a community deserves more inquiry. He observed that some studies appeared to utilize a simplistic social ecology model that focused solely on community as a synonym for location, while a limited number of papers included key aspects such as an emphasis on power, decision-making, or reliance in their assessment.

Communities differ based on a variety of factors such as proximity to big cities, primary land uses, kind of tourism-based activity, and gender norms and relationships. In form of community form, governance, and relationships with upper levels of government, communities demonstrate diversity and dynamism. Because of the small size and distinctive qualities of emerging tourism contexts, it is impossible to come up with a consistent explanation for community behaviours that can be used to forecast local results [17].

Community-based tourism method has the advantage of being extremely adaptive to regional socioeconomic, ecological, and natural variables. During the period of colonialism, local control gave way to senior leadership. At the moment, tourist community methods are attempting to re-establish and express local involvement. The community can create a better feeling of responsibility for the resource's responsible use, and local usage disputes are often avoided with this method. It appears that a community-based approach to tourist development is widely embraced. Visitors engage with local living (hosts, services) and non-living (landscape, sunshine) to experience a tourist product in a community-based tourism destination that takes an ecosystem approach [18].

Most community-based tourism research adheres to a set of general objectives. The fact that community-based tourism is socially sustainable is also a plus. This implies that, over the vast extent, tourist activities are designed and administered by members of the local community, with their approval and cooperation. The community promotes engagement in this notion. Also, it is critical that the community get a fair portion of the earnings. Respect for local culture, heritage, and customs is another crucial component of community-based tourism. As the

UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has stated, it must satisfy the wants and ambitions of society's members while also assisting in the improvement of quality of life [40;41]. The community's long-term sustainability; protection of local resources and customs; community engagement and support; and advantages to the local community such as money, jobs, pride, and life enhancement are some of the primary components in CBT definitions. The agreement on community-based tourism definitions highlights the importance of these factors in the CBT concept.

Scheyvens [42] distilled the ultimate purpose of community tourism from these broad considerations: to strengthen the destination community on four levels: economic, psychological, social, and political. Capacity building should guarantee that a destination community's economic advantages are long-term. Proactiveness should boost community members' self-esteem by recognizing the distinctiveness and worth of the group's heritage, environmental assets, and cultural traditions. Individuals and families work together to establish a successful tourist endeavour, and social empowerment strives to preserve the community's equilibrium; that is, community cohesiveness is increased when individuals and families work together to build a successful tourism venture. From the feasibility stage through execution, political empowerment should use the community's views and concerns as guides for tourist initiatives.

"Community development," a word that combines the two meanings, is currently the core of advancement in many cultures, and it has been encouraged in a variety of sectors including the economics, education, environment, health, politics, population, public safety, recreation, and transportation [43]. According to Nicholls [44], the two most important aspects of community tourist development are the environment and the economy, an accessibility, finance and economics, social and cultural issues, and planning and implementation are all topics that need to be addressed. Jafari [45] gives a comprehensive description of community development toward tourism in the Encyclopedia of Tourism, stating:

*It is an economic and social development process based on local efforts. Tourism development can exacerbate civic issues, but it can also help by raising attention to issues and possibilities, enabling citizens to make judgements, preparation of residents for leadership roles, giving more and greater community infrastructure and amenities, and fostering thriving institutions and feelings of interdependence. (96 p.)*

As a result, tourist growth in a community or area should allow for active economic engagement by the local inhabitants. If the effects of tourist development on a local community must be considered, a community

development model must be prepared, and the community must be educated before construction on the project begins.

The meanings of sustainability, according to McCool, Moisey, and Nickerson[46], may be expressed through the indicators that organizations and governments construct to monitor its implementation. These indicators represent notions of what should be preserved. They went on to say that at a time of change and uncertainty, sustainability is a good objective to have. Essentially, it establishes a desirable end state for determining solutions that may differ depending on the situation. In any tourist policy that looks to the future, the definitions and meanings of sustainability are critical.

The community's long-term sustainability; protection of resources and customs; community engagement and support; and advantages to the surrounding community such as earnings, employment, pride, and life enhancement are some of the primary components in CBT definitions [6]. The accord on community-based tourism definitions highlights the importance of these factors in the CBT concept. However, through our research fielded trips we observe inconsistency regionally in sustainability concepts applied or understanding and perception of it similar to the inconsistency and critique in the literature.

Sustainability, according to Collins [47], necessitates a change in "normal welfare economics." One of the basic tenets of sustainability, according to Farrell [48], is that it aims for a seamless and transparent integration of business, society, and environment, or the "sustainable trinity." According to Farrell [48], the idea of sustainability is extremely constraining for cultures striving to convert sustainability into local action while maintaining their individuality. Scholars have raised worry about the negative socio-cultural effects of tourism, as a result of the tourist gaze [49]. Such interactions, described by Hollinshead [50] as a "objectifying" gaze, raise issues about the industry's stimulating equity[51], worries about authority [52] and issues about the lack of ethics displayed by customers and providers [53]. Concerns about the shortage of local projection in tourism planning [54], gender equality[55], ecologic concerns questioning the concept of sustainability [27], environmental justice [56], the postcolonial nature of the industry [57], and Tourism's real and varied repercussions compel critical researchers and practitioners to rethink an industry that could return back to the communities where it operates.

If these objectives are met, CBT is expected to be successful. The goal of this thesis is to learn in depth and suggest effective CBT development criteria.

The thesis framework is influenced by the background of literature linked to the notion of community-based tourism. As a result, identifying potential areas, the thesis objectives are as follows:

- To find out what experts think about community-based tourism planning and what they agree on.
- To understand and evaluate the perception of the sustainability of community-based tourism through the prism of multi-stakeholders
- Using experts' expertise and insights as a foundation, investigate criteria utilized by stakeholders in the assessment of sustainable community-based tourism.
- To explore the viewpoints of key stakeholders on community-based tourism growth, including decision-makers, companies, visitors, and community members.
- To analyse the perception, satisfaction of tourism development with interrelation to country image and migration among youth
- To create common ground among the primary stakeholders and specialists on community-based tourism development.
- To explore future opportunities for community-based tourism development.

The literature review of topics and techniques in connection to thesis concepts will be presented in the following chapters. In addition, more detailed research methodology and thesis objectives will be defined.

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## Chapter 2.

# Sustainability perceptions of Community Based tourism by stakeholders in Central Asia.

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## Abstract

The present study is focused on Community Based Tourism (CBT) having as its primary purpose the analysis of benefits that community can obtain or perceive like the ones got from the tourism. CBT can be used as a powerful tool to improve the livelihoods of people who call the destination home and to combat the poverty in Central Asia. The following study presents a review of CBT as a concept and provides data collected in the field on the sustainability perceptions of CBT from stakeholders. The information helped to determine long-term goals for sustainability planning and to suggest an action strategy for sustainable tourism development so the government can apply it into practice.

*Keywords:* community-based tourism, Central Asia, sustainability

## 2.1. Introduction

Over the past six decades, tourism has undergone continuous growth and diversification, becoming one of the world's largest and fastest-growing sectors of the economy. Many governments regard tourism as a potential for their efficient economic growth under the conditions of their economies (Bunghez, 2016).

As an instrument for the growth of society and the economy, the attitude towards tourism is focused on its effectiveness as a powerful resource for jobs (Homafar, Honari, Heidary, Heidary & Emami, 2011), as well as on the changes in income (Saint Akadiri, Alola & Akadiri, 2019) and the conservation of natural and cultural resources (Saarinen, 2016) that have been lost for various reasons. It also promotes the construction of new public infrastructure, protects and funds the protection of natural and cultural heritage (Faganel, A., & Trnavčević, 2012; Kakiuchi, 2014). The positive improvements that can be made through sustainable tourism activities are illustrated in realistic leadership programs around the world, rendering tourism a model sector for a green economy. Sustainable tourism has become a common subject in developed and developing economies for discussions and debates on the applicability of aspects.

The value of sustainable tourism cannot be doubted, however the researchers are analyzing it from critical perspective (Font et al., 2019; He et al., 2018; Weaver et al., 1999), however its concept and components that constitute it are widely debated (Hardy & Pearson, 2016; Nguyen et al., 2019). Tourism offers economic benefits to the poor (Njoya & Seetaram, 2018), but is unlikely that tourism alone can allow longer-term, sustainable contributions to poverty reduction, which is why there are debates on the definition and concept of sustainability of tourism (Holden, Sonne & Novelli, 2011; Spenceley, A., & Meyer, 2012).



Sustainability and engagement with local people can be presumed to be relevant when communities in that area can offer the experiences that are unique and authentic creating the promising segment of community-based tourism (CBT). CBT has been proposed as a choice for mass tourism and as part of "responsible travel" to reduce the crowd impact in the destination. There is almost no study done of challenges faced by CBT stakeholders in emerging markets, despite developed literature and evaluation of concepts and modules.

This paper seeks to analyze the CBT case in Uzbekistan. It should be noted that the main contribution the paper is pretending to make is practical rather than theoretical. First, a brief introduction in CBT concept and history of the industry in Uzbekistan is provided. Second, the data extracted from interviews with local stakeholders is introduced and analyzed. Based on their testimonials and evaluations we would like to provide insight on various groups of the problems existing in the field. In conclusion, we are making practical suggestions on what should be done to improve the situation in the industry and how the policymakers can help the CBT representatives in Uzbekistan. We expect the present research to make contribution in literature regarding CBT in Central Asia, as there is a limited number of works on that topic.

## 2.2. Literature review

### 2.2.1 *Community-based tourism*

Sustainable tourism, as a discipline, is an area in tourism that meets society's needs, preserves what has been accomplished and enhances prospects for the future (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2018; He, He & Xu, 2018; Hunter, 1997). Stability and constancy are very important factors that create base for the future prospects. A significant importance comes from the fact that it is working in order to not only to maintain what has been accomplished economically in the field of tourism, but also to develop the growth of tourism, taking into account all the socio-economic needs of society, through a steady, stable movement forward. Sustainable tourism is one of the few sectors of the economy that maintains a relatively proportional growth rate, triggering at the same time economic, social and cultural changes in the society (Pemayun, Suryanata, Nurcita & Yunita, 2019).

As one of the forms of tourism that can provide sustainability community-based tourism is named (Álvarez-García, Durán-Sánchez, Río-Rama & De la Cruz, 2018; Lee & Jan, 2019). Modern tourists are increasingly choosing alternative travel options such as CBT. This is a fashionable type of tourism, in which the most important component is living in an environment that is as close as possible to the living conditions of ordinary residents of a particular country.

CBT tourism is becoming more and more popular among tourists who want to get better acquainted with the traditions and way of life of local residents, enjoy

the nature, and experience a different atmosphere of life. This type of tourism is based on the use of the tourist potential of rural areas with living in family houses of local residents. Given that the number of tourists in the world is constantly increasing, the number of residents involved in CBT is also growing.

CBT explores community growth and engagement in the production and planning of such tourism products as sustainable tourism activities and principles (Boonratana, 2010; Dangi & Jamal, 2016; Okazi, 2008). In addition, academicians are emphasizing the power of CBT in poverty alleviation (Giampiccoli & Saayman, 2017; Manyara & Jones, 2007; Zapata et al, 2011), in local minor communities empowerment (Dolezal, 2015; Farooqy, 2018; Piartini, 2018), and in enhancing cooperation opportunities for stakeholders networking (Burgos & Mertens, 2017; Iorio & Corsale, 2014; Tolkach, 2013; Zapata et al, 2011). The CBT is believed to become a great option for destination promotion (López-Guzmán, Sánchez-Cañizares & Pavón, 2011; Sugandini et al, 2018), and for rural economies growth (Akunaay, Nelson & Singleton, 2003; Pawson, D'Arcy & Richardson, 2017).

CBT is a dynamic term that involves multiple individuals and entities in its area of influence from different fields of operation. In this regard, the factors that adversely affect the planning process will influence it. This occurs most frequently as tourism is expected by society to be able to solve many economic and social problems. Unfortunately, in countries and regions at a time of economic crisis, such aspirations are most frequently observed and are limited by budgetary constraints that reduce the government's ability to fund and support the tourism industry's growth.

### *2.2.2. Community-based tourism in Central Asia*

Today, Central Asia is a rapidly evolving and developing region not only in touristic sphere, but also in economic, social, and cultural life. The independence obtained by Central Asian countries in 1991 is starting to bear fruit. These countries are being distinguished in the internal world order and in international relations by their individual characteristics, their own style. They are given all necessary assistance by the international community in the transition to a market economy and in accessing world markets.

Under the guidance of the Swiss development organization Helvetas, the implementation of the CBT initially began in central Kyrgyzstan and has shown growing interest across the world. CBT agencies provide numerous services such as: homestays, rental of cars, horse trekking services, experience in eagle hunting, food and catering, master classes in handicrafts and region-wide adventures, offering an authentic budget adventure. In May 2000, the first CBT group opened its doors in Kochkor village with the main objective of promoting sustainable Community-based ecotourism services in Kyrgyzstan, which give tourists unique experiences in order to generate incomes for rural families and conserve

the country's natural and cultural heritage. Reservation services for homestays, yurtas tourism and trekking, guided tours to cultural and historical sites, handicraft demonstrations and sales, car rentals and tourist information are among the services CBT groups offer to visitors and tour operators. The key source of income for individual service providers and CBT groups is the provision of these services.

Program coordinators support themselves through a commission of 15 percent or the fee of a small coordinator. There are still many important issues to be addressed: nepotism issues, the propensity of service providers to break apart and start their own competing companies, and lack of self-support in the majority of companies.

If we decide to enumerate principal Central Asian CBT's objectives, we can determine those as follow. In the first place, we should include the generation of income to improve living conditions in rural areas; in the second place, the promotion of conventional national forms of management; in the third place, the replacement of the agricultural sector, which has a less serious effect on natural areas, with tourism; in the fourth place, the participation of the local population in the preservation of region's environment and culture; and, in the fifth place, the reciprocal spiritual exchange.

The following principles have made it possible for the inhabitants of villages in the remote areas of the countries to obtain benefits from their activities:

the successful engagement of local residents in CBT's activities;

- openness and accountability to all members of the community's financial flows and activities;
- promotion of local initiatives;
- the CBT group's sustainable development;
- respect for cultural heritage and natural resources.

In the Republic of Uzbekistan CBT is not as developed as it is in neighbor countries. Following Presidential Decrees and legislation in tourism sphere, different territories of the republic are developed in order to increase their touristic potential including in CBT. In addition to taking an inventory of all the facilities and structures situated in the territory, it is expected to implement non-waste and eco-friendly facilities.

Firstly, it is a matter of protecting specially protected natural areas from extensive agricultural production. In a difficult economic period the population is increasingly relying on subsistence farming as the only source of material well-being, and animal farming and crop production are developing intensively in this respect. Land and grazing, naturally, also come under state protection in parks and reserves. There is an aggressive policy conducted on undeveloped lands by humans, which results in a breach of ecology and species extinction. The local community is encouraged to participate in tourism as an alternative, that is, to receive and offer service to international and domestic tourists who have expressed interest in the population's local flora and fauna, landscape, history,

and culture. The community provides accommodation, food, transport, show of domestic customs and crafts, guides, safety and security, etc.

There is almost no research done in community-based tourism in Central Asia, and in Uzbekistan in particular. Several works are evaluating representation of local residents in tourism promotion (Palmer, 2007), and analyze sustainability concept applied to Central Asian countries case (Akbar et al, 2020; Mukhambetov et al, 2014). However, no works were found that treat problems in CBT sphere in Uzbekistan. We consider that lack of information in that field can create obstacles for CBT development in the country, and we aim to ensure that the research conducted will have practical implications and will create conditions needed for better planning and involvement of local residents in CBT activities.

## 2.3. Methodology

### 2.3.1. Objectives of the study

The general objective of the study was determined after literature review conducted on CBT in Uzbekistan. We pretend to analyze and evaluate the perception that stakeholders have on CBT in the country, and detect the problems they are facing while working in the sector.

In line of the general objective specific one were generated:

- (1).to conduct a mixed-method research aiming to understand the state of CBT in Uzbekistan from the perspective of key stakeholders;
- (2).to analyze the problems they are facing in their CBT activities;
- (3).to suggest directions for policies design to ensure involvement of local residents in CBT on fair and reasonable conditions.

The mixed-method approach used, that combines field observations and interviews with stakeholders, enriches the study proposed. The objectives established are making the present research more descriptive rather than analytical or theoretical. However, the description of issues that emerge in the CBT sector of Uzbekistan creates a basis for its critical analysis and further improvements.

### 2.3.2. Data collection

The data were collected from a sample composed out of 19 stakeholders from the capital of Uzbekistan – Tashkent, and Tashkent, Jizzah and Surxondaryo regions through series of semi-structured interviews. Snowball and random sampling techniques were used in order to select interviewees. The majority of participants were males (63.2% or 12 people). The geographical distribution was almost equal: four people were representing Tashkent, five were interviewed in case of each

region. Most of them were owners of guesthouses (78.9% or 15 people), others were involved in CBT activities by providing their services or services of their companies. In addition, their experience in the sector was measured ( $M=5.19$  years,  $SD=3.27$ ).

The interviews were conducted in Russian and Uzbek by researchers during their field trips to villages and cities where CBT is developed by residents and supported by local authorities. The data collection was hampered by the reluctance of local residents to talk about the problems in the sector and to assess the actions of the authorities and employees of the tourism industry. However, the interviewers reached the pull of reliable answers that let them conduct the evaluation of the state of the sector.

The interviews contained questions regarding the following:

- (1) experience of the respondent in the sector;
- (2) understanding of the concept of CBT by the respondent;
- (3) level of involvement of local residents and authorities in CBT activities;
- (4) level of State support in CBT;
- (5) characteristics of CBT activities performed by the respondent: types of activities, types of tourists; problems and positive changes;
- (6) ideas on future development of the CBT activities in the region;
- (7) suggestions for policy makers on improvements in the sector.

As the interviews conducted were semi-structured, some points received more attention by one group of participants, others were treating more another group of relevant issues. However, all the topics planned were covered in all 19 interviews that were transcribed afterwards by the researchers. Textual analysis was performed in order to determine the main issues raised during the interviews and common topics discussed by participants. The analysis was conducted manually by researchers and by application of IBM SPSS 23 software. The software analysis permitted to obtain the range of topics discussed by respondents and emotions, concepts and ideas associated with each of them. Using the results of interviews' analysis suggestions for future policies in CBT field were formulated. These ideas are presented in the current article in form of practical implications of the study introduced in the conclusion.

## 2.4. Results

The results of the analysis of interviews conducted show that despite the rapid growth of tourism in Uzbekistan, observed in the last decade, many developments in world tourism in our country are still unnoticed. The respondents focus on several issues that are considered to be more relevant from their own perspective. In particular, many problems caused by the inertia of the CBT growth in Uzbekistan are inextricably related to the general difficulties of Uzbekistan's entry into the world tourism market.



The respondents compared the state and perspectives of CBT places in Uzbekistan with such well-known touristic cities as Samarkand (78.9%), Bukhara (68.4%), and Khiva (52.6%). They admitted that the state support (78.9%), inversion (52.6%) and promotion (42.1%) are still more canalized toward these famous itinerary points rather than CBT locations.

