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An Investigation of the Impact of Fashion Tourism on Destination Image and Tourist Intentions: The Case of Samarkand, Uzbekistan

Musinova Rayxona Sanjarovna

Silk Road International University of Tourism and Cultural Heritage Tourism and Hospitality

Abstract: This article explores the development of fashion tourism in Uzbekistan, focusing on how cultural heritage and modern exhibition complexes, such as Silk Road Samarkand, influence destination image and how young travelers perceive fashion and cultural events. Fashion tourism combines creative industries with cultural heritage and can attract visitors, support local businesses, and create employment opportunities. The study examines how modern exhibition facilities, cultural heritage, and fashion events may motivate young travelers in Samarkand to participate in fashion tourism. A quantitative questionnaire survey is planned with 150 undergraduate students studying Tourism and Hospitality at Silk Road University. The draft survey findings suggest that cultural exploration, fashion exhibitions, modern facilities, traditional textile heritage, and international fashion events may contribute to the attractiveness of Samarkand as a fashion tourism destination. The reported percentages require verification against the completed questionnaire dataset.

Keywords: fashion tourism, Samarkand, Silk Road Samarkand, destination image, cultural heritage, young travelers, Uzbekistan tourism

Introduction This article explores the development of fashion tourism in Uzbekistan, focusing on how cultural heritage and modern exhibition complexes, such as Silk Road Samarkand, influence destination image and how young travelers perceive fashion and cultural events. Fashion tourism combines creative industries with cultural heritage and can attract visitors, support local businesses, and create employment opportunities (Torabi Farsani & Moazzen Jamshidi, 2021). Uzbekistan has introduced tourism reforms in recent years (Sobirov & Alimova, 2019), while the development of the Silk Road Samarkand complex creates opportunities to host international exhibitions, fashion shows, and cultural events. Previous research suggests that fashion tourism depends on suitable infrastructure, cultural authenticity, and creative ecosystems (Ghaderi et al., 2025; Lazzeretti et al., 2016). Yu et al. (2026) highlight the importance of value co-creation in fashion production and consumption at heritage destinations. Other studies indicate that event and cultural tourism can create distinctive value for destinations (Dwyer & Wickens, 2011; Getz, 2007). Xaytboyev (2025) also discusses how modern complexes such as Silk Road Samarkand shape Uzbekistan's national brand. Despite growing research on fashion tourism in Europe

and Asia, empirical research on young travelers' preferences in Central Asia and on how the Silk Road Samarkand complex may influence their intention to attend fashion and cultural events remains limited. Therefore, this study examines how modern exhibition facilities, cultural heritage, and fashion events may motivate young travelers in Samarkand to participate in fashion tourism. The findings are intended to provide practical recommendations for local tourism stakeholders.

Literature Review

The study of fashion tourism has evolved significantly, with researchers defining it as a specialized form of cultural tourism that combines creative industries with travel. According to Torabi Farsani and Moazzen Jamshidi (2021), traditional fashion tourism has positive economic and cultural impacts on destinations. Within this broader category, cultural events and exhibitions are vital drivers for economic growth (Getz, 2007; Trićić & Arsenov-Bojović, 2018). However, success depends on destination readiness and infrastructure. Lazzeretti et al. (2016) analyzed Florence as a manufacturing fashion city and concluded that cities must offer modern facilities and unique cultural experiences to stand out.

In the developing world, Rogerson (2005) highlighted that conference and exhibition tourism can drive economic development. Similarly, Uzbekistan has undergone accelerated tourism development (Sobirov & Alimova, 2019). Xaytboyev (2025) notes that the Silk Road Samarkand complex plays a crucial role in shaping Uzbekistan's national brand image, and Pardaeva (2026) emphasizes the role of local entrepreneurship in this sector. Furthermore, Yu et al. (2026) argue that value co-creation at heritage destinations enhances tourist experiences. To succeed, destinations must integrate cultural ecosystems. Dwyer and Wickens (2011) argue that event and cultural tourism are symbiotically linked. Gupta and De Angelis Barros (2025) note that the intersection of culture and tourism is essential for creating authentic fashion experiences. Finally, understanding the audience is critical. Madeira et al. (2023) found that younger attendees have specific preferences, and Warliati and Setiawan (2026) found that career perceptions directly influence students' interest in the events industry.

Methodology

Research Design: This study employs a quantitative research design using a questionnaire survey.

Sample and Source: Data will be collected from a defined group of young travelers, specifically 150 undergraduate students studying Tourism and Hospitality at Silk Road University in Samarkand. A snowball sampling technique will be used, where participants are asked to share the survey with their peers.

Data Analysis: The collected data will be analyzed using statistical techniques to identify correlations between destination attributes (such as the Silk Road Samarkand complex and cultural heritage) and students' intention to attend fashion tourism events.

Results

The survey results are summarized in Table 1. The figures below reflect the percentages stated in the current draft and should be checked against the actual questionnaire data before submission. Respondent counts were not provided and should be added after the completed questionnaires are checked.

Factor	Number of respondents	Percentage
Cultural exploration as a motivation	Not reported	78%
Interest in attending fashion exhibitions	Not reported	65%
Modern exhibition facilities rated very important	Not reported	85%
Traditional textile heritage makes the destination more attractive	Not reported	75%
International fashion events improve Uzbekistan's national brand image	Not reported	80%

Table 1. Summary of reported survey findings

The draft figures indicate that cultural exploration may be an important motivation for young travelers. Interest in fashion exhibitions and the perceived importance of modern facilities also suggest that event infrastructure could contribute to the attractiveness of Samarkand as a fashion tourism destination. In addition, traditional textile heritage and international fashion events may support the destination's cultural identity and national image. These interpretations remain provisional until the percentages and respondent counts are confirmed using the survey dataset.

5.Conclusion

The study suggests that to develop fashion tourism in Samarkand successfully, local stakeholders must modernize exhibition venues (such as the Silk Road Samarkand complex) while promoting Uzbekistan's unique cultural and textile heritage. The results may help local tourism boards, university administrators, and hotel managers design targeted marketing strategies that appeal to young travelers, thereby securing a sustainable future for Uzbekistan's cultural tourism sector.

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