The density of network of concepts taken from 19 interviews is 89%, which shows the relevance of all topics discussed by each participant. Problems with infrastructure became one of the emerging issues (78.9%). In particular, the interviewees from Jizzah region admitted that the lack of good roads and indicators decreases the touristic flow. Transportation problems (57.9%), specifically within the regions, are adding barriers for visitors and are decreasing their willingness to take CBT itineraries. Another group of problems specified by interviewees is related with bureaucracy (57.9%), certification (68.4%), and governmental services (31.6%). Most respondents who mentioned these issues are coming from regions, while in the capital financial aspects were discussed more. Both representatives of Tashkent and regions coincide in the necessity of trainings (36.8%) to increase service level (73.7%), decrease language barriers (52.6%), and improve the level of professionalism in the sector (26.3%). Need for CBT destinations promotion in Uzbekistan and in other countries (68.4%), better involvement of local stakeholders (42.1%) were also discussed by participants. Importance of sustainability in tourist services were confirmed by the majority of respondents (68.4%), in addition 52.6% were persuaded that CBT could contribute to sustainable development of their region and Uzbekistan in general, following the findings of Lee & Jan (2019).

We have determined strong positive correlation between the place of living ( $r = 0.91$ ) and the problems named by respondents, slightly less strong correlation between experience in the sector ( $r = 0.74$ ) and the issues discussed. However, no correlation was found between the latter and the nature of work performed by respondent ( $r = 0.03$ ). The level of engagement of interviewees in the sector potentially has strong effect due to their knowledge of the problems existing and ways to deal with them.

To summarize, we might say that according to our respondents, the development of CBT in Uzbekistan is limited by both economic and organizational factors.

The economic reasons include:

- the absence of the required initial resources to fund the establishment of CBT centers, which would begin to resolve the full range of issues related to the establishment of targeted CBT travel programs;
- the insignificant investment in CBT infrastructure affecting the state of tourist hotels and transport services;
- the absence of promotional campaign funds to draw the interest of potential foreign and domestic visitors to visit at least those territories which have any facilities to receive, accommodate and serve guests.

The organizational factors include:

- reduced existence and poor arrangement of tourist routes in CBT areas;
- almost complete absence of professional tourist organizations in the field of CBT;
- bureaucratic prohibitions and restrictions on the visit of CBT tourists to naturally attractive locations, mainly because of the undeveloped system of contact between the administration of these locations and organizers of CBT tours;
- modest number of tourist recreational services;
- lack of advertisement of CBT activities;
- small number of trained CBT specialists capable of assuming responsibility for the development, creation and conduct of CBT tours;
- lack of the legislative structure for CBT;
- bureaucratic constraints and conditions imposed on CBT homestays, hostels and hotels that minimize number of those that qualify to accommodate visitors;
- low levels of service and service culture in general in Uzbekistan should be noted.

## 2.5. Limitations and suggestions for future research

The present research tackled the problems that CBT stakeholders in Uzbekistan observe in the field. However, analysis of tourists' and state representatives' perception can provide more insight on the issues that take place in that sphere.

On the other hand, a comparison of experiences of stakeholders from other countries in Central Asian region with Uzbekistan can be helpful in order to understand better the dynamics of CBT development and potential pitfalls that local residents can have in the process.

The COVID-19 pandemic with closure of state frontiers, limitation of travel possibilities and raising concerns about hygiene and accommodation negatively impacted the CBT in Uzbekistan. In combination with the factors determined in present study, it can have long-lasting negative consequences for the industry. Therefore, we consider important to conduct more studies in the field to determine the degree of the impact and to plan future policies and actions accordingly. Several practical suggestions are presented in the conclusion that might be considered by policymakers and future researchers on topic as well.

## 2.6. Conclusions

While tourism is officially recognized as an economic priority in the Republic of Uzbekistan, the state's attention to it is clearly inadequate. As a CBT destination, the nation has tremendous potential for its growth, but so far, this enormous potential has been very fragmentarily established. The inadequate and extremely

superficial understanding of the meaning of CBT, its concepts, technology, and types is one of the reasons for this. The creation of domestic and inbound CBT spots based on the existing network of destinations within the country, has great economic prospects and can become a significant foundation for attracting additional financial flows to the regions.

We may infer the following in a short- and long-term perspective on the basis of the evidence provided by CBT stakeholders from three regions of Uzbekistan and its capital city. We consider important to establish alliances, build CBT networks and establish tourist information centers in order to address the challenges of development of community-based tourism. The goal of these organizations is to raise awareness of CBT in Uzbekistan, to contribute to the social and economic growth of the local population and to improve the quality of education in the field of CBT. Unique databases should be developed as reference information systems for natural, historical, and cultural attractions located in CBT areas, routes and tours, and the experience of active CBT pilot projects should be disseminated in the next phase. The state should build tourism infrastructure and develop CBT trails and roads, create credential programs and reduce the level of bureaucracy for those working in the CBT domain at the same time. In addition, there is a great need to launch promotion campaigns and advertise CBT in Uzbekistan to domestic and international markets.

Training of workers should be included in the complex of steps to be taken to improve situation with CBT in Uzbekistan. The state or collaborators in that domain can organize trainings and workshops for guides, group guides, coaches, and local community trainings in hospitality and tourist service issues. In Uzbekistan, CBT stakeholders should engage actively in the implementation of a state policy for the development of CBT. In addition, they and the country's tourism authorities should establish foreign collaboration in the field of CBT.

The development of Community-based tourism in Uzbekistan, in our view, will in many ways assist the region. One of the key reasons for this is that it would impact the protection of the natural beauty of the country's diverse territory and reduce the burden on popular tourism attractions. In addition, by attracting capital flows and creating new workplaces, this would contribute to the growth of various regions of the country.

The multivariate design of its pricing strategy, which could be seen as one of the most competitive advantages by a seller in a highly divided tourism services industry, is one of the key features of CBT. Many CBT goods may have a record low price because of their low dependency on infrastructural provision. In the other hand, the economic limitations of the CBT "from above" are virtually limitless, meaning that it could produce large income for the budget of the regions visited.

Community-based tourism is an emerging sector in Uzbekistan's tourism industry. In different countries, it is not often developed in the same way, its types are dynamic, it penetrates into areas of tourism activity traditionally far

from local-resident orientation. However, due to the numerous challenges created by the fiscal, social and organizational climate, its tremendous capacity cannot be utilized properly. The cooperation between state and society is required to remove these hurdles and create space for CBT activities.

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**Yurt Invited: Combining Tourists and Stakeholders Perceptions of Sustainable Community-Based Tourism in Central Asia**

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## Chapter 3.

# Yurt Invited: Combining Tourists and Stakeholders Perceptions of Sustainable Community-Based Tourism in Central Asia.

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## Abstract

Community-based tourism represents an opportunity for sustainable socioeconomic development, helping local populations to emerge out of lower living conditions. This paper investigates the perceptions of tourists and stakeholders engaged in Community-Based Tourism (CBT) in Central Asian countries (including Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan) as an opportunity for sustainable development. This study's purpose is to point out the usefulness of a combination approach of stakeholders' and tourists' perceptions to address the opportunities of CBT that can improve the quality of life of the tourism community in Central Asia by identifying the pitfalls of practices and determining challenges for tourism policy. Using a mixed-method approach, two complementary methodologies are simultaneously conducted. (1) An in-depth interview approach with sixteen selected experts in the region was processed with semantic network analysis for the definition of the main challenges and opportunities facing CBT as an enabler of sustainable development, considering the perceptions of sustainability from the point of view of stakeholders. (2) An online survey involving one hundred twenty-five tourists to the region was carried out to focus on tourists' perceptions of sustainability. A structural equation modelling technique was used to identify the influence of tourists' sustainability preferences and their involvement with local communities on sustainability perceptions. The results highlight the benefits the community receives, as well as future opportunities to obtain more advantages from tourism practices within the scope of sustainable tourism planning.

*Keywords:* Sustainable tourism planning, Community-based tourism, Sustainable tourism perception, Structural equation modelling, Semantic network analysis, Mixed methods, Central Asian countries.

### 3.1. Introduction

Sustainable tourism has become a common subject for debates and discussions about its useful applicability in developed and emerging economies. Simultaneously, although some assertions centred on the ideas of "sustainable tourism" have become widely considered, conflicting evidence casts some doubts about the practice [1–4], demonstrating that the wide appliance of the terms and concepts is fairly arguable [5–7]. There is a discussion on how tourism brings more opportunities to the poor in the short term, but it cannot sufficiently contribute solemnly to reducing poverty in the long run [8–12], which leads to raising questions on the concept and notion of sustainability used to facilitate poverty alleviation but also causing invisible harm while aiming for good.

One of the ideas raised to promote sustainable tourism for alleviating the poor is the promotion of community-based projects that integrates communities involving small businesses and companies, with all revenue resources going directly to the community and the community providing all services [13]. Community-based tourism (CBT) and other sub-branches of sustainable tourism focused on villages have often been used as tools for rural growth in outlying areas. Their origins date back to the 1970s when CBT was seen as a viable option for rural communities as well as a viable instrument for poverty reduction, restoration [10], and rural economic growth [14]. As a result of these incentives, many CBT programs in developed countries evolved into community development of ventures.

CBT has been advocated as a critical component of sustainability in local communities, as group interest in implementation and decision-making processes provide conditions for community development and empowerment [15–17]. Thus, studies have shown CBT to be rather successful in the creation of additional earnings in remote areas where resources to support the community are scarce, and the flow of direct investment can bring a significant positive impact on living conditions [18–21]. On the other hand, CBT has been offered as an alternative to mass tourism, and as a way to avoid the crowding effect in destinations by invoking a more meaningful purpose as a part of “responsible travel” [13,22–24].

The role of CBT for achieving sustainability in less developed countries has been under-researched, with a lack of understanding of both the facilitators and the barriers facing emerging markets [25]. Regardless of all debates and recognised contributions to sustainable tourism and CBT concepts, there is a need for research on the sustainability perceptions or assessments of visitors who would like to—or did—experience CBT [26]. Thus, it is critical to research the factors enabling tourism growth and sustainability in new-coming destinations to find the defining characteristic of their establishment and promotion. Along with that, there is very little available research on understanding how tourists evoke CBT destination perceptions and which factors play a key role in tourists’ decision-making [27]. To exceed tourists’ expectations from CBT, destination managers must understand how tourists perceive sustainability in their destinations. It can be assumed that sustainability and interactions with local people are significant when local communities can offer the experiences that tourists are looking for in CBT [13].

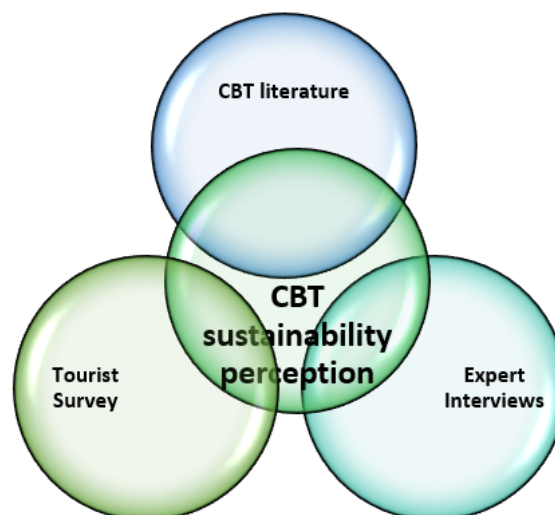
The purpose of this paper is to assess the CBT sustainability perceptions of both a group of key stakeholders and a sample of tourists that have visited Central Asian countries (Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan).

The results provide critical evidence on how both tourists’ and tourism businesses’ perceptions of the sustainability of CBT can influence the destination’s main characteristics by analysing factors that influence tourists’

perceptions of their experience and determining critical barriers to success. The conclusions raise some lessons to be learned that can be applied to the design for future CBT development and sustainable tourism planning in the emerging destinations of Central Asia.

The paper is structured as a presentation of a critical review of the relevant literature relating to CBT that discusses stakeholders' sustainability perception, preferences, and community involvement. Explanatory evidence was gathered through a combination of methods using qualitative data obtained during two field trips to Central Asian countries and quantitative evidence through visitor surveys; discussion of the findings and the implications are provided. The following procedures, recommended by Dimitrovski [28] in a multistakeholder approach study (Scheme 2), were used to investigate tourists' perceptions of the destination's CBT sustainability: (1) a literature analysis (a portion of which was supplied above), (2) interviews with tourism industry experts, and (3) interviews with visitors who have recently visited Central Asia.

Scheme 2 Study Approach



## 3.2. Literature review

### 3.2.1. Community-based tourism

CBT is conceived as a form of relatively low scaled tourism that is managed by a group of locally owned businesses with the goal of benefiting the community and, in some cases, contributing to conservation (when taking place in or near protected areas) [25]. It is marketed as a means of enhancing livelihoods and creating opportunities for community development [16] and is defined as being

in, owned, and managed by the community, which receives a sizable portion of the benefits [25; 26; 27].

CBT is founded on the notion of sustainable development since it encourages community engagement in order to achieve a more equitable and comprehensive development [28]. By focusing on local (rural, native, etc.) cultures, CBT assures that communities do not diminish and perish and that communities may be seen strategically as a means of enhancing the resilience of social and ecological systems, thereby contributing to sustainable development [29]. Residents of traditional villages have resurrected local customs and culture and showcased them to visitors [30; 31]. As a result, CBT is observed to be critical for poverty reduction since it fosters community development, therefore working towards community sustainability.

However, tourism may have negative consequences, including an increase in the cost of living [32], unequal distribution of tourism revenue [33], low-skilled and low-paying employment [34], degradation of natural and cultural resources [35], crime and crowded living areas [32;36], and a low level of empowerment [37]. These adverse effects may have a detrimental effect on local inhabitants, as well as the economy, culture, and environment, impeding further sustainable CBT. Despite this, many emerging destinations have seen an opportunity in CBT development as an efficient way to reduce poverty and raise the awareness of the destination, heritage, culture, and traditions. This trend is causing economic pressure on some villages, which in turn is forcing young people to move to urban areas. Nevertheless, there is still a strong segment of the urban population that is interested in visiting rural areas and understanding the way of life [38].

Regardless of all the debates on applications of CBT concepts and sustainable tourism practices, there is very little evidence of an understanding of perceptions of current and pre-CBT development destinations and the effects of tourism development on tourists' perceptions and decisions [39]. Additional analysis of community-based tourism sustainability perception is needed that provides insight on how to manage and monitor changes caused by tourism development in emerging regions and evaluate the perceived value CBT activities carried for tourists.

### *3.2.2. Tourists' perceptions of CBT*

Central to the understanding of tourism as a phenomenon has always been the question of the reasons that determine why people travel to certain destinations [44]. The answer to this question becomes vital for tourist destinations since, in the struggle for attracting tourists, they have to make a significant promotional effort to be noticed and chosen. Regional or national cultural distinctions are significant tourist drivers [45].

People desire to learn about different native cultures and to introduce their own to the locals. Tourists' views of tourism products and places are critical for destination development, management, and promotion, as several destination image studies have demonstrated [46]. The significance of knowing how tourists receive and generate destination image perceptions is that these features play a significant influence in visitors' destination decision-making processes. In other words, because visitors do not experience a location prior to deciding to visit and making reservations, their consuming decisions are influenced by what they believe in and the thoughts and feelings they identify with it [47]. This is especially true when other process variables—for example, prices, proximity across areas, views, expertise, technology, and trust—are comparable amongst accessible options [48].

Given the critical role of perceptions on destination image formation and tourist consumption dynamics, the concept of destination competitiveness emphasizes that a destination's success is contingent on its capacity to deliver experiences that surpass visitors' expectations [49]. However, expectations are influenced by travellers' views of places [50]. Therefore, destination management must know how tourists perceive their locations in order to surpass their expectations. Sustainable tourism behaviour is the focus of many researchers. The studies conducted by Grilli et al. [51], Nok et al. [52], Mathew and Sreejesh [53] claim that the understanding of sustainability, shown by the tourists, is connected with their preferences in sustainable travelling practices. The perceptions of sustainability become crucial in the moment of destination selection and evaluation of tourism activity impact on the local community. In addition, such factors as the quality of existing sustainable initiatives and encouragement of sustainable practices are considered to be important in the evaluation of the sustainable component of CBT practices [54].

Similarly, understanding tourists' expectations and impressions of a location are critical for tourism planning, as they influence tourists' choices and consumption decisions [48]. Given the significance of these two important ideas (perceptions and sustainability), this study aims to add to the progress of knowledge about sustainable tourism by assessing the perceptions of stakeholders and tourists about the sustainability of CBT and its implication trends in Central Asia.

### *3.2.3. Tourists' sustainability preferences and community involvement*

It is known that to produce economic and social advantages for local communities, tourism firms' value proposition should be able to attract tourists that have preferences for sustainable practices and do become involved respectfully with the communities' activities and social environments [55]. That is, consumer preferences for the external environment and infrastructural facilities within a tourism location can have an impact on the success of sustainable tourism.



Following CBT as a sustainable tourism derivative, it needs numerous stakeholders to collaborate and develop partnerships, pooling their talent, resources, and knowledge [56]. It enables tourists to connect with indigenous communities in a quiet and natural setting, learn about traditional ways of life, and enhances the dynamic and intriguing relationship between customers and the community [57].

CBT places a premium on human engagement and helps visitors through the process of interaction to gain a better understanding of their communities' culture and history [58]. As a result, researchers should examine the total reaction of tourists in a continuous process using CBT as a starting point. Nevertheless, little research has explored how the level of perceived community engagement in CBT, and the advantages created for them, affects the choices made by tourists when visiting developing destinations [29].

Only a few studies that have examined customers' preferences for attributes related to local communities have found some evidence, demonstrating impartial or even critical attitudes toward community involvement [59], while others exemplify stronger preferences for local community involvement or benefits [60] Rihova et al. [65] claim that tourism is a collaborative and shared experience and that outcomes are achieved via interaction. Therefore, additional insight is needed to comprehend both tourists' preferences and the ability of locals to provide services, and engage and share their communities with visitors. This is especially true in locations with a history of civil strife and in areas where tourists and inhabitants come from diverse social and cultural backgrounds [66].

Individual behaviour, which within a group gives rise to collective behaviour that identifies and characterizes the culture in question, is governed by the conviction or belief of each individual regarding the correct form of behaviour in each situation. This echoes the approach to the definition of values tourists and organizations in the sector have and share [67]. The values play an important regulatory role in human activity and therefore in attitudes toward the surrounding world, which establishes a correspondence between what is thought, what is said, and what is done, at the individual level [68]. The values play a key role in the model of sustainability empathy [69] that tries to unite all the influencing matters together and adds the psychological dimension. It uses the tourists' values as a key factor that can determine their attitude toward the local community and sustainable practices. The conclusions of that research created the baseline for future studies in the field and a foundation for the current study.

#### *3.2.4. Community-based tourism in Central Asia*

Central Asian countries have been included in the "bucket list" of the tourists [70] that experience tensions from time to time and pose some "roadblocks" that cause concerns to travel. However, the introduction of e-visa types in Tajikistan

and Uzbekistan has significantly increased the flow of visitors and made them more attractive for inclusion in the Lonely Planet’s pick list of destinations in 2018–2019. Nevertheless, the key issues are not just border-crossing difficulties and neighbourhood drama, but also the need for adequate sustainability policies and practices, and legislation mechanisms that preserve natural resources and reduce the negative impact of the industry and boost the local economy.

As shown in Figure 1, Central Asian countries were visited by over 15.5 million tourists in 2018 [71], led by Kazakhstan (over 8.7 million) and Uzbekistan (over 5.3 million). The first CBT group opened its doors during May 2000 in Kochkor village in Kyrgyzstan offering tourists cultural and authentic experiences and providing direct incomes for rural families. CBT enterprises in the region offer independent tourists and tour operators accommodation services for homestays, stays at authentic traditional yurts/jailoo, trekking on horses, local guide tours of heritage sites, demonstrations of handicraft skills, etc. Individual service providers directly benefit from sales, and CBT suppliers charge a rate for each service sold (up to 15%).

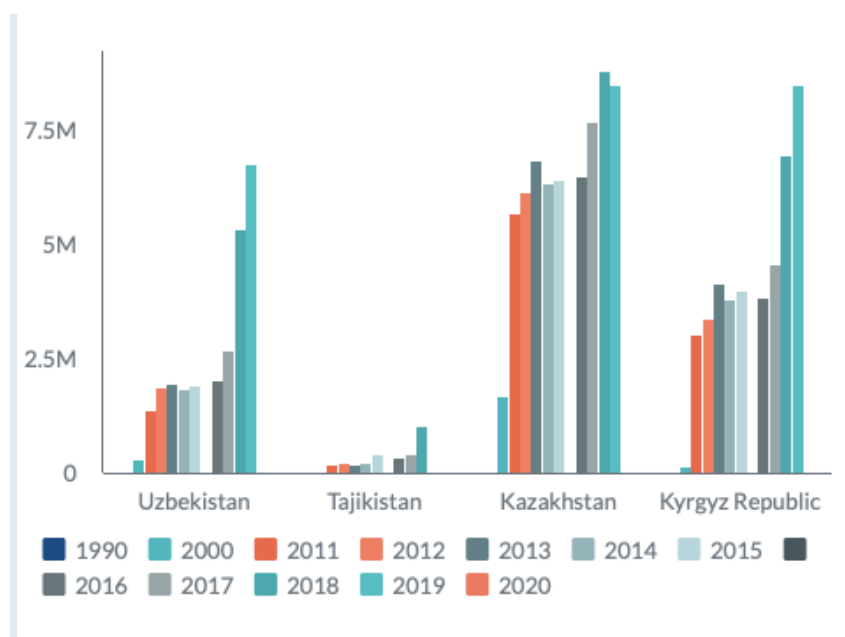


Figure 1 International tourist arrivals in Central Asia (The World Bank, 2020)

*Uzbekistan* is showing intensive development of tourism and tourist services in recent years, with growing niches involving ecotourism, agrotourism, archaeological and ethnographic tourism, and extreme tourism, all related to CBT. In the Jizzakh region, such as the Forish area and Zaamin National Park, special attention is being given to creating infrastructure for CBT activities. Family guesthouses and homestays are gaining popularity among families as

their first choice of entry to the tourism business in regions such as Bukhara, Samarkand, Surkhandarya, Khorezm, Fergana Valley, and Tashkent.

*Kazakhstan's* sustainable and competent activities of CBT have contributed to improving the living standards of the rural population, reducing unemployment, and increasing the welfare of the society in the regions.

*Kyrgyzstan* launched its first CBT project in partnership with the Swiss Association for International Cooperation Helvetas, which since 2003 has been under the umbrella of the Kyrgyz Community-Based Tourism Association (KCBTA). More than 1400 units are currently involved in CBT in the country. CBT is operating in several villages in Kochkor, Naryn, and Tamchi, where CBT aims at the progress of tourism under the supervision of residents. Participants in CBT projects can be rural residents, local nongovernmental organisations, and the local administration, and the selection criterion is based only on the ambition and opportunity to engage in tourist activities.

The Canadian Adventure Travel Company (social enterprise) “G Adventures” has been involved in the promotion of CBT tourism in Central Asia since 2016 starting in Kyrgyzstan. In addition, the nonprofit organisation “Planeterra Foundation” established the its first Central Asian project (more than 100 projects worldwide) in Kyrgyzstan—Barskoon village. Project “Ak Orgo” (White Yurt) supports local craftsmen workshop of yurt making that helps to sustain the technique of authentic yurt building skills, passing the knowledge to the younger generations by directly hiring and involving youth at the workshop, with ten people directly hired and over 1000 community members benefited [72].

*Tajikistan* received 1.3 million international tourists between January and December 2019 [73]. Various organizations such as META (Murgab Ecotourism Association), PECTA (Pamir Eco-Cultural Tourism Association), ZTDA (Zerafshan Tourism Development Association), MSDSP (Mountain Societies Development and Support Project), and the Ecotourism Resource Information Centres, have led the promotion of responsible travelling by implementing community development projects, training programs in business management, language learning programs, support homestays, and assistance with necessary infrastructure.

*Turkmenistan* is a highly isolated country with hard travelling restrictions only comparable with North Korea. There are complicated visa processes and regulations that make access to the country only possible by invitation from an individual or agency. The latest available data on the number of tourists visiting Turkmenistan refers to 2007 [74], counting 8200 visitors. However, the country's authorities have announced a new policy intended to raise the number of tourists and develop tourism infrastructure. The attraction of the Darvaza gas crater (or

Gates of Hell) has become very popular among adventure and dark tourists. Despite the difficulty of establishing CBT practices and venture activities, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in partnership with the Kyrgyz CBT Association is providing community training for guest houses or homestays in Turkmenistan [75].

### 3.3. Methodology

#### 3.3.1. Objectives of the study

The objective of this study is to assess tourists' and stakeholders' perceptions of the sustainability of CBT in Central Asian countries. To this aim, specific objectives involve the assessment of the challenges and opportunities of CBT by stakeholders in the industry that are related to sustainability perceptions and may lead to the formulation of actions needed to work toward higher levels of sustainability across the region. In addition, the study evaluates the structural relationships between tourists' sustainability perceptions, their intentions to become involved with CBT in Central Asia, and their preferences for sustainable tourism products.

The validity of the causal relationships indicated by hypotheses H<sub>1</sub>, H<sub>2</sub>, and H<sub>3</sub> were investigated with the estimation of a structural equation model (SEM) [62], which is a technique commonly utilized for appraising complex relationships between variables in a model. The model was statistically assessed by utilizing the SPSS and AMOS 27 statistical packages. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was applied to each of the scales for measuring the constructs of sustainability perceptions and local involvement. This was followed by confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to assess the convergent validity of the scales [76].

#### 3.3.2. Theoretical modelling

The theoretical model investigates the formation of the sustainability perceptions of CBT based on tourists' preferences for sustainability and the involvement with local community. The tourism sustainability preferences of CBT visitors to Central Asian countries were measured utilizing a five items scale [60]. This scale measures the intention to purchase green certificate tourist products by being willing to pay a higher amount for environmentally friendly products, as well as the care about the environment in the choice of holiday destinations. The interest of tourists in the involvement with the local community was assessed utilizing a four items scale containing the willingness to spend on local goods and services and sustaining local features and culture [61]. Tourists were also asked to assess the sustainability perceptions of Central Asian countries also in a Likert scale from the scores of 1 indicating not sustainable to 5 indicating very sustainable.

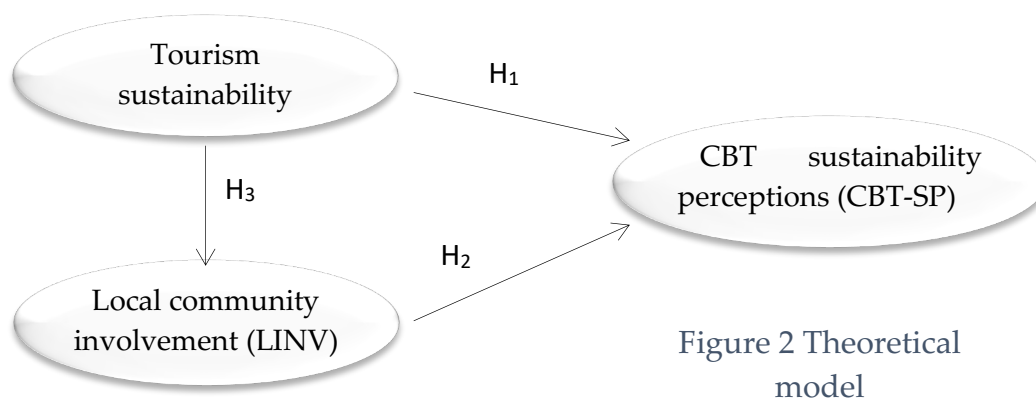
Thus, the following hypotheses are investigated:

*Hypothesis H<sub>1</sub>*: Tourists' preferences for sustainable tourism (TSP) have a significant impact on the sustainability perceptions of CBT in Central Asian countries (CBT-SP).

*Hypothesis H<sub>2</sub>*: Tourists' preferences for getting involved with the local community (LINV) have a positive significant impact on the sustainability perceptions of CBT in Central Asian countries (CBT-SP).

*Hypothesis H<sub>3</sub>*: Tourists' preferences for sustainable tourism (TSP) have a positive significant impact on their preferences for getting involved with the local community (LINV).

Figure 2 illustrates the hypotheses of the model.



### 3.4. Results

The validity of the causal relationships indicated by hypotheses H<sub>1</sub>, H<sub>2</sub> and H<sub>3</sub> were investigated with the estimation of a structural equation model (SEM) [62], which is a technique commonly utilized for appraising complex relationships between variables in a model. The model was statistically assessed utilizing SPSS and AMOS 27 statistical packages. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was applied to each of the scales for measuring the constructs of sustainability perceptions and local involvement. This was followed by confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to assess the convergent validity of the scales [63].

#### 3.4.1. Data collection and instruments

The data for achieving the objectives and studying the hypotheses of this study were collected with two complementary fieldworks during 2018 and 2019, one involving a group of stakeholders and experts, and another directed toward

tourists who had travelled to Central Asian countries. The fieldwork with experts and stakeholders was intended to be qualitative and involved in-depth interviewing of a group of 16 expert stakeholders in CBT in Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan. The primary criterion for selection was to include company entrepreneurs that work directly with CBT families and organizations on a national and international basis. The researchers contacted the first participants directly, and they later facilitated more potential persons through horizontal networking [79]. The experts throughout Central Asia to be considered in the study were recommended by local CBT agencies or through the recommendations of local authorities. Experts were six CBT ventures in Kyrgyzstan, two in Kazakhstan, two in Tajikistan, and three in Uzbekistan. Additionally, three executive managers of tourism companies that offer services of CBT throughout the Central Asian region. Interviewed experts had an average of 15 years of experience in CBT and directly worked with the CBT community, taking a leading part in the development initiatives in the regions.

In addition to the in-depth interviews with experts at their own business locations, researchers collected observation field notes on the CBT sites in the specific countries investigated. The interviews with stakeholders were undertaken in person and in their native language to avoid misinterpretation and language bias. Participants were inquired about the most important components of CBT tourism. In addition, opinions were asked to identify the viability of CBT business activities and the community perception of sustainable tourism development and business environment. Interviews with experts were transcribed and the information retrieved was analysed through the application of semantic network analysis techniques (AutoMap and ORA software for processing and Gephi 0.9.2 for visualisation).

On the other hand, tourists were addressed through an online structured questionnaire that was answered by 125 tourists, taken as a purposive sample from those respondents who had earlier travelled to the region. That is, participants had travelled to the region in the period of March 2018 to November 2019, visiting one or more countries of study (Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kirgizstan, Tajikistan, or Turkmenistan) and had used CBT services during their stay. Tourists had taken the surveys post-trip.

There were 4 sections with 35 questions in the visitor's questionnaire. The question components addressed the tourist profile, including the type of visitor and period of visit in each country, on a multi-item scale the familiarity with sustainability concepts, factors that influence their destination choice, accommodation, preference of availability of leisure choices at CBT, evaluation of experience at CBT area, and rating perceived sustainability concepts applied at destination [80,81].

The questionnaire for tourists collected information on the demographic characteristics of the traveller, the features of the trip, the perception of CBT sustainability, and the preferences for sustainable CBT products and services.



The data obtained from questionnaires were quantitatively analysed by using IBM SPSS 23.

Regarding the gender of tourists in the survey, 45.6% were males (57 people) and 54.4% were females (68 people). The percentage of those who visited each of the countries was Uzbekistan (84.0%), Kazakhstan (73.6%), Kyrgyzstan (73.6%), Tajikistan (66.4%), and Turkmenistan (15.2%). The average number of times that this set of countries was visited was 3.5. In 30.4% of the cases, participants had travelled alone, 11.2% with their families, and 23.2% with friends, while for 7.2% of individuals the primary purpose of the visit was business-related; in 39.2%, the trip was organised with colleagues.

### 3.4.2. Experts' and stakeholders' perceptions

The interviews with experts and stakeholders were transcribed and analysed with AutoMap and ORA software. The issues discussed are presented in Table 1 mapped in two groups according to their inclusion as a challenge or as an opportunity for CBT. In general, most items refer to different aspects that are present in most countries. However, some items are only present in some countries as in the case of high and low levels of bureaucracy. Such tendency confirms a variety of levels of development in CBT in different countries, as some of them, according to the experts, managed to decrease bureaucracy levels, while others maintain a big number of complex procedures. The connections within each group are analysed with two alternative semantic networks (Figure 3), where the size of the node indicates the frequency of the term's appearance, the width of the edge is the number of the appearance of the pair of terms in the same interview transcript.

Table 1 Topics discussed by CBT experts

Challenges	Opportunities
1. CBT practices damage the environment	9. big proportion of CBT component
2. shortage of talents	10. plenty of benefits for CBT organizations
3. need for educational programs in CBT services	11. guarantee of opportunities for the CBT sector
4. tourism safety literacy	12. low level of bureaucracy
5. destination exploration	13. positive influence on the economy
6. high level of bureaucracy	14. positive influence on the social sector
7. lack of information about financial opportunities	15. possibility to work independently
8. low foreign language proficiency	16. funds from NGOs
	17. openness for self-investment

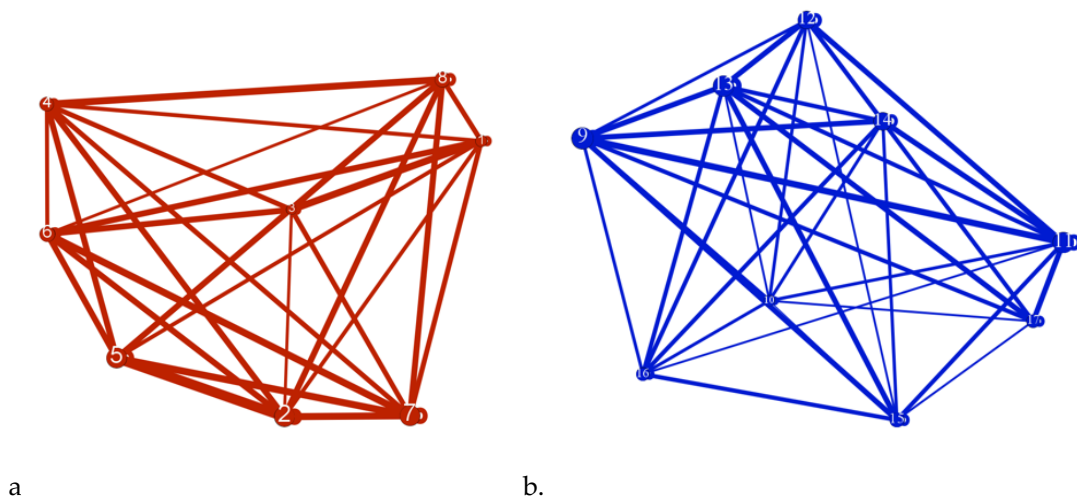


Figure 3 Semantic networks extracted from experts' opinion (*a – challenges; b – opportunities*)

Figure 3 shows that the distribution of opinions is relatively similar among all the challenges and opportunities mentioned by experts. Although the number of experts is reduced and the results obtained after the analysis are relatively similar for all the countries, there can be spotted several differences.

In the case of challenges, less attention is given to the problems CBT practices might cause to the environment (50% of experts mentioned it, Degree centrality = 35.000). Shortage in talents and problems with their attraction, lack of knowledge about the destination and financial opportunities that exist for CBT workers are pointed out as the most problematic areas (62.5%). However, high levels of bureaucracy continue preoccupying a major part of the participants (68.8%). In the case of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, 100% of respondents mentioned it, while the same indicator scores lower in other countries (Kyrgyzstan – 33.33%, Kazakhstan – 50%).

Further, a low level of bureaucracy is perceived by 25.0% of total respondents, with Kyrgyzstan having a somewhat larger positive evaluation of this factor. On the other hand, 62.5% of experts noted the positive influence CBT has on the countries and region's economies, having in addition 43.75% mentioned the positive role of social sphere support from CBT. It is noteworthy that 31.25% of participants observed a sufficient number of positive inputs provided by the government to the development of CBT businesses. However, both the experts active in the whole region and Uzbekistan representatives did not mention this aspect in their interviews.

In all the interviews, experts confirmed that they were working with both international and domestic tourists, but the interest in CBT prevailed among the

first group (18.75%). The majority of experts (81.25%) concluded that domestic tourists and the local community as a whole lacked an in-depth understanding of the sustainability concept, which may also impact their interest in CBT activities.

According to experts, Kyrgyzstan presented the largest share of CBT in the tourist offer (90%) with CBT services and routes becoming very popular. In addition, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are found to be most active in promoting CBT through facilitating benefits and opportunities. Experts mentioned the easiness and less time-consuming processes required for obtaining activity entrepreneurial licences.

Experts were mostly positive about the influence of tourism on economic and social development, thereby contributing to sustainable development. However, some concerns are raised about the preservation of the environment and in relation to the effects of tourism on the adjacent areas, questioning the sustainability of the tourist offer. The public sector is mostly driven to boost economic growth while hardly considering the negative effects on the social-cultural and ecological environments. On the other hand, private operators of CBT in the case of Kyrgyzstan are mostly motivated to work independently in order to reduce the dependency on mediator agencies.

In general, there is a need for human resources training, educational programs, and tourism service literacy. Further, experts pointed out a high level of need for community tourism services training, environmental conservation practices, foreign language and financial literacy, and safety procedures across Central Asia. Thus, according to the perception of stakeholders, there are some key destination issues (environmental and cultural conservation, socio-economic impacts, governance, education, and human capital) that require urgency from the point of view of planning for sustainability.

Experts showed a high level of dissatisfaction with the information distribution on available development funds between public and private sectors. Despite the government's support for tourism development programs, it is noticed that CBT entrepreneurial families rely mostly on self-investment or start-up funds granted by NGOs (USAID, 2021). The main challenges are related to the high state bureaucracy for developing entrepreneurial activities in tourism and the very low awareness of the community on opportunities for CBT. There is also a lack of awareness or actual understanding of sustainability concepts among locals and businesses.

According to experts, the main challenges or objectives of Central Asian's CBT can be posed as follows: i) generate sustainable income for a better quality of life

in remote areas; ii) sustain traditional forms of authentic culture and raise awareness of the cultural content; iii) find a less harmful alternative to agriculture which damages the natural areas; iv) the involvement of the local population in preserving the nature and culture, and v) managing a mutual spiritual exchange with tourists.

### 3.4.3. Tourists' perceptions

Table 2 shows the mean values of the tourists' perceptions of sustainability in the Central Asian countries valued utilizing a Likert scale from 1 to 5. Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan are the countries with the highest level of sustainability perceptions, while Turkmenistan has the lowest level. Overall, the perceptions of sustainability of CBT are around the average of the scale in these countries, with the case of Turkmenistan at the bottom of the scale, suggesting that there is large scope for higher enhancement of the sustainability profiles of the tourism industry.

Table 2 Mean and standard deviation of the sustainability perceptions

(1-5 scale)

Country	Mean	Standard Deviation
Kazakhstan	2.59	1.320
Kyrgyzstan	2.91	1.465
Tajikistan	2.38	1.528
Uzbekistan	2.91	1.257
Turkmenistan	.87	1.362

The sustainability perceptions of CBT can be influenced by the preferences of tourists for tourism sustainability and community involvement. Table 3 presents the mean values of the items of the scales utilized for appraising the constructs of sustainability perceptions and community involvement. The values of the items on the scale of community involvement are larger (average value 4.19) than those on the scale of sustainability preferences (average value 3.42).

Regarding the scale of sustainability preferences, the item with the highest value is referred to the care of the environment while on holidays and the expectations of the responsible management of the tourist services (TSP1), followed by the items concerned with the propensity to choose products with green certificate (TSP3) and the willingness to pay for environmentally friendly products (TSP4). The lowest value given to item TSP2 indicates that tourists equally balance comfort or value for money and the sound management of the environmental aspects of the destination since its value is 2.50 i.e. just in the middle of the scale.

With respect to the items on the community involvement scale, tourists place the highest value on giving the same interest to sustaining the local community as well as to the environment (LINV4), followed by the desire to be offered local food and drink while on travelling (LINV3). Tourists also show high interest in choosing to spend money that helps local communities (LINV1) and in embedding in the destinations' local culture and traditions (LINV2). Thus, although there are strong preferences for local involvement with communities across the tourists visiting Central Asian Countries, their area also marked preferences for sound sustainability management that care for the environmental impacts that the tourism activity may generate in the destinations.

Table 3 Means and standard deviations of the item constructs

Item scale	(1-5 scale)	
	Mean	Standard Deviation
Sustainability preferences		
TSP1: I care about the environment and expect the services provided on my holiday to be run in an environmentally responsible way	3.81	1.148
TSP2: I prioritize comfort and value for money over environmentally friendly "green" practices	2.50	1.140
TSP3: I would be willing to pay more for tourism products and services that have an explicit component that is environmentally friendly (e.g. reduction of waste, water and energy use)	3.61	1.092
TSP4: I would choose a product/service ahead of others if it had a green award or certification (e.g. Green globe certification)	3.65	1.018
TSP5: I would like to have information about sustainable management policies of hotels and guesthouses when booking a trip	3.57	1.080
Community involvement		
LINV1: I choose to spend money where it stays in the local community and contributes towards a thriving locality	4.10	1.142
LINV2: When I travel I want to understand the destination and "live like a local" through informed decisions	4.10	1.106
LINV3: I would like to be offered locally sourced food and drink where possible	4.31	1.187
LINV4: Sustaining the local culture and community is as important as sustaining the environment to me	4.25	1.203

#### 3.4.4. SEM results

Table 4 shows the mean values of each of the items of the scales utilized for the measurement of the constructs in the model. EFA applied to the scales of sustainability preferences and local involvement raised one single factor for each construct. Table 5 presents the results of the convergent validity as evaluated with CFA for both scales.

The composite reliability (CR) ranged from 0.74 to 0.81, therefore above the threshold of 0.7 for a satisfactory level [83]. The average variance extracted (AVE) also exceeded the criterion value of 0.5 for satisfying the internal consistency of the scales [84]. This is also proved by the high values of the  $\alpha$ -Cronbach, which are above 0.7 for both scales [83,85].

In addition, the fitness indexes (NFI = 0.925; CFI = 0.932; TLI = 0.915; IFI = 0.933) are all above the threshold value of 0.9, thus representing a good fit to the model, while the quality indicators of the measurement model are  $X^2/df = 2.9$  and RMSEA = 0.031, which are below the threshold levels of 5 and 0.08, respectively, necessary for a level of good fit [86,87].

Discriminant validity refers to the extent to which a construct is really different from the other constructs in the model. This was evaluated by considering the correlation matrix of the latent variables that allows assessing whether the square root of the mean value extracted (AVE) is greater than the correlations with the rest of variables. As shown in Table 5 all correlations shown in the diagonal values or correlations between factors are greater than those on the off-diagonal referring to square roots of the variance shared between the factors and their measures (AVE).



Table 4 Results of CFA reliability and validity

Item scale	Standardized Factor Loading	Composite Reliability (CR)	Average variance extracted (AVE)	Cronbach $\alpha$
<b>Sustainability preferences</b>		<b>0.741</b>	<b>0.630</b>	<b>0.711</b>
TSP1: I care about the environment and expect the services provided on my holiday to be run in an environmentally responsible way	0.835			
TSP2: I prioritize comfort and value for money over environmentally friendly "green" practices	-0.834			
TSP3: I would be willing to pay more for tourism products and services that have an explicit component that is environmentally friendly (e.g. reduction of waste, water and energy use)	0.728			
TSP4: I would choose a product/service ahead of others if it had a green award or certification (e.g. Green globe certification)	0.644			
TSP5: I would like to have information about sustainable management policies of hotels and guesthouses when booking a trip	0.672			
<b>Community involvement</b>		<b>0.812</b>	<b>0.695</b>	<b>0.810</b>
LINV1: I choose to spend money where it stays in the local community and contributes towards a thriving locality	0.833			
LINV2: When I travel I want to understand the destination and "live like a local" through informed decisions	0.855			
LINV3: I would like to be offered locally sourced food and drink where possible	0.754			
LINV4: Sustaining the local culture and community is as important as sustaining the environment to me	0.721			

Table 5 Correlation matrix of latent variables

Constructs	1	2	3
1 Sustainability preferences	0.770		
2 Community involvement	0.219	0.830	
3 CBT sustainability perceptions	0.350	0.366	0.775

Figure 4 presents the parameter results of the structural model (SEM). Model fit is satisfactory based on  $X^2/df=1.7$  and other indicator statistics (CFI=.933;

TLI=.922; IFI=.940; NFI=.912). The structural model is appropriate according to the RMSEA index that takes a value of 0.028. The parameters of the structural paths were also significant at the 0.001 level (1%).

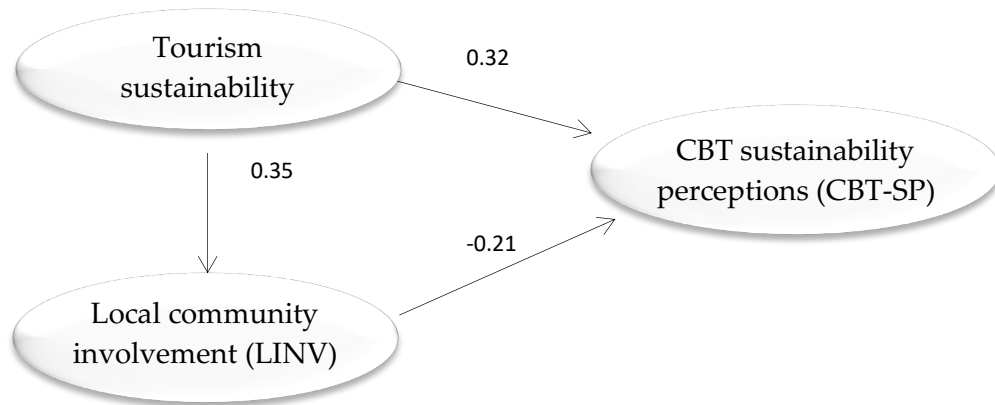


Figure 4 Results of the structural model

Table 6 presents the summary results of the hypotheses testing and standardised coefficient estimates. The empirical results support two of the theoretical hypotheses of the structural relationships leading to the formation of the perceptions of CBT sustainability (Figure 4). First, the preferences for tourism sustainability have a significant and positive impact on the sustainability perceptions of CBT ( $\beta=0.32$ ;  $p<0.00$ ) (supporting hypothesis H<sub>1</sub>) That is, those tourists with higher preferences for tourism sustainability have higher perceptions of how sustainability is managed in Central Asian countries. However, the relationship between the local community involvement and the perceptions of CBT sustainability is negative but not significant ( $\beta=-0.21$ ;  $p<0.00$ ) thereby rejecting H<sub>2</sub>. The negative sign would indicate that those tourists who wish to involve more with the local communities have a lower perception of the sustainability of CBT. However, this hypothesis is not supported by the structural model. Finally, the relationship between tourists' sustainability preferences and the local involvement with the community is confirmed with a positive sign ( $\beta=0.35$ ;  $p<0.00$ ) supporting H<sub>3</sub>. Thus, tourists' preferences for sustainable tourism practices leading to a positive perception of CBT do also impact on tourists' higher preferences for involvement with the local community.

Table 6 Hypothesis testing results

Path	Par- estimate	p-value	Hypothesis
TSP → CBT-SP	0.32	.000	H <sub>1</sub> supported
LINV → CBT-SP	-0.21	.141	H <sub>2</sub> rejected
TSP → LINV	0.35	.000	H <sub>3</sub> supported

### 3.5. Discussion

As with other emerging destinations, Central Asian countries face critical challenges for successfully working toward sustainability through the expansion of CBT [88]. These challenges are mostly related with the prioritization of the sustainable development goals in the management of the destinations, which are lagging behind the interests of local decision-makers and tourist organizations for the promotion of CBT as a successful socioeconomic activity [89]. In this paper, the perceptions of both business stakeholders and tourists about the sustainability performance of CBT in Central Asian countries have been jointly evaluated, showing that this combined approach may enhance the diversity of perspectives that can be useful for moving forward in a concerted approach.

The results show that tourists are very much interested in the sustainability of CBT since they pose strong preferences for a sound sustainable management of the destinations and for a responsible involvement with the affected communities, similar to the findings of other studies [15,90–92]. Further, structural equation modelling shows that the preferences for sustainable development significantly and positively influence the perceptions of sustainability in the Central Asian destinations. Thus, those tourists with higher preferences for sound management of environmental issues at the Central Asian destinations and who are willing to pay for environmentally certified products do have higher perceptions of the sustainability of CBT.

However, the overall ratings given by tourists to the sustainability perceptions are rather moderate, indicating that there is significant scope for improving the sustainability profiles of the destinations [93]. In this regard, the opinions of tourists coincide with that of stakeholders and experts in CBT in Central Asian countries. That is, the stakeholders have pointed out that there are critical challenges and opportunities for CBT that should be explored in order to transit toward a more sustainable path, given the current conditions in which the tourism industry is being developed [94]. Specifically, there is a need to focus on the aspects of human capital development, socioeconomic impacts of tourism, involvement of local communities, financial facilities, and prevention of the environmental impacts [95]. Overall, most of the aspects raised by stakeholders coincide with the sustainable development goals that are needed in order to increase the performance of sustainability of tourist destinations, thereby leading to higher perceptions by stakeholders and tourists [96].

On the other hand, results show that tourists support sustainable tourism development through participating in tourism with local communities [97,98]. This is related to the fact that they are also willing to buy green-certified tourist products and to pay a premium price for ecologically friendly products, as well as sharing a high environmental concern when choosing vacation places [98].

Along this line, Karlsson [97] found evidence of the willingness of tourists to spend on local goods and services and on the preservation of local features and culture, although Dikgang [62] found evidence of neutral or even critical attitudes toward community engagement.

The perceptions of CBT sustainability are related to the interests of tourists with participating in CBT activities, local life, integration, and participation in local events, since it is clear that tourists are attracted to the region in search of something special [98]. These preferences are manifested in a higher willingness to pay for those experiences that guarantee sound sustainability features [99,100]. This puts into question the common perception of CBT as being scheduled “*only for budgeted tourists*”, or “*provided services are pretty basic, for those who sacrifice comfort*” [101]

Thus, based on the perceptions of tourists and stakeholders there are opportunities for tourism businesses to tie their activities with CBT families with the aim to help them to upscale their services and conditions, by increasing the level of tourist participation in traditional daily activities (as herding sheep, cooking traditional meals, engage in seasonal harvesting, horseback riding sports and games, carpet weaving, cultural events and celebrations, etc.) [102]. There is evidence showing that tourists that participate in local activities and become involved with local communities are more satisfied with the tourist experience and become more loyal to the company offering it [2]. Along this line, this paper has shown that tourists’ stronger inclinations for interaction with the local community are influenced by their preferences for sustainable tourism practices that contribute to a positive perception of CBT.

The planning and development of sustainable tourism in developing countries are frequently criticized for failing to satisfy the demands of local stakeholders [103]. As a result, stakeholders sometimes resist tourism-related efforts, jeopardizing their implementation and long-term viability [90]. The present study has shown that CBT actors show the need for instrumenting long-term viable sustainable development strategy; providing equal access to resources and funding; obtaining government support in lowering the risks of social, cultural, and environmental damage; and urging financial independence provided by less bureaucratized entrepreneurial activities. Some studies suggest that sustainable tourism development cannot be achieved without early stakeholder input and participation in the tourism planning process [104]. Assessing and incorporating the diverse preferences of all important stakeholder groups in sustainable tourism planning is challenging, and may necessitate a combination of stakeholder involvement strategies [105].

The stakeholders in this study point out that both the domestic tourists and the local populations are not very much aware of the sustainability practice, and that this may affect their lack of enthusiasm for CBT planning and activities. Thus, there is a need for intervention to make it easier for the local communities to access and comprehend tourists’ and the tourism sector’s concerns [106]. This

might be accomplished by conducting awareness-raising efforts in host communities about tourist preferences and interactions between different stakeholder groups (i.e., visitors and local people) before the creation and delivery of any tourism activities [17].

### 3.6. Conclusion

The perceptions of tourists and stakeholders about the specific features of destinations are one of the main drivers of tourism products and the formation of tourist experiences [107]. Sustainability planning requires working through the perceptions of tourists and stakeholders for putting in place those activities and products that contribute to successful destinations [108]. This paper proposed a combination of methods and approaches to study both stakeholders' and tourists' perceptions of CBT sustainability in Central Asian countries. These destinations face important sustainability challenges to become truly competitive on the international scene and must balance their wealth of endowed tourist resources with the pressures from the urgencies of growth and rising living standards.

These results show that both tourists' and stakeholders' perceptions of CBT coincide in that there is scope for more compelling actions toward sustainability. That is, the sustainability performance of CBT in Central Asian countries can be improved beyond the current practices in managing environmental, social, and financial issues [109]. On the one hand, stakeholders pointed out that there is need to work on improving environmental preservation, reducing socioeconomic impacts on the local populations, building human capital, enabling local entrepreneurship, and providing local financial facilities. On the other hand, the perceptions of tourists are significantly influenced by their preferences for sustainable tourism development, which are also affect their desire to become involved with the culture and traditions of local communities. Thus, it is clear that tourists care about contributing to long-term tourism development, and therefore CBT businesses and destinations should actively work toward satisfying visitors' needs regarding sustainability management [110].

Tourists' preferences for sustainable CBT products influence their willingness to become involved with the local communities and contribute to the local development. That is, tourists, wish to engage and experience the "difference" that successfully contributes to community development [111]. Thus, in some ways, this may shift responsibility away from tourism organizations and toward travellers to combat unsustainable growth and poverty in destination areas [112]. However, it is found that tourism organizations in Central Asia support CBT socioeconomic development, but this support is not fully grounded on sustainability principles and does not always align with local communities'

interests. There is a need to meet travellers' desires to contribute to the well-being of local communities by enjoying an authentic tourism experience. In this regard, the strengthening of collaboration between the different stakeholders of destinations may help push forward successful practices for achieving sustainable goals.

Tourists' and stakeholders' perceptions of sustainability across Central Asian countries are not homogenous, with Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan receiving the highest levels of sustainability perceptions, while Turkmenistan having the lowest. This may be due to low destination awareness of Central Asian countries, raising the importance of building competitive promotion strategies and destination branding [113].

In addition, tourists' preferences for sustainable CBT in Central Asian countries are reflected in their willingness to pay more for green-certified products [114]. That is, if tourists concord with the sustainable aim of the payments and have also a meaningful experience, they are more likely to accept a price increase [115]. Further, results reveal that engaging in CBT services is not necessarily associated with backpacking or low-cost tours; i.e., travellers who value comfort also express interest in—and choose—environmentally sound CBT facilities, making authenticity or sustainability no longer the "cheap" option. This suggests that there is scope for tour operators to redesign their products to approach tourists' preferences for sustainability, and for destination management organizations to implement promotional initiatives aimed at incentivizing sustainable tourist behaviour.

The desire of tourists to become involved with the local community as significantly influenced by their sustainability preferences, is also in line with the recommendation raised by stakeholder experts that the community must establish a sense of ownership in order for CBT to yield tangible results [116]. That is, supply should meet demand for CBT to work out according to the sustainable preferences of tourists. Locals must be involved in the resolution of all major concerns, and they must be enabled to solve them on their own [117]. In this sense, empowerment and collaboration of local communities and stakeholders becomes a crucial issue for sustainability, i.e., providing them with the means and capacities (human capital, financial resources, and entrepreneurship) to become active suppliers of CBT at the destination.

In sum, this paper has shown that a combined methods approach provides more grounded insights into the perceptions of CBT in Central Asian countries, since the qualitative information generated by stakeholders' experts, which was analysed by content analysis methods, allows researchers to explain and support the quantitative assessments and hypotheses that are evaluated based on tourists' survey responses. This approach leads to useful implications for destination management that match the desires of tourists according to their demands and perceptions. The organization of the local resources should be put in place to meet those demands, thereby raising the level of perceptions of



sustainability, and contributing toward more sustainable CBT in Central Asian countries.

### 3.7. Limitations and ideas for future research

The present research is centred on the analysis of CBT perceptions from the perspective of travellers, who visited the region recently, and the stakeholders that operate in the area. The main limitation of the work is related with the rather reduced number of participants that is due to the small scale of CBT in the area and the difficulties for approaching large numbers of subjects. The results of the research could provide useful information to carry on further inquiries along a larger time span that increase the sizes of the samples. A larger sample size could also enable an in-depth analysis for each specific country in the region. On the other hand, from a methodological standpoint there would be need to assess the feedback loops between the CBT perceptions of tourists and stakeholders, by applying methods that enable to appraise how the value and social propositions that are designed as sustainable solutions at the destinations are perceived by potential tourists.

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## Chapter 4.

The effects of Young Residents' image and satisfaction with tourism on migration intentions

## Abstract

Tourism offers an opportunity for the socio-economic development of less developed regions around the world. However, the capacities for development may be handicapped by the emigration of the younger and more qualified workforce. This paper explores the relationships between youth migration intentions and tourism image and life satisfaction in Uzbekistan. The results show that the country's tourism image mediates the relationship between life satisfaction and migration intentions, i.e. those individuals with a lower image of the positive impact of tourism in the destination show a higher impact of tourism satisfaction on their intentions to migrate. The results raise the need to focus on the tourism image of residents of less developed tourist destinations to increase their capacities to attract local talent for tourism development.

*Key words: residents, tourism satisfaction, country image, youth, intentions to migrate.*

## 4.1. Introduction

Young people appreciate having a public voice and, as per Frank (2006), want to strengthen their ties to their community. Youth engagement is becoming more widely recognized as a necessary prerequisite for effective community improvement. A generally recognized problem of developing community-based tourism is the attraction of talent and the avoidance of migration intentions of the most talented and entrepreneurial workforce.

A growing body of research [1;2;3] have underlined the relevance of young attitudes in the creation of a dynamic and healthy local tourist economy. The advantages and expenses associated with the growth of a local tourist business influence how the host community views the development. Residents are more likely to favor a development if the advantages outweigh the drawbacks [4; 5]. The development of tourism has a varying degree of economic, social, and environmental impact on host communities. Local inhabitants' perspectives include their recognition and knowledge of tourist development issues and difficulties, which may be either good or negative. Economically, a thriving tourist business benefits local citizens by increasing their wage and employment prospects, but it also has certain negative consequences, such as rising living costs and property values. Residents can benefit socially from the increased availability and quality of recreation and leisure facilities, as well as increased opportunities to demonstrate traditional arts and cultural identity to a broader audience, but as the visitor population grows, traffic and safety issues may become serious. Environmentally, a burgeoning tourist business may result in

increased air and water pollution, increased waste production, disruption of local ecosystems, and degradation of natural monuments [6].

Among residents, young people have more positive attitudes toward tourism development [7; 8], others have found that young people are more concerned about the critical effects of tourism growth even though they may not be able to reap any direct benefits [9; 2]. Bett [10] found that young adults are generally uninterested in community-driven tourism development, with this lack of interest stemming from a lack of knowledge of the practical advantages. Interventions aiming at raising youth's understanding of the advantages of tourism development have been demonstrated to increase their favorable attitudes, motivating them to participate in sustainable conservation initiatives and increasing their sense of community belonging [10].

Additionally, tourism-impact research [11] has highlighted numerous aspects critical to the adult transition, most notably job and social possibilities. However, the impacts of tourism on these areas' appeal to young adult residents have received less attention. Tourism provides a chance for the socio-economic development of the world's less developed regions. However, development capacity may be harmed as a result of the migration of the younger and more skilled workers. The biggest proportion of migration happens during the transition from adolescence to adulthood, regardless of when and where it is studied. Due to longer schooling and longer life expectancy, the migratory peak has been pushed out from early adolescence to the early twenties during the previous century [12].

To understand this notion additional measures, such as "how individuals would feel about moving away," were created via research, and the resulting scale for assessing community connection became known as the "feeling of belonging" [13; 14; 15]. Conversely, the results on the link between residents' impressions and their sense of belonging are frequently conflicting, with just some studies indicating a positive association, while others found a negative correlation, and yet others reporting no significant relationship at all [9]. Also, residents' satisfaction, according to Wang et al. [5], is one of the most important variables in the success of tourist development. According to tourism studies, there is a dearth of study on people' attitudes of tourism in developing [16], public-sector tourism perception of the country image as well sense of country proudness among young people [17].

The main objective of this article is to examine the links between young migration intentions and Uzbekistan's tourism image and tourism development satisfaction. The findings indicate that the country's tourist image mediates the association between tourism development satisfaction and migration intentions, i.e., those with a lower perception of the destination's positive influence on tourism have a greater impact on their migration plans.

The paper explores the need of focusing on young residents' tourism development image, satisfaction and to understand the paradox of having strong sense of country proudness while having desire to migrate.

## 4.2. Tourism image among residents

Recognizing the diversity of destinations, the function of place attachment in determining citizens' perceptions of tourist impacts and support has received a lot of attention [13;18].

Another issue to consider when determining how locals react to tourists is the image of the area.

Despite the importance of place image in understanding tourists' attitudes and behaviour in the tourism literature [19; 20], only a few studies have looked into the image that residents have of their place, and even fewer have looked into its impact on their attitudes and reactions to tourism development [21; 22]. As tourism development is to help the local community, people's perceptions of the area should be considered as well as tourists' perceptions. Furthermore, whereas place attachment is a rather stable psychological characteristic [23], image is a dynamic construct based on perceived place features that can alter and evolve. As a result, an image may be more suited to conveying people's reactions to the changes brought about by tourism growth.

Determining residents' destination image is invaluable for a range of reasons. Their image assists in delineating a place's strengths and weaknesses and contributes to strategic planning that enhances residents' quality of life. Image is strongly linked to community satisfaction, sense of place and community, and place attachment.

Whereas the stakeholder theory highlights the need of considering the viewpoints of all stakeholders in the design and development of tourism, past research has mainly concentrated on visitors' perceptions of the destination and paid little attention to local populations' views. As a result, the concept of "destination image" appears to be dominating the literature, with a plethora of studies examining tourists' destination image and its impact on tourist behaviour and experience concerning vacation destinations [24; 25; 26; 27; 28].

The most widely recognized paradigm, The Social Exchange Theory (SET) has been used for analyzing citizens' reactions to tourism growth since it enables the capture of divergent perspectives based on experiential and psychological consequences [21; 29]. SET views social interactions as resource exchanges, implying that individuals would engage in an exchange if they anticipate gaining benefits without suffering unacceptable costs [30].

Residents' attitudes about tourism are shaped by their assessment of tourism "in terms of projected benefits or expenses incurred in exchange for the services they provide" [30]. Residents are more likely to support tourist development if



perceived good impacts (benefits) outweigh possible negative implications (costs) [31; 32; 33; 34]. As such, citizens' opinions on tourism's impacts are critical for the creation and management of tourism successfully [35; 36].

Schroeder [37] indicated that residents who had a favourable image showed a higher level of support for tourist development and promotion, as well as more positive behaviours such as the intention to recommend the destination to others.

### 4.3. Residents' tourism satisfaction and migration

Migration affects the whole globe; even the most isolated countries cannot completely escape emigration, immigration, and/or transit. International migration encompasses a variety of different types, including economic migration, refugee migration, and asylum seekers.

Societies become more mobile as a result of development, demographic upheavals, and social, economic, and political interconnectedness, yet unconstrained study on international human mobility has yet to pique the interest of funding agencies and policymakers. Indeed, "few attempts have been made to integrate all of these distinct forms of population migrations, to study them in their whole and globality, and to construct a holistic international viewpoint." [38].

For a while, numerous perspectives have viewed migration as a complex and complete structure including economic and social domains. Microeconomic and macroeconomic factors influencing migration decisions dictated the methods for engaging with and comprehending the cores and principles that drive individuals to emigrate. With regards to this issue, we may deduce that declining life satisfaction in one's nation or increased hopes for a better life lead individuals to move, seek more, and somehow capture the "happy" [39].

Meanwhile when migration is often viewed as a result of failing economic and social development and a lack of institutional capability, recent research, however, indicates that oppositional considerations influence migration intentions. When individuals profit from a country's growing economic and social growth, their psychological yearning for more and moving beyond - out of the box - develops. Thus, improving education in a developing nation leads to increased ambitions and motivations for impoverished families to migrate to countries with desired prospects, which would be the commitment strategy to migration [40].

Organizational flaws, such as corruption in developing countries, function as further inducements to flee. By lowering the value of education, corruption functioned largely to encourage emigration, particularly among skilled employees [41; 42].

While human well-being is critical in every way, a country's macroeconomic conditions are indisputable [43]. Countries' macroeconomic indices and the

widening socioeconomic divide among residents contribute to an increase in migration intentions.

Politicians and organizations have placed a high premium on tourism as a rural development strategy [44]. Tourism provides beneficial economic consequences such as increased income, employment, investments, and tax revenue; but, it also has unfavourable economic implications such as leakages, low wages, seasonal income, and struggle for wealth and resources between tourism and other industries [33;45]. Improvement of infrastructure, cultural exchange, enhancement of cultural identity, improvement of standard of living, and recreation for locals are some of the positive socio-cultural impacts of tourism that have been mentioned in the literature, while negative socio-cultural impacts reflect negative aspects such as traffic congestion, crime, increase in prices of goods and services, and cultural erosion [33;13]. Environmental awareness, conservation, and preservation are beneficial economic implications, whereas environment degradation, destruction are negative environmental consequences [33;35].

Global tourist growth is an effective source of revenue and employment and in some cases one of the few viable possibilities, which explains why rural politics and planning pay so much attention to tourism [46]. Nevertheless, the optimism for tourism as a development instrument is not lost. As per Snaith and Haley, [47], a "happy host" is critical to the tourist industry's success, monitoring people's attitudes toward tourist development and knowing how and whether tourism affects inhabitants' perceived satisfaction of tourism development is a must-do duty for every policymaker and necessary for any tourist development strategy to succeed. Despite some researchers' perspectives on the general and standardized effects of residents' considerable economic, environmental, and socio-cultural impacts of tourism on populations' satisfaction [45;48], more research is needed to determine yet if residents' perceptions of tourism image impacts have a significant impact on their overall satisfaction with tourism and lead to migration desires [33;49]. Furthermore, past study has shown that locals who rely on tourism for a living have more favourable attitudes than those who do not. The potential moderating impact of tourist economic reliance on actual tourism influence and satisfaction [50] has yet to be determined.

#### 4.4. Migration and Youth

The neoliberal economy drives people in rural, underprivileged regions to migrate in quest of better possibilities. Indigenous adolescents are particularly vulnerable to this because of their status in local society — while they are not regarded as children, they are still minors and thus more subject to manipulation and pressures [51]. Youth ambitions, according to Pierre Bourdieu [52], reflect structural inequities, and this is especially true in modern countries, where

economic disparities have widened in recent decades. In many rural countries, the only option for young people to get out of poverty is to relocate in quest of an education that would provide them with more job opportunities. Young people are active participants in building their own surroundings, rather than passive users of culture [53].

Möller [54], interviewed thirteen young adults at a Swedish ski resort to ascertain the circumstances for adult migration. An important result was that tourism destinations may provide a dynamic environment for young adults, including possibilities to expand their social network, employment options, and a typically easy transition into the labour market. Young people leaving their homes is a global migratory pattern that has occurred throughout the previous century. Numerous research across all fields have highlighted employment and service shortages as important causes, as well as restricted educational possibilities [55]. As Ivlevs [56] emphasizes, investigating the link between subjective well-being and intention to emigrate has significant policy implications for both migrant-sending and receiving nations. With governments increasingly using subjective well-being as a proxy for individual welfare and social progress [57], policy changes impacting happiness in a sending nation will affect emigration decisions if a substantial association exists between happiness, development perception and migratory flow.

Furthermore, earlier study has found that young hosts are more vulnerable to tourism's demonstration effects [58; 59]. With scant primary evidence from young members of host communities [60; 61; 62], this idea remains empirically barren. We know very little about young people's coping abilities and resilience to tourism, implying that the literature in this area has to be expanded in tourism studies.

Individuals' life aspirations are influenced by their home country's conditions and possibilities, which motivates them to pursue a shift. As a result, migration ambitions are also included on the list of anticipated reactions in this scenario. The conditions of tourism employment, it is frequently seasonal, low-status, and underpaid, creating concerns about the industry's ability to offer appropriate livelihoods [63].

Other cited impediments include economic leakage from the tourist sector, unequal income distribution, and the danger of mono-development in a single industry [63]. Ivlevs [56], on the other hand, emphasizes the concept of "happiness drain" and argues that increased life satisfaction increases individuals' proclivity for emigration. As a result, this topic necessitates thorough research on a country-by-country basis.

#### 4.5. Country proudness (self-image) and migration

Youths' commitment to place and migration possibilities in the rural Midwest of America were studied by Elder et al [64], who discovered that between the eighth and eleventh grades, home and social affiliations grew less significant to adolescents. Adolescents' choices for staying close to family were lowered by the impression of restricted career options in the region, which acted as a downstream impact in moulding youths' choices and attachments [64]. Youth's preferences for settling close to family and in their native community were similarly influenced by the presence of strong community links and participation. When opposed to people who are little involved in their communities, having friends and family in the community is related with stronger place attachment. Similarly, those who are involved in their communities demonstrate higher levels of place attachment and are thus less inclined to migrate [64].

The researchers however, made a point that strong communal spirit is clearly not always a good thing, especially for young people [65]. Some people feel conflicted about selecting between staying where they belong and having a stable employment, as well as guilt over abandoning family ties and/or customs [66]. Some people may also be unable to take advantage of other chances due to their responsibilities to their families and communities [67]. As a result, while place attachment and pleasure might contribute to a greater sense of well-being for youth, it can also lead to emotions of entrapment and anger.

Migration imperative is divided into three aspects by Farrugia [68]: structural, symbolic, and non-representational. The first examines the movement framework and locates adolescents within it. Within this dimension, the key causes for youth migration are the educational and employment possibilities available in cities. Structured social disparity, which is a result of a worldwide economy, is the root of this form of movement [68]. The relationship between place, mobility, and identity is tied to the symbolic dimension. Cultural flow is influenced by changes in the youth's environment, since symbolic representations of youth differ dramatically in urban and rural settings [68]. The non-representational component is characterized by a sophisticated place attachment and emphasizes on the 'becoming' process, where motivation constitutes a fresh throughout existence in an unknown area.

Migration study, according to Lawson, should build a "knowledge of the interaction of identity and subjectivity, as well as desire and longing" [69]. In this article, we tackle this problem by concentrating on a small Uzbek youth group and examining their perceptions, country pride, and self-image, as well as their aspirations for the future of the country's tourist sector.

## 4.6. Data sources and Methodology

### 4.6.1. Research area

Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan have the greatest rate of migration in Central Asia. Russia, Kazakhstan, and Turkey are three of Uzbekistan's primary migratory destinations. Emigration patterns between Uzbekistan and Russia, as well as between Uzbekistan and Turkey, are impacted by several economic, historical, cultural, language, and political variables. To address that public policy of Uzbekistan aims to develop tourism so that it becomes one of the drivers for accelerating the integrated development of regions and their infrastructure in the future, assisting in the completion of essential socio-economic activities such as employment, securing diversity and stimulating innovation in regions, boosting earnings, the perceived level of life of its citizens, and rising the volume of foreign exchange allocated. The modernization of the tourism sector, the creation and upgrading of the legal framework for the industry's long-term development, and the management of tourist services in line with worldwide standards are all priorities for Uzbekistan [70]. In 2019, 6,748,500 visitors visited Uzbekistan, compared to 5,346,200 in 2018, indicating a 26.2 percent rise. The Central Asian area had the biggest number of visitors, with 5,764,500 persons. The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) nations sent 495,600 tourists [71]. The total number of visitors from non-CIS countries was 488,400. Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, the Russian Federation, Turkey, Afghanistan, China, the Republic of Korea, and India accounted for the majority of visitors. 81.8 percent traveled to see relatives and friends, while 15.5 percent came for pleasure. A total of 2.7 percent of individuals who came for other purposes, such as treatment, shopping, business, or research, were present [72].

Uzbekistan's population consists of 60% young individuals under the age of 30. Youth is, without a doubt, the largest and most significant resource. These adolescents and young people will make up the greatest labor force Uzbekistan has ever had in two decades.

Today's youth population can be the generation that propels Uzbekistan to a greater degree of socioeconomic growth if the correct investments are made now. In addition to financial resources, their needs, interests, and goals must be carefully considered.



Picture 1 Geographic map of the Republic of Uzbekistan

#### *4.6.2 Data sources*

The study is based on online survey questionnaire through purposive sampling and surveyed 200 young residents of Uzbekistan in the age scale of 18 to 28 years old from the period of 2021-2022. Majority of participants are International University students in Uzbekistan and have lived in the territory of Uzbekistan at least for 10 years period.

Participants took online structured survey in with 20 questions that was divided into three sections to determine 1) how tourism impacts young people's views of possibilities, 2) assess country pride and self-image, and 3) how it influences their desire to stay in or migrate from Uzbekistan.

On the other hand, extended in-depth interviews were conducted with selected 10 among those participants who answered that directly or professionally relate themselves with tourism industry to shed more light on perceived tourism industry development, satisfaction, and destination image correlation with wish to migrate. Interview questions were open to explore their perception, experience and country image, tourism development satisfaction, self-image and tourism development satisfaction, their present and past relation to tourism industry. Surveying and interviewing allow to get key information on respondents' country image of Uzbekistan and some other detailed reasons of having intentions to migrate. This approach was supported in the literature by Peter Möller [54] who also studied youth, tourism and migration.

Interviews were transcribed, and the information gathered was analysed using contents analysis technique NVivo software for processing, complimentarily with an application of semantic network analysis technics (AutoMap for cleaning



and processing the textual information, Ucinet 6 for centrality measures calculation, and NetDraw 2.173 for visualisation). Since the student population was from International Universities or with extensive English language skills, both survey and interviews were conducted in English language.

#### *4.6.3 Theoretical model*

The model investigates the theoretical relationships between the tourist image of youth residents, their proudness with the country and their intentions to migrate. The tourist image was measured with a scale of twenty-six items about various aspects related to the economic social and environmental impacts of tourism in the destination. The intentions to migrate and the proudness with the country of the destination were measured with a binary variable indicating whether the young individual was or not intending to migrate to another country and was or not feeling proud about their own country. It may be expected that those young residents with a higher image for the destination have a larger proudness about their country and have a lower intention of migrate to another country. In addition, it could be explored a potential negative relationship between the proudness with the country and the intentions to migrate.

Thus, the following formal hypotheses are investigated:

Hypothesis H<sub>1</sub>: Youth residents image of the destination (IMA) has a positive impact on the proudness of the country (PROUD).

Hypothesis H<sub>2</sub>: Youth residents image of the destination (IMA) has a negative impact on the intentions to migrate to another the country (MIGRA).

Hypothesis H<sub>3</sub>: Youth residents' proudness of the country (PROUD) has a negative effect on the intentions to migrate to another the country (MIGRA).



Figure 5 illustrates the hypotheses of the model.

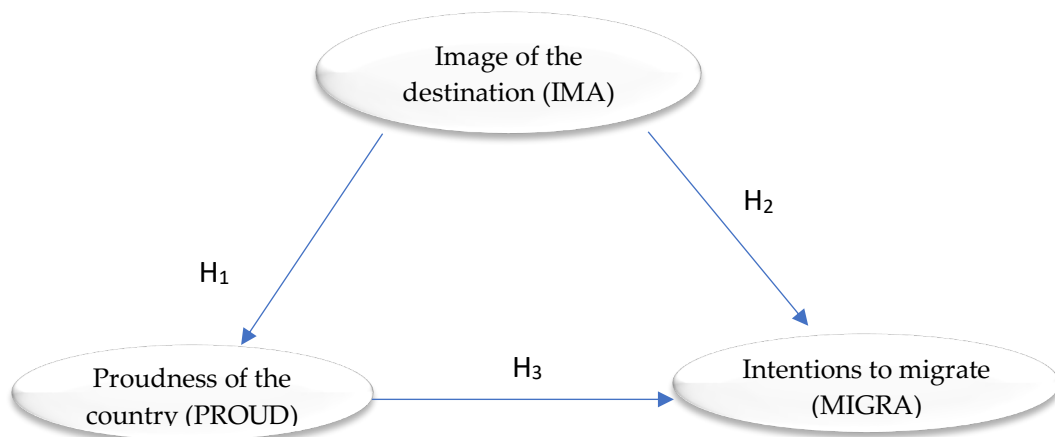


Figure 5 Theoretical model

The model was estimated utilizing AMOS 27 statistical package on SPSS. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was utilized for assessing the scale measuring the construct of youth residents' tourist image, while confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was applied to assess its convergent validity. The empirical validity of the relationships defined in hypotheses was determined with the estimation of a structural equation model (SEM) [73]. SEM has been successfully applied in other studies to assess structural relationships between variables involving the scale of residents' tourist destination image [74].

## 4.7. Results

### 4.7.1. SEM results

The mean values of the items of the scale of youth residents' tourist image perception are shown in Table A1 in the Appendix. The application of EFA led to three factors that are named as environmental, social, and economic impacts of tourists on the destination. Eight of the items of the scales were dropped from the models because they did not become significant in supporting the respective constructs of tourism impacts. Table 8 shows the results of applying CFA to assess the convergent validity of the model to measure the youth residents' image of the tourist destination based on these constructs. The average variance extracted (AVE) is above 0.5 for the three constructs thereby providing evidence of the internal consistency of the scales [75], which is also supported by the fact that the  $\alpha$ -Cronbach is above the level of 0.7 for the three constructs [76;77]. In addition, the composite reliability (CR) has values above the level of 0.7, which is considered satisfactory [77]. The overall goodness of fit of the model is also

satisfactory with fitness indexes above the value of 0.9 (NFI=.912; CFI=.908; TLI=.917; IFI=.921). The quality indicators of the measurement model ( $X^2/df=3.5$  and RMSEA=0.062) are also below the level of 5 and 0.08 for a good fit level respectively [19;78].

Table 7 Results of CFA reliability and validity

<i>Item scale</i>	Standardized Factor Loading	Composite Reliability (CR)	Average variance extracted (AVE)	Cronbach $\alpha$
<b>Economic impacts</b>		0.772	0.650	0.811
Tourism increases employment opportunity	0.600			
Tourism improves quality of life in Uzbekistan	0.698			
Tourism created entrepreneurial opportunities	0.814			
Tourism increases the price of housing	0.794			
Tourism increases the cost of living	0.581			
Tourism generates employment instability	0.604			
<b>Social impacts</b>		0.786	0.685	0.820
There are more theater sand exhibitions with tourism	0.748			
Tourism improves public services (health care, education, sport centers, etc)	0.639			
Tourism stimulates our festivals and traditions (Navro'z, fairs, bazaars)	0.853			
There are more parks and gardens due to tourism	0.856			
Tourism brings positive impact on Uzbek culture and introduces new languages	0.713			
Tourism has raised awareness of Uzbek culture and Uzbek language	0.618			
Tourism creates ground for practices such as prostitution, human trafficking	0.665			
<b>Environmental impacts</b>		0.833	0.692	0.793
Due to tourism, urbanization is rapidly developing	0.743			
Tourism produces more congestion, accidents, and parking problems	0.692			
Tourism increases pollution, noise,garbage etc.	0.833			
Tourism deteriorates the natural environment	0.751			
Tourism creates big crowds in preservation areas and disturbs living environment	0.789			

Discriminant validity is concerned with the extent to which constructs in the model are truly different from each other. This can be assessed by looking at the correlation matrix between constructs in order to find out whether the square root of the mean value extracted (AVE) is greater than the correlations with the rest of variables. Table 8 shows that the cross-correlations of the off-diagonal values are lower than those on the diagonal which refer to the correlations between factors

Table 8 Correlation matrix of latent constructs

Constructs	1	2	3
Economic impacts	0.801		
Social impacts	0.324	0.832	
Environmental impacts	0.415	0.388	0.794

The parameter estimates of the structural model (SEM) of the influence of youth residents' tourist image perceptions on country proudness and migration intentions are depicted in Figure 6. The fit of the model is satisfactory according to the  $X^2/df=2.1$  and other statistics of goodness of fit (CFI=.901; TLI=.915; IFI=.927; NFI=.919). The three parameters of the structural model are all significant at the .001 level (1%), and the structural model is appropriate according to the value of the RMSEA index that takes a value of 0.022.

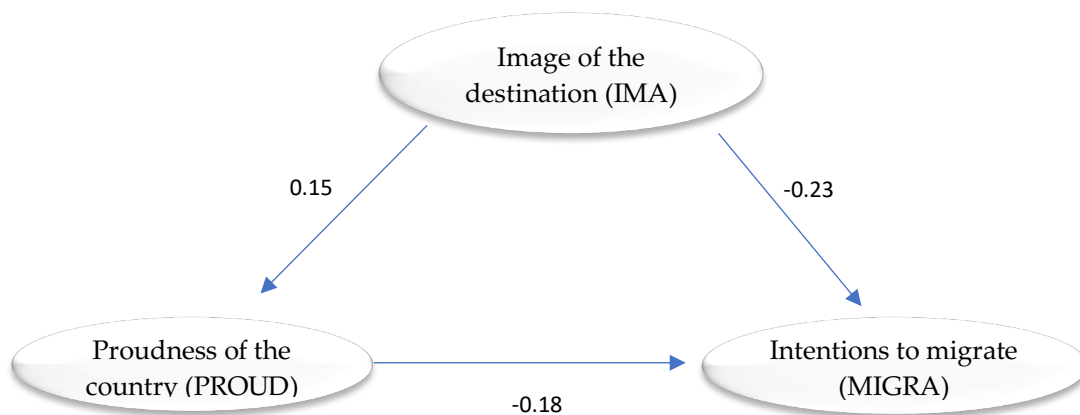


Figure 6 Results of the model

The test results of the hypotheses and the standardised coefficient estimates are presented in Table 9. The structural model supports the three theoretical hypotheses regarding the relationships between the youth residents' image perception, country proudness and migration intentions (Figure 6). First, for the youth residents the image of the tourist destination has a positive impact on the country proudness. That is, those residents with higher image perception of the impacts of tourism on the country are more likely to be proud of their own country, thereby supporting hypothesis H<sub>1</sub> ( $\beta=0.15$ ;  $p<0.00$ ). Second, higher perceptions of the impacts of tourism on the destination among the youth

residents are related with a lower intention to migrate ( $\beta=-0.23$ ;  $p<0.00$ ), which supports hypothesis H<sub>2</sub>. Finally, the relationship between country proudness and migration intention is also negative and significant ( $\beta=-0.18$ ;  $p<0.00$ ), i.e. those youth residents who are not proud about their country are more likely to have intentions to migrate, thereby supporting hypothesis H<sub>3</sub>.

Table 9 Hypotheses testing results

Path	Par. estimate	p-value	Hypothesis
IMA → PROUD	0.15	.000	H <sub>1</sub> supported
IMA → MIGRA	-0.23	.000	H <sub>2</sub> supported
PROUD → MIGRA	-0.18	.000	H <sub>3</sub> supported

#### 4.7.2. Semantic networks analysis results

The analysis is performed on the basis of data collected in ten in-depth interviews conducted with graduates of Tourism faculty. The interviews aimed to evaluate the perspective participants have on tourism industry in Uzbekistan, their perception of potential of the industry and measure their intention to migrate. The respondents are between 18 and 28 years old, six of them are females, four – males. None of them have children, the majority (nine out of ten) have a Bachelor degree, one reached the Master’s level of studies. All participants studied in international universities, located in Uzbekistan, and the language of instruction was English. Eight participants shared that their current employment is not related with Tourism and Hospitality industry.

The analysis was conducted at the following steps. First, the answers of participants for key questions were coded with key words (Table 11). Second, their frequencies and internal connections were calculated. The third step consisted in semantic analysis of participants’ responses, that helped to determine various clusters of key words.

The analysis was conducted at the following steps. First, the answers of participants to key questions were coded with key words (Table 11). Second, their frequencies and internal connections were calculated.

Table 10 Participant Responses

Question	Key words
Why have you chosen to study in Tourism and Hospitality field?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- tourism, travel</li> <li>- work</li> <li>- diversity of field</li> <li>- opportunities</li> <li>- culture</li> <li>- major's curricula</li> <li>- cultural exchange</li> </ul>
Describe two positive aspects of working in Tourism and Hospitality Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- networking</li> <li>- opportunities to travel</li> <li>- new perspectives</li> <li>- new cultures</li> <li>- country wealth growth</li> <li>- relocation</li> <li>- opportunities to learn</li> <li>- interesting tasks</li> </ul>
Describe two negative aspects of working in Tourism and Hospitality Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- high rotation</li> <li>- bad transportation system</li> <li>- bad infrastructure</li> <li>- work 24/7</li> <li>- stress</li> <li>- lack of money for locals</li> <li>- low wages</li> <li>- seasonal nature of jobs</li> <li>- labor intensity</li> <li>- non-stable work</li> <li>- environmental harm</li> <li>- lack of control of damaging the heritage</li> </ul>
Describe satisfactory aspects of tourism development in Uzbekistan that helps you to thrive in your career	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- technology development</li> <li>- new tourist facilities benefit locals</li> <li>- local traditions are preserved</li> <li>- young professionals welcomed in the industry</li> <li>- international hotel brands</li> <li>- investments</li> <li>- not satisfied</li> <li>- doesn't know</li> <li>- n/a</li> </ul>
Describe unsatisfactory aspects of tourism development in Uzbekistan that influences your career plans negatively	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- low wages</li> <li>- gender discrimination</li> <li>- changes in ministry leadership</li> <li>- advertisement</li> <li>- prices</li> <li>- ideas of youngsters are not heard</li> <li>- nepotism</li> <li>- language barrier</li> <li>- n/a</li> </ul>
What are the challenges (barriers) young people studying Tourism and Hospitality are facing today in terms of employment?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- lack of opportunities</li> <li>- lack of internships</li> <li>- lack of standards for hotel industry</li> <li>- low wages</li> </ul>
Have you thought of migrating to other country for living or working? What are the reasons if yes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- language practice</li> <li>- multicultural experience</li> <li>- opportunities for personal growth</li> <li>- job / career opportunities</li> <li>- better future</li> <li>- travel opportunities</li> <li>- escape from nepotism and corruption</li> </ul>

The positive aspects of work in Tourism and Hospitality industry are more abstract and generalized, while the negative ones are more specific, and their list is wider. Half of participants acknowledged that they would consider return to Uzbekistan in case of migration only for a family visit. They are the ones who point out the non-stable nature of the work in this industry, low wages and corruption and nepotism issues.

As it can be noted, the choice of Tourism and Hospitality major was mainly determined by two aspects: possibilities of travelling and exploring, and diversity of opportunities in the field. Exploring the answers of those two groups, several tendencies can be determined.

The first group demonstrates bigger focus on cultural and historical awareness, considering them to be a positive aspect for tourism industry. Among the negative sides they point out more frequently low wages and stress at the workplace.

The second group of participants demonstrates a more critical approach. If among the positive key features they name various types of opportunities the industry can offer them, they are becoming more specific when it comes to negative aspects. Bad infrastructure, seasonal nature of jobs, labor intensity, lack of stability, corruption and nepotism are the features that are named more frequently by them as negative characteristics of the industry.

Focus on Uzbekistan decreases the grades of satisfaction among the participants. In particular, two respondents shared directly their low levels of satisfaction and couldn't name any positive aspect of tourism sphere in the country. In addition, five respondents after sharing briefly the positive sides, counterweighted them right away with the negative one.

For example, one participant talked about interest of the industry in young specialists, and at the same time admitted that organizational culture doesn't let the youngsters to share their ideas and knowledge, and they are forming rather a cheap labor force. While asked to provide more specific information, the participants shared such barriers in the industry as lack of internships and requirements of work experience (90% of answers), lack of opportunities for growth and development (70% of answers), low wages and difficulties in getting promotion (50% of answers).

The group of participants that selected Tourism and Hospitality as their major because travelling and exploring possibilities the industry can offer are not so determined in migrating from Uzbekistan. They consider a temporary labor migration or the one that can provide the opportunities to learn new language or get acquaintance of a new culture.

The second group, that came to that major seeking for a variety of opportunities, demonstrates higher levels of determination in long-term or permanent migration from the country. The participants shared their dissatisfaction and aspirations for better future and better access to opportunities they are looking for, abroad.

The complete semantic network of key words and main ideas extracted from the interviews is presented below (Figure 7). The Average degree in the network is 21.837, and the Density = 0.455. The network has one component; however, the core and periphery analysis shows well-marked distribution of concepts (Table 11).

Table 11 Key words

Core Class	Periphery Class
R: work	R: tourism, travel
R: diversity of field	R: culture
R: opportunities	R: cultural exchange
R: major's curricula	PS: networking
PS: new perspectives	PS: opportunities to travel
PS: opportunities to learn	PS: new cultures
NS: work 24/7	PS: country wealth growth
NS: lack of money for locals	PS: relocation
NS: low wages	PS: interesting tasks
NS: seasonal nature of jobs	NS: high rotation
NS: youngsters are not heard	NS: bad transportation system
NS: lack of standards in hotel industry	NS: bad infrastructure
NS: lack of internships	NS: stress
NS: lack of opportunities	NS: labor intensity
NS: nepotism	NS: non-stable work
PS: new tourist facilities benefit locals	NS: environmental harm
	NS: lack of control of damaging the heritage
	NS: gender discrimination
	NS: prices
	NS: language barrier
	PS: local traditions are preserved
	PS: investments
	PS: international hotel brands
	PS: technology development
	M: yes
	M: no
	MR: language practice
	MR: multicultural experience
	MR: opportunities for personal growth
	MR: job/career opportunities
	MR: better future
	MR: travel opportunities
	MR: escape from nepotism and corruption

The centrality measures calculated for the network provide additional details on the core/periphery distribution and importance of topics in the interviews. In particular, the work prospects in Tourism and Hospitality industry are the most popular reason for choosing that major (*Degree* = 92.000, *Eigenvector* = 0.933), while culture is the least popular one (*Degree* = 46.000, *Eigenvector* = 0.329). New perspectives and opportunities to learn are occupying top positions in positive aspects of the industry, according to the respondents (*Degree* = 61.000, *Eigenvector*



= 0.728; and Degree = 62.000, Eigenvector = 0.781 respectively). Meanwhile, lack of opportunities (Degree = 69.000, Eigenvector = 0.852) and nepotism (Degree = 62.000, Eigenvector = 0.708) are two the most frequently mentioned problems by the interviewees.

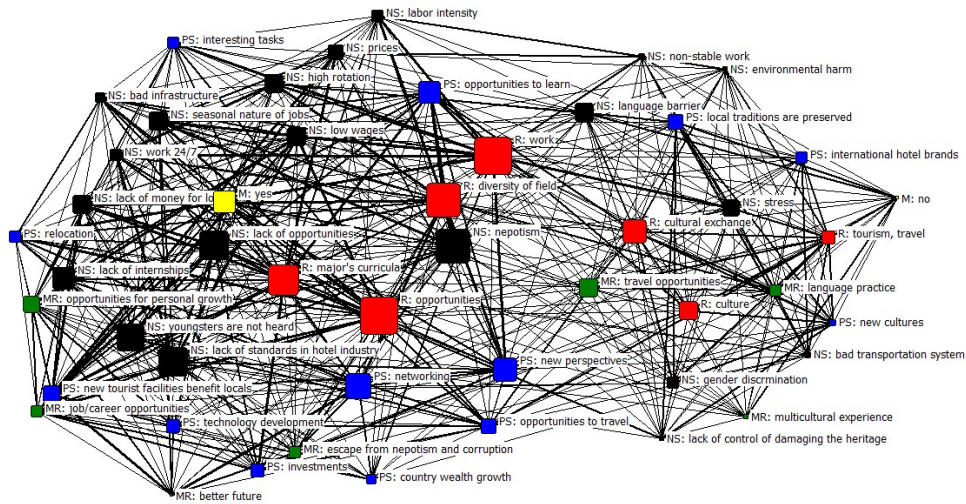


Figure 7 Semantic network of key concepts and ideas from in-depth interviews

(node size shows the degree of the node; node color – group in which the concept is included: red – reason for choosing the Tourism and Hospitality major, blue – positive aspects of the industry, black – negative aspects of the industry, yellow – desire to migrate, green – reasons for migration; edge size – tie strengths between two concepts)

Analysis of the concept network of those participants who declare lack of desire to migrate from Uzbekistan, recreates the semantic network shown in Figure 8. The network is denser than the original one (0.783), and the Average Degree is 11.750. The interviewees from that group demonstrate preoccupation by structural problems in the industry (like gender discrimination, non-stable work or stressful nature of job). The positive aspects have lower indicators rather than negative ones (ex., Degree = 29.000, Eigenvector = 0.724 in case of “International hotel brands”, which is the highest centrality measure among positive sides of work in the industry). Even if the negative aspects prevail in the discourse of this group of interviewees, they are not demonstrating willingness to migrate.

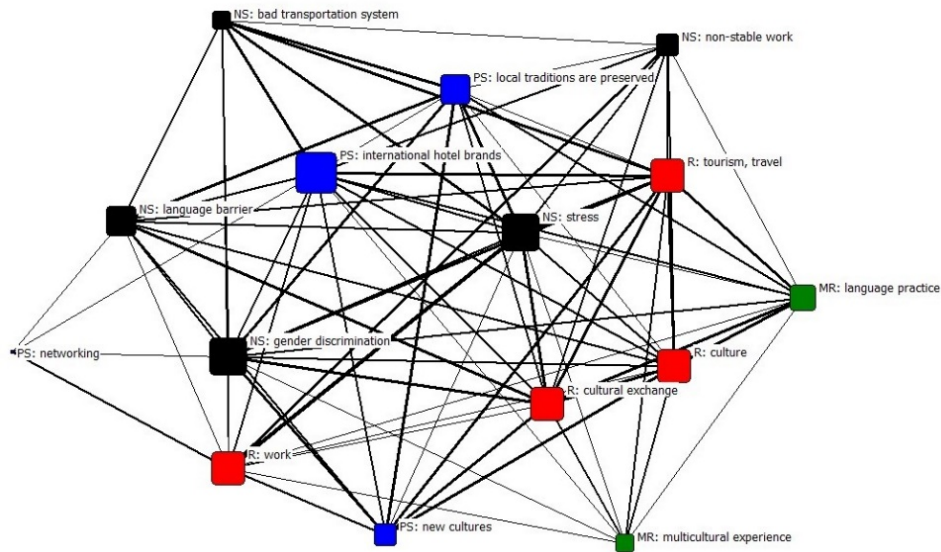


Figure 8 Semantic network of concepts of those with no intentions to migrate

Semantic network of concepts present in answers interviewees non-willing to migrate (node size shows the degree of the node; node color – group in which the concept is included: red – reason for choosing the Tourism and Hospitality major, blue – positive aspects of the industry, black – negative aspects of the industry, green – reasons for migration; edge size – tie strengths between two concepts).

In the second group, formed by those who confirm their desire to migrate from Uzbekistan, the properties of the semantic network are different (Figure 9). The Average Degree is 14.560, however the Density is lower (0.607). It combines mainly two categories of participants – those who chose the major in Tourism and Hospitality because of its curricula (*Degree = 50.000, Eigenvector = 0.990*) and the opportunities it provides (*Degree = 50.000, Eigenvector = 0.966*). In the core of the network, negative aspects of work in the industry prevail: lack of money for locals, youngsters are not heard, lack of standards in hotel industry, lack of opportunities, and nepotism. The strengths of ties in the core is high, which makes this group of factors a solid reason for increase of the desire to migrate from the country and look for job opportunities abroad.

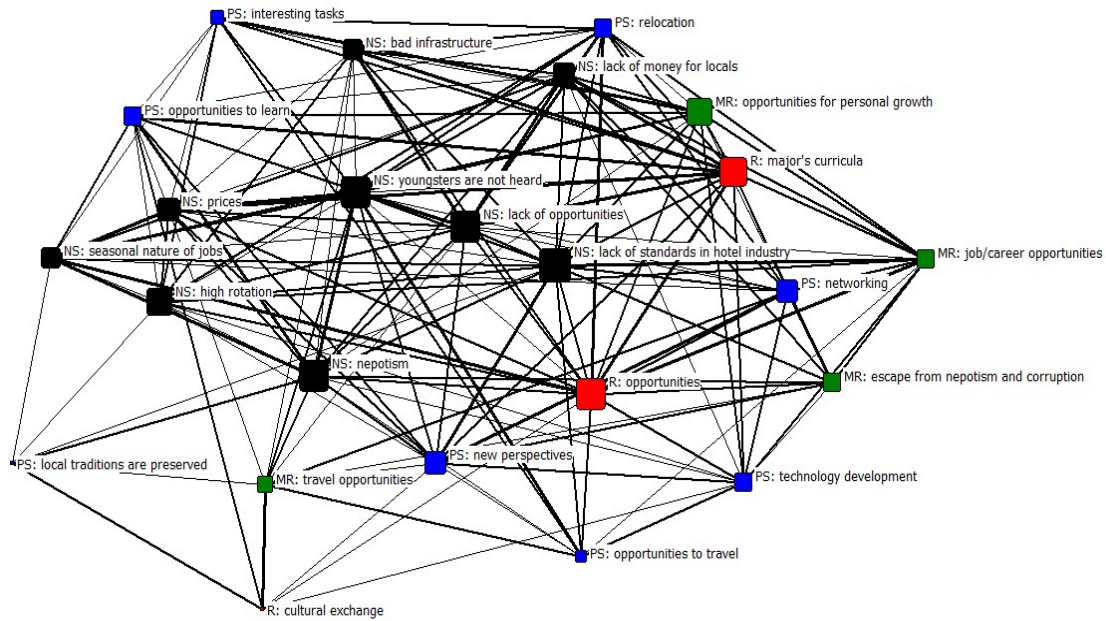


Figure 9 Semantic network of concept present in answers interviewees willing to migrate

(node size shows the degree of the node; node color – group in which the concept is included: red – reason for choosing the Tourism and Hospitality major, blue – positive aspects of the industry, black – negative aspects of the industry, green – reasons for migration; edge size – tie strengths between two concepts).

#### 4.8. Discussion

The impact of young residents' perceptions of the destination on a complex sense of pride in the country and aspirations to migrate from their native country of Uzbekistan was investigated in this study. Evidence suggests that estimating the attractiveness of a nation's image may be done by looking at perceptions of the native country in relation to migration intentions. The findings revealed key insights about how country images function in a complicated judgment context like migration.

Citizens tend to exaggerate their self-images, according to Anholt [79], but this study found the opposite, respondents might be patriotic (have a greater emotional image of their home country) but yet, have high migration intentions due to a lesser image of their home destination.

There are major impediments to movement, with strong familial ties being a key driver. According to recent studies [80;81], migration intentions diminish when family is prioritized. When it comes to other motivations, our research shows that a variety of non-economic factors have a role. Potential Uzbek migrants are more likely to be men, younger, urban, well educated, and have previous internal migration experience, according to demographic characteristics. Nonetheless, there are geographical disparities to be found. Tashkent city though it is a capital,

for example, appears to have distinct features, with women and individuals with less education being more likely to express a desire to leave. This study also suggests that the sensation-seeking, multi-cultural experience demand personality has a major role in readiness to migrate, supporting other recent studies on the existence of a 'migrant personality' [82; 83].

To that extend our study reveals that participants who choose Tourism and Hospitality as their major because they want to travel and explore the opportunities the business has to offer are less committed to leaving Uzbekistan. They consider transitory work migration or movement that allows them to acquire a new language or become acquainted with a new culture. The second group, who came to that major in search of a range of options, shows greater commitment in their long-term or permanent departure out of the country. The participants expressed their disappointment as well as their hopes for a better future and easier access to the chances they seek elsewhere.

Country image is used to simplify complicated choice of environments, such as relocation initiatives, by fitting smoother into knowledge structures and assisting in the formulation of views [84]. Furthermore, the country's overall economic, political, and social conditions are thought to play a considerable effect in future migrants' planning [85]. As a result of these factors combining to signal overall country images [86; 87], and country images being anticipated to be linked with satisfaction as guided by the attitude theory [88], images of migration destinations can be observed to be extremely impactful in positively affecting migration intentions.

External audiences of the nation have generally been the emphasis of country image research [89], while internal audiences, also known as collective self-image by Yousaf and Li [89], remain a severely under-researched subject. On multiple fronts, this study contributes to the theoretical discussion on national images and nation branding among adolescents. First, this research gives a clear picture of a destination's domestic consumers. Second, the inclination to migrate is an indication of a low country image, according to this study, which brings up the issue regarding self-images a strong impact on destination-tourism-related views, significant influence on product-country-related perceptions [90; 91].

## 4.9. Conclusion

Youth, according to Prout and James [92], are an unseen population in our culture, and their "silent" has been widespread in the social sciences until recently. This is still true in the field of tourism studies. Youth is underrepresented in tourism studies and are sometimes referred to as a "voiceless demographic" or "missing host" [93; 3]. Through semantic networks analysis we also found evidence that the group of young people who related themselves to tourism industry expressed that a low role in the organizational

culture prevents them from sharing their ideas, voice and skills, resulting in being undervalued and exploited as cheap labour force.

The ability to attract has traditionally been thought to be an essentially effective component of an image, making it fundamentally salient to persuasion and the country's soft power [94]. However, the capacity to attract has really been captured in the notion of a location's attractiveness as a vacation spot rather than as a migrant target.

As per the findings of this study, respondents can be patriotic, proud (have a greater emotional image of their home country) yet have high intentions to migrate owing to a weaker image of their home nation. This distinguishes between the two significantly affected when assessing internal nation images. The inclination to migrate is an indication of a poor country image, according to this study, which brings up the issue regarding self-images. Although respondents with a high migration desires also had a high emotional picture of their home country, this indicates that the nation brand of the homeland is mostly based on cognitive representations, as pride, family emotional attachments.

There are a few key conclusions for policymakers in developing nations. To prevent the outflow of skills shortage, emerging countries should first enhance their country images for its residents, as specially for young representatives. When people have high intentions to migrate, pride to their nation are still strong, but it is the self-image component of the home country that determines migration.

Second, governments are taking favourable self-evaluations for granted. In such terms, authorities cannot expect that people of a country would always have good feelings for their home country, and hence must work hard to earn the support and assistance of their citizens. That's also essential because residents act as representatives for their region and represent as a medium of communication for the destination's external stakeholders [89], but that can only happen if young people believe in their country's brand and are encouraged to announce to the world about their country and its people and characteristics.

Educational activities should also be provided by planners and local groups to improve young residents' learning chances. More foreign language programs and corporate in-house training may improve cultural awareness and work skills among personnel. There appears to be a sociocultural system in place where many opportunities and education are available in metropolitan regions but not in rural ones, resulting to rural out-migration.

Tourism can assist, but it can't completely eradicate the socioeconomic framework that leads to youth migration. According to this study, tourism development and boosting the image of Uzbekistan as a tourist destination may enhance opportunities and greatly contribute to making Uzbekistan more appealing to stay or return of it's young adults.



## 5. Limitations and future research

Though the theoretical model and the approaches used are grounded on the literature, some limitations are worth mentioning. First, the replication of the study and additional testing can be done after collecting more data on different sample. Such approach could enrich the results obtained and amplify the perspective on youth migration and its connection with sustainability. Second, the longitudinal analysis in that topic is recommended.

The trends in migration intentions, the changes in understanding of sustainability concept and its application to touristic activities might be evolving. In addition, life experience of participants, the enrichment of their educational background, changes in their social and civil status are the factors that potentially might affect their intentions to leave the country. Third, the research is focused on youth, however we did not include the category of children under 18 years old.

The inclusion of high-school students and teenagers, who are perceived to be an important component [95] of the immigration phenomena, the measurement of their satisfaction and country image and the connection of their views and those of their parents will provide wider picture on the topic analysed. Fourth, the researchers limited themselves with data collection mostly in the capital of Uzbekistan. However, the youth migration intentions might differ in rural areas due to the variety of conditions and environmental factors. The measurement of such an influence and the understanding of its nature can be recommended for future studies.

## Appendix

Table A1. Mean and standard deviations of items scales	Mean	S. D.
1. Tourism is main economic activity in Uzbekistan	1.92	1.25
2. More roads and urbanizations are constructed	1.59	1.308
3. Tourism increases employment opportunity	3	1.178
4. Tourism improves quality of life in Uzbekistan	2.58	1.339
5. There are more theaters and exhibitions with tourism	1.79	1.423
6. Tourism improves public services (health care, education, sport centers, etc)	2.34	1.474
7. Tourism stimulates our festivals and traditions (Navro'z, fairs, bazaars)	2.98	1.26
8. There are more parks and gardens due to tourism	2.13	1.397
9. Tourism has improved and protected the environment	1.39	1.344
10. Tourism brings positive impact on Uzbek culture and introduces new languages	2.86	1.221
11. Tourism created entrepreneurial opportunities	2.92	1.205
12. Tourism has raised awareness of Uzbek culture and Uzbek language	2.54	1.473
13. Tourism is positively influencing country image	2.78	1.338
14. New tourism development programs raised your interest to travel domestically	2.36	1.473
15. Due to tourism, urbanization is rapidly developing	2	1.499
16. Tourism increases the price of housing	1.86	1.577
17. Tourism increases the cost of living	1.71	1.516
18. Tourism generates employment instability	1.51	1.382
19. Tourism increases drug and alcohol consumption	1.53	1.248
20. Tourism creates ground for practices such as prostitution. human trafficking	1.41	1.288
21. Tourism causes more crime	1.29	0.958
22. Tourism produces more congestion, accidents and parking problems	1.6	1.28
23. Tourism generates loss or change of our traditions	1.6	1.212
24. Tourism increases pollution, noise, garbage etc.	2.05	1.365
25. Tourism deteriorates the natural environment	1.56	1.399
26. Tourism creates big crowds in preservation areas and disturbs living environment	1.8	1.357



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## Chapter 5. Conclusions



This thesis adds to community-based tourism research by explaining and comprehending the basic idea of CBT held by experts, identifying points of agreement with the concept from the views of the primary stakeholders, and advocating future effective CBT development paths. The stakeholder engagement takes place in Central Asia. At the outset, it is envisaged that the findings may be generalized to poor nations for CBT development.

The findings indicated the significance and basic principles behind community-based tourism, as well as its benefits and drawbacks, as well as the first measures that should be taken and effective assessment criteria. Although there are parallels in the agreement concerning CBT, the uniqueness of each community should be acknowledged when pursuing the development, according to the research of community viewpoints.

This is similar to Sirakaya et al. [1] findings in their research of communities' support for tourist development. Their findings revealed elements that influence citizens' support for tourist development, which were comparable to the findings of the current study. However, each site has its own set of unique circumstances that must be addressed in order to increase local support for tourist development. However, the initial stages highlighted in this study are an investigation of tourists' perceptions and a community-based planning process. Other measures mentioned in this research included raising community awareness, particularly in terms of tourist development results; developing a training activities for a community; and obtaining professional guidance and support.

This thesis studies found that various characteristics are relevant to many CBT projects, agreeing with many scholars who argue that no one set of favorable circumstances allows all CBT initiatives to thrive [2;3;4;5].

None were country-specific, despite the fact that they couldn't be generalized to all places. Dodds et al [6] have presented the basic themes around the success factors and challenges for CBT. The outcomes of this study (Table 13) support our conclusions by offering a technique for evaluating and comparing CBT projects as follows:

Table 12 Outcomes of the study

- 1.Community Participation and Involvement
- 2.Experience co-creation by local community and tourist
- 3.Local management and sense of ownership
- 4.Positive country image formation among residents
- 5.Participation of young residents in tourism development
- 6.Rising the awareness of CBT sustainability among residents and tourists
- 7.Focus on long-term sustainability in CBT

## - **Community Participation and Involvement**

At the onset, determining the community's cohesion (or togetherness) is critical(ref). Communities frequently have differing perspectives on introducing tourism so near to them, which can lead to disputes and conflicts, which is counter to CBT's stated goal of community engagement(ref). The capacity of community members to collaborate and the degree to which they share a similar purpose has a significant impact on the likelihood of success. The importance of participation in a project is critical to its success. Government entities, NGOs, or local expert specialists should hold seminars and trainings in the community destination. The ability to communicate in the regional languages is essential for establishing trust and attaining learning goals. Tourist management and business training are required to equip CBT firms with the requisite abilities to function as official tourism businesses and suppliers. In many situations, further training is required, such as artisan manufacturing, leading, and English language skills [7; 8]. Each case should be assessed for its unique requirements, and then learning should be tailored to local complexities such as previous educational levels, training stress (in areas with a high number of outside donor projects), literacy and language factors, and specific skills required for the CBT initiative.

## - **Experience co-creation by local community and tourist**

The importance of stakeholder inclusion has been noted as a critical aspect in CBT's long-term viability [9; 10]. Stakeholder theory [11], states that in managing CBT organizations, it is critical to recognize the stakeholders and their perceptions [12].

Essentially, this work contributes to the theoretical development of CBT by capturing the coordinating responsibilities of individual players at the micro-level of the CBT ecosystem. As a result, the study broadens the definition of value co-creation in CBT to include non-referent benefactors who initiate value co-creation exercises.

We recognize the critical role of policy-making organizations in promoting value co-creation at a destination in CBT ecosystems. Proactive measures in soliciting feedback from a wider range of stakeholders, including visitors, in order to co-design the tourism offering can result in favorable value outcomes for all parties. Specialists can discover and predict inconsistencies or resource dissolution by actors by examining present value co-creation procedures in CBT, and plan relevant remedial measures. Furthermore, because value co-creation is managed through institutional mechanisms, those activities that contribute to superior outcomes may be codified as organizational guidelines and rules [13]. To prevent value degradation at service interactions, tourism operators should be open to input from visitors and ideas from staff on a local scale. Finally, because value outputs for actors show who benefits and who loses from tourism in a given

location, authorities may target individual destination stakeholders by treating each one as a unique resource.

- **Local management and sense of ownership**

It is suggested that a tourist commission or organization be formed to handle CBT locally in order to ensure local leadership and independence [14; 15;16; 17; 18; 19; 20; 21]. This is critical for tourism to be managed, created, operated, controlled, and overseen by the people who work in the tourism industry. Participation in the creation and operation of a business empowers people of the community by fostering a constructive pattern in which they strengthen their strength and ability to sustain the well-being of their communities, sense of ownership, hence promoting proudness in their cultures.

- **Positive country image formation among residents**

Furthermore, the analysis shows that country image may play a substantial role in predicting country identification(self-image). This finding backs with earlier research on the relationship across place image and place attachment in both a tourism and non-tourism scenario (i.e. between visitors and tourist sites; [22;23]). (i.e. between residents and living environments; [24;25]). This study also gives proof to support Low and Altman's theory [26]. As a result, place attachment is influenced not only by genetic differences, but also by sociocultural context (e.g. the "culture, history, and architecture" component of country image) and psychological processes (e.g. emotional country image). The research aids local governments in identifying diverse community groups based on their perceptions of their environment, as well as the most and least favorable components of that image. Recognizing the demands of certain groups provides knowledge for the efficient use of scarce assets that possibly be wasted [27]. The link connecting local image and resident support, in particular, suggests that tourism must be exploited as a strategy for the overall growth of the area [28]. Regional authorities in Uzbekistan should take steps to persuade citizens that tourist growth would not harm the image of the country.

- **Participation of young residents in tourism development**

One of the study's research questions is how tourism influences young resident's perceptions of their chances of migration in or staying in their home country. According to the findings of this study, respondents might be patriotic and proud (have a positive emotional image of their home country) while also having strong migration intentions due to a negative picture of their home country. When evaluating internal nation images, this distinguishes between the two considerably affected. According to this study, the desire to move is a sign of a

negative national image, which raises the question of self-image. Although respondents who had a strong desire to migrate also had a strong emotional image of their home country, this suggests that the homeland's nation brand is mostly built on cognitive representations such as pride and familial emotional bonds.

For policymakers in developing countries, there are a few significant takeaways. To avoid a skills deficit, growing nations should first improve their country image among their citizens, particularly among young representatives. When people have strong inclinations to move, their pride in their homeland is still strong, but migration is determined by the home country's self-image component.

Authorities cannot expect individuals to constantly have positive views about their own nation, therefore they must work hard to win their citizens' support and help. Residents serve as spokespeople for their region and serve as a conduit of communication for the destination's external stakeholders, therefore this is also critical [29].

- **Rising the awareness of CBT sustainability among residents and tourists**

Through experts interviews we have learnt that there is lack of understating on sustainable tourism concept within the community, tourist show some degree of familiarity, but the area still remains grey for them. Experts expressed unhappiness with the way information about available development funding was distributed between the public and commercial sectors. Despite the government's assistance for tourist development projects, CBT entrepreneurial families appear to rely on self-investment or NGOs for start-up money (USAID, 2021). The biggest hurdles are the excessive state bureaucracy for growing tourism-related entrepreneurial operations and the community's limited knowledge of CBT opportunities. Locals and companies are also unaware of or have a limited knowledge of sustainability ideas. The key problems or aims of Central Asia's CBT, according to experts, are as follows: i) generate a sustainable income for a better quality of life in remote areas; ii) preserve traditional forms of authentic culture and raise awareness of the cultural content; iii) find a less harmful alternative to agriculture that harms natural areas; iv) local population involvement in nature and culture preservation; and v) managing a mutual spiritual exchange with tourists.

- **Focus on long-term sustainability in CBT**

In order to put in place those activities and goods that contribute to successful destinations, sustainability planning necessitates working through the views of tourists and stakeholders [30]. This research proposes a mixed methods approach

to study stakeholders' and visitors' views of CBT sustainability in Central Asian countries. These destinations confront significant sustainability problems in order to be fully competitive on the international stage, and they must balance the pressures of expansion and rising living standards with the riches of endowed tourism resources.

These findings suggest that visitors' and stakeholders' perspectives of CBT are similar in that more compelling activities toward sustainability are needed. That is, CBT's sustainability performance in Central Asian nations may be enhanced beyond present environmental, social, and financial management standards [31]. On the one hand, stakeholders stated that more sound environmental protection, socioeconomic implications on local residents, human capital development, encouraging local entrepreneurship, and providing local finance facilities are all necessary. Tourist views, on the other hand, are impacted considerably by their choices for sustainable tourism development, which also affects their willingness to participate in local culture and customs. As a result, it is obvious that visitors care about contributing to long-term tourism growth, and CBT firms and destinations should engage actively to meet visitors' sustainability management demands [32].

Tourists' choices for environmentally friendly CBT items have an impact on their propensity to engage with local communities and contribute to local development. Tourists, on the other hand, want to connect with and experience the "diversity" that leads to community growth [33]. As a result, in some aspects, responsibility for combating unsustainable growth and poverty in target locations may move away from tourist organizations and toward passengers [34].

However, tourist organizations in Central Asia appear to promote CBT socioeconomic development, while this support is not necessarily based on sustainable principles and does not always coincide with the objectives of local people. Travelers' wants to contribute to the well-being of local communities through a genuine and authentic tourist experience must be met. In this regard, enhancing collaboration among destination stakeholders may aid in the advancement of effective techniques for accomplishing long-term objectives.

The perspectives of sustainability among tourists and stakeholders in Central Asian nations are not uniform, with Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan having the highest levels of sustainability perceptions and Turkmenistan having the lowest. This might be related to Central Asian nations' poor destination awareness, emphasizing the need of developing competitive advertising techniques and destination branding [35].

Furthermore, visitors' preferences for sustainable CBT are reflected in their readiness to spend more for green certified items in Central Asian nations [36]. That is, visitors are more willing to accept a price rise if they agree with the long-term goal of the payments and enjoy a meaningful experience [37]. Furthermore, the findings show that using CBT services is not always associated with backpacking or low-cost tours, indicating that travellers who value comfort are also interested in and choose environmentally sound CBT facilities, indicating that authenticity and sustainability are no longer "cheap" options. This shows that tour operators may alter their offerings to cater to visitors' sustainability preferences, and destination management organizations can adopt promotional campaigns to encourage sustainable tourist behaviour.

## 5.1. Limitations and future research

### CBT and community

There are a few more factors to look at when it comes to community tourism. This thesis, for example, clearly addresses the main benefits and drawbacks of community-based tourism. Future study might expand on this conclusion by looking at the good and negative aspects of additional community tourist areas. Mitchell and Eagles [38] urge that researchers look at how local tourist engagement affects people's livelihoods and the equitable distribution of socioeconomic gains. To examine similarities and differences, comparative multi case study analysis could be considered in the future.

In the study 1, the surveys distributed to local community were translated to local common language in Central Asia, into Russian by researchers. The translation into English was carried out by different tourism students who assisted in the data collection due to time limitations and urgency of efficiency. Although all translations were reviewed by researchers, individual translation capabilities may have had a minor impact on the content analysis.

### Tourists and CBT

The study's primary weakness is the small number of participants, which is attributable to the tiny size of CBT in the region and the difficulty in addressing big groups of people. The findings of the study might be beneficial in guiding future research over a longer period of time, allowing for greater sample numbers. A greater sample size might also allow for a more detailed investigation of each country in the area. On the other hand, from a methodological standpoint, it would be necessary to assess the feedback loops between CBT perceptions of tourists and stakeholders by employing methods

that allow for the evaluation of how potential tourists perceive the value and social propositions that are designed as sustainable solutions at the destinations.

### Residents, Youth and Migration

Even though the theoretical model and methodologies employed are based on literature, there are several limitations worth addressing. After gathering further data on a new sample, the study may be replicated, and more testing can be done. Such an approach might enhance the findings and broaden the view of youth migration and its relationship to sustainability.

Second, a longitudinal investigation of that subject is suggested. Trends in migratory intentions, as well as changes in perceptions of sustainability and its application to tourism, may be changing. In addition, individuals' life experiences, educational background enrichment, and changes in their social and civic standing are all variables that might influence their decision to leave the nation.

Third, data collection was mostly in the capital of Uzbekistan. However, the youth migration intentions might differ in rural areas due to the variety of conditions and environmental factors. The study in the remote areas, the measurement of such an influence and the understanding of its nature can be recommended for future studies.

The inclusion of high-school students and teenagers, who are seen as an important part of the immigration phenomenon, as well as the measurement of their satisfaction and country image, as well as the connection between their views and those of their parents, will provide a more comprehensive picture of the subject under consideration.

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## Appendix

1. Study 2 (Chapter 3) Tourists' Survey
2. Study 3 (Chapter 4) Residents 'Survey
3. Interview questions for Youth in Study 3 (Chapter 4)

# Destination Sustainability Evaluation Survey

Hi! My name is Gulnoza Usmonova and I am a PhD candidate in Tourism, Economics and Management at the University of Las Palmas, Spain.

My research aims to equip Destination Management Organisations, policy makers and business managers in the tourism field with knowledge and the skills to run their businesses sustainably and generate long term benefits for the wider community in Central Asia.

I will be most grateful if you would take the time to participate in this survey.

Completing this questionnaire should take no more than 5-10 minutes, and will help us to have more insight on identifying the needs and expectations of visitors.

For further information on the project or queries about the survey please contact me at: [gulnoza.usmonova@gmail.com](mailto:gulnoza.usmonova@gmail.com)

Thank you very much, Rakhmat!

\* Required

1. Where are you from? \*

2. Your age? \*

### 3. Gender \*

Male

Female

Other

### 4. Please tell us about your most recent holiday in Central Asia, where did you go? \*

Kazakhstan

Uzbekistan

Tajikistan

Turkmenistan

Kyrgyzstan

### 5. When was your visit? \*

Please input date (M/d/yyyy)



### 6. Was that your first visit to that destination? \*

Yes

No

7. If no, how many times have you visited that destination?

8. Who did you travel with? \*

- Alone
- With family
- Friends
- Organised group colleagues
- Business/work

9. How long did you spend in each country?

10. Uzbekistan \*

- 0 nights
- 1 night
- 2-4 nights
- 5-7nights
- 8 -10 nights



11. Kazakhstan \*

- 1 night
- 2-4 nights
- 5-7 nights
- 8-10 nights
- 0 nights

12. Kyrgyzstan \*

- 1 night
- 2-4 nights
- 5-7 nights
- 8-10 nights
- 0 nights

## 13. Tajikistan \*

- 1 night
- 2-4 nights
- 5-7 nights
- 8-10 nights
- 0 nights

## 14. Turkmenistan \*

- 1 night
- 2-4 nights
- 5-7 nights
- 8-10 nights
- 0 nights

## 15. Which type of accommodation did you stay in?

## 16. Uzbekistan

- Guesthouse/B&B
- Camping/Yurt
- Hostel
- Family homestay
- Hotel 2-3\*
- Hotel 4-5\*
- At family and friends' accommodation

## 17. Kazakstan

- Guesthouse/B&B
- Camping/Yurt
- Hostel
- Family homestay
- Hotel 2-3\*
- Hotel 4-5\*
- At family and friends' accommodation

## 18. Tajikistan

- Guesthouse/B&B
- Camping/Yurt
- Hostel
- Family homestay
- Hotel 2-3\*
- Hotel 4-5\*
- At family and friends' accommodation

## 19. Kyrgyzstan

- Guesthouse/B&B
- Camping/Yurt
- Hostel
- Family homestay
- Hotel 2-3\*
- Hotel 4-5\*
- At family and friends' accommodation

## 20. Turkmenistan

- Guesthouse/B&B
- Camping/Yurt
- Hostel
- Family homestay
- Hotel 2-3\*
- Hotel 4-5\*
- At family and friends' accommodation

21. Do you rate, comment or provide feedback online (e.g. on TripAdvisor) about the place you have stayed? \*

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

22. Regarding your most recent holiday in Central Asia, how did you find out about the destination you visited? \*

You may tick more than one

- Knowledge from previous visit
- Word of Mouth
- Search engine (e.g. Google)
- Website organised by destination tourist board (e.g. Visit Kyrgyzstan, Visit Uzbekistan)
- Website organised by travel company (e.g. G Adventures, Intrepid)
- Guide books (e.g. Lonely Planet, Time Out etc.)
- Newspaper Travel supplement or TV/Radio travel programs
- Brochures or Posters
- Setting for Film, TV Program, Podcast or a Book

23. How important are the following factors in choosing your travel destination?

Please rank the following list in order of priority you give them

24. Comfort and accessibility \*

- Most important      1      2      3      4      5      Least important
- ○      ○      ○      ○

## 25. Value for Money \*

Most important    1    2    3    4    5    Least important  
               

## 26. Entertainment and Nightlife \*

Most important    1    2    3    4    5    Least important  
               

## 27. Consideration of Sustainable principals \*

Most important    1    2    3    4    5    Least important  
               

## 28. Attractive natural or cultural location \*

Most important    1    2    3    4    5    Least important  
               

## 29. Do you believe you understand the concept of sustainable tourism and responsible travelling? \*

- Very familiar
- Somewhat familiar
- Unfamiliar



30. Do you believe protection of local heritage and tourism can be compatible? \*

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

31. How important are sustainable criteria in your choice of a holiday destination? \*

1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=undecided, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

I care about the environment and expect the services provided on my holiday to be run in an environmentally responsible way

I prioritize comfort and value for money over environmentally friendly "green" practices

I would be willing to pay

more for tourism products and services that have an explicit component that is environmentally friendly (eg. Reduction of waste, water and energy use)

I would choose a product/service ahead of others if it had a green award or certification (eg. Green globe certification)

I would like to have information about sustainable management policies of hotels and guesthouses when booking a trip

32. Considering the following statements about sustainability of culture and community; please indicate your agreement/disagreement with each statement by giving a score from 1-5 \*

1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=undecided, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree

1 2 3 4 5

I choose to spend money where it stays in the local community and contributes towards a thriving locality

When I travel I want to understand the destination and "live like a local" through informed decisions

I would like to be offered locally sourced food and drink where possible

Sustaining the local culture and community is as important as sustaining the environment to me

33. What would be your indicator of tourism sustainability conditions in Central Asia?

1=non sustainable, overcrowded 2=poor sustainability planning, 3=emerging sustainability practices 4=good introduction of sustainability policies 5=very sustainable tourism destination (environment, culture friendly)

	1	2	3	4	5
Kazakhstan	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Kyrgyzstan	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tajikistan	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Uzbekistan	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Turkmenistan	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

34. What would you prioritize if offered the following on a holiday/ a trip? \*

Please rate with 1=lowest priority to 5=highest priority

	1	2	3	4	5
Visiting major landmarks and sites	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Joining local activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Attend festival and events	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Shopping and markets	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Guided tours/walks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Self guided tours/walks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hiking/active activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Relaxation/re treat activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Getting out in nature	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

35. Do you have a disability or condition that makes it more difficult to go on a holiday? \*

Yes

No

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# Evaluation of residents' perception of sustainable tourism development in Uzbekistan

Assalomu Alaykum! Hi, My name is Gulnoza Usmonova and I am a PhD candidate in Tourism, Economics and Management at the University of Las Palmas, Spain.

My research aims to equip policy makers and business managers in the tourism field with knowledge and the skills to run their businesses sustainably and generate long term benefits for the wider community in Uzbekistan.

I will be most grateful if you would take the time to participate in this survey.

Completing this questionnaire should take no more than 10-15 minutes, it is completely anonymous and will help us to have more insight on identifying the needs, perceptions on tourism development in our beautiful country.

For further information on the project or queries about the survey please contact me at: [gulnoza.usmonova@gmail.com](mailto:gulnoza.usmonova@gmail.com)

Thank you very much, Katta Rakhmat!

 required

## 1. Gender \*

- female
- male
- Prefer not to say

## 2. Age \*

- less than 20 years
- 20-25 years
- 26-35 years
- 35-45 year
- 45-55 years

## 3. Marital Status \*

- single
- married
- Divorced
- Widowed
- Separated



#### 4. Indicate your place of birth \*

- Tashkent city
- Tashkent region
- Fergana region
- Namangan region
- Andijan region
- Bukhara region
- Sirdarya region
- Jizzakh region
- Navoiy region
- Samarkand region
- Kashkadarya region
- Surkhandarya region
- Khorezm region
- Karakalpakistan Autonomous Republic
- Outside of the territory of Uzbekistan

5. Where do you current live? \*

- Tashkent city
- Tashkent region
- Fergana region
- Namangan region
- Andijan region
- Bukhara region
- Sirdarya region
- Jizzakh region
- Navoiy region
- Samarkand region
- Kashkadarya region
- Surkhandarya region
- Khorezm region
- Karakalpakistan Autonomous Republic

6. Do you have children? \*

- Yes
- No

### 7. Level of education \*

- No studies
- Primary
- High School
- Specialized college or lyceum
- University

### 8. If University level

- Bachelor
- Masters
- PhD

### 9. Is/was your job related to tourism? \*

- yes
- no
- planning to relate in future

### 10. If answer is yes, indicate the type of work done or performed?

11. If yes, what was your engagement level?

- Full time
- Part time

12. What is your favorite place to travel in Uzbekistan? \*

13. Describe two good aspects of tourism development in Uzbekistan \*

14. Describe two unsatisfactory aspects of tourism development in Uzbekistan \*

15. Are you familiar with the term "Sustainable Tourism Development"? \*

- Yes
- No
- Somehow

16. What is your opinion about tourism in Uzbekistan? \*

	Strongly disagree	Tend to disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Tend to agree	Strongly agree
Tourism is main economic activity in Uzbekistan	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
More roads and urbanizations are constructed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tourism increases employment opportunity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tourism improves quality of life in Uzbekistan	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There are more theaters and exhibitions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

with tourism

Tourism improves public services (health care, education, sport centers, etc)

Tourism stimulates our festivals and traditions (Navro'z, fairs, bazaars)

There are more parks and gardens due to tourism

Tourism has improved and protected the environment

Tourism brings positive impact on Uzbek culture and introduces new languages

Tourism created entrepreneurial opportunities

Tourism has raised

awareness of Uzbek culture and Uzbek language

Tourism is positively influencing country image

New tourism development programs raised your interest to travel domestically

Due to tourism, urbanization is rapidly developing

Tourism increases the price of housing

Tourism increases the cost of living

Tourism generates employment instability

Tourism increases drug and alcohol consumption

Tourism creates

ground for  
practices  
such as  
prostitution,  
human  
trafficking





17. What is your opinion about tourism in Uzbekistan? \*

	Strongly disagree	Tend to disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Tend to agree	Strongly agree
Tourism causes more crime	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tourism produces more congestion, accidents and parking problems	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tourism generates loss or change of our traditions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tourism increases pollution, noise,garbage etc.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tourism deteriorates the natural environment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tourism creates big crowds in preservation areas and disturbs living environment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

18. Overall, I am satisfied of tourism development in Uzbekistan \*



19. I am proud of living in Uzbekistan \*

yes

no

20. I am planning to migrate to other country for living \*

yes

no

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# Tourism image perception, satisfaction and intentions to migrate among youth

\* Required

## 1. Gender \*

- Woman
- Man
- Non-binary

## 2. Age \*

- younger than 18
- 18-24
- 25-28
- 29-39

### 3. Marital Status \*

- single
- married
- divorced
- widowed
- Separated
- in a relationship

#### 4. Indicate your place of birth \*

- Tashkent city
- Tashkent region
- Fergana region
- Namangan region
- Andijan region
- Bukhara region
- Sirdarya region
- Jizzakh region
- Navoi region
- Samarkand region
- Kashkadarya region
- Surkhandarya region
- Khorezm region
- Karakalpakstan Autonomous Republic
- Outside of the territory of Uzbekistan

### 5. Where do you currently live? \*

- Tashkent city
- Tashkent region
- Fergana region
- Namangan region
- Andijan region
- Bukhara region
- Sirdarya region
- Jizzakh region
- Navoi region
- Samarkand region
- Kashkadarya region
- Surkhandarya region
- Khorezm region
- Karakalpakstan Autonomous Republic
- Outside of the territory of Uzbekistan

6. Do you have children? \*

- Yes
- No
- Planning a family

7. Level of Education \*

- No studies
- Primary
- High School
- Specialized college or lyceum
- University

8. If University level \*

- Bachelor
- Master
- PhD

9. What was your language of instruction in your secondary school? \*

- Uzbek
- Russian
- English
- Kazakh
- Tajik
- Turkmen

10. What was your language of instruction at your university? \*

- English
- Russian
- Uzbek

11. Is your future/or past degree related to Tourism or Hospitality Studies?

\*

- Yes
- No
- Planning to relate in near future



12. Are you employed currently? \*

- Yes
- No
- self employed/freelancer

13. Is your employment related to Tourism and Hospitality \*

- Yes
- No
- Not directly

14. Why have you chosen to study in Tourism and Hospitality field? \*

15. Describe two positive aspects of working in Tourism and Hospitality Industry \*

16. Describe two negative aspects of working in Tourism and Hospitality Industry \*

17. Describe satisfactory aspects of tourism development in Uzbekistan that helps you to thrive in your career \*

18. Describe unsatisfactory aspects of tourism development in Uzbekistan that influences your career plans negatively \*

19. Do you think there is enough opportunities available to grow as tourism professional in Uzbekistan today? \*

- Yes
- No
- there is, but limited
- I am not aware of them

20. What are the challenges(barriers) young people studying Tourism and Hospitality are facing today in terms of employment? \*

21. How satisfied are you with your major choice now? \*



22. Rate Tourism Development Image of Uzbekistan in the World \*



23. If you were a tourist outside of Uzbekistan, would you plan your holidays in Uzbekistan? \*

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

24. Do you see your future in Uzbekistan? \*

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

25. I am happy living in Uzbekistan \*

- yes
- no

26. I am happy studying Tourism and Hospitality in Uzbekistan \*

- yes
- No

27. To be more successful I need to study Tourism and Hospitality abroad \*

- yes
- No
- maybe

28. I feel that I am needed and appreciated as professional in Uzbekistan \*



29. Have you thought of migrating to other country for living or working?  
What are the reasons if yes? \*

30. I already migrated from Uzbekistan \*

yes

no

31. If you thought of migration, do you think you will come back? \*

Yes

No

Maybe

Only for a family visit

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owner.

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