

## **Improving of the attractiveness of museums of Uzbekistan among local tourists**

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**Annotation.** The article analyzes the rate of the attractiveness of museums of Uzbekistan among local tourists, using some statistical data, and provides possible ways to improve the number of visitors.

**Keywords:** Local tourists, museums, tourist firms, attractiveness, marketing strategy

**Аннотация.** В статье анализируется показатель привлекательности музеев Узбекистана среди местных туристов, используя некоторые статистические данные, и приводятся возможные пути улучшения количества посетителей.

**Ключевые слова.** Местные туристы, музеи, турфирмы, привлекательность, маркетинговая стратегия.

**Annotatsiya:** Ushbu maqolada ayrim statistik ma'lumotlardan foydalangan holda mahalliy sayyohlar orasida O'zbekiston muzeylarining jozibadorlik darajasi tahlil qilinadi va tashrif buyuruvchilar sonini oshirish imkonini beradigan yo'llari keltirib o'tiladi.

**Kalit so'zlar.** Mahalliy sayohatchilar, muzeylar, turistik firmalar, jozibadorlik, marketing strategiyasi

For humanity, museums play an essential role in preserving the pieces of history and transferring them to today and the next generations. They gather several artifacts (e.g. art, science, etc.) that contain massive information about the history of a particular country or location.

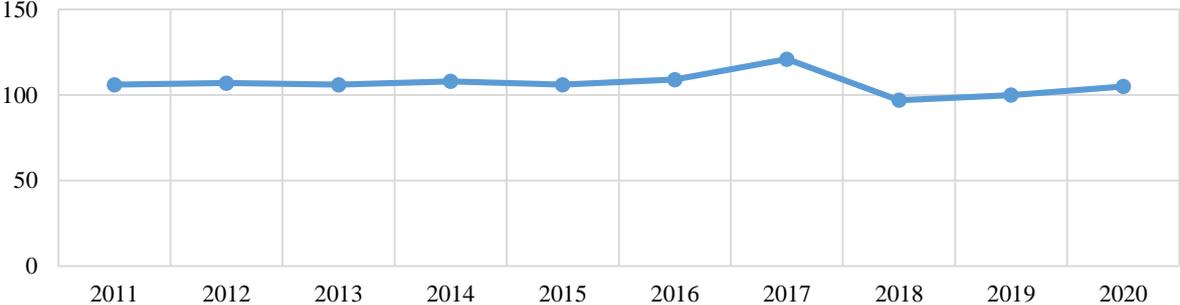
Museums are not considered as the only place that holds ancient artifacts, but they are one of the key places that gathered the art and science of humanity in one place that is valuable for individuals. Gunay defined museums as “organizations with the mission of investigating the production of humanity along the ages from the viewpoint of science and art to enlighten them about the history in addition to being spaces that present and conserve the treasures of science and art and the under and above ground treasures” (Gunay, 2012).

Uzbekistan is considered as the pearl of the East, which has a great history that everyone should know. For the preservation, the historical artifacts and pieces

of art, the government of Uzbekistan opened up plentiful museums assuming the necessity of them in keeping those pieces of artifacts and sharing knowledge about them to everyone. From the data about the museums of Uzbekistan, it is evident that in 2019, there were 100 museums that attracted more than 7 million visitors, but in case these museums are not attracting more visitors even the capacity of serving the tourists is so high.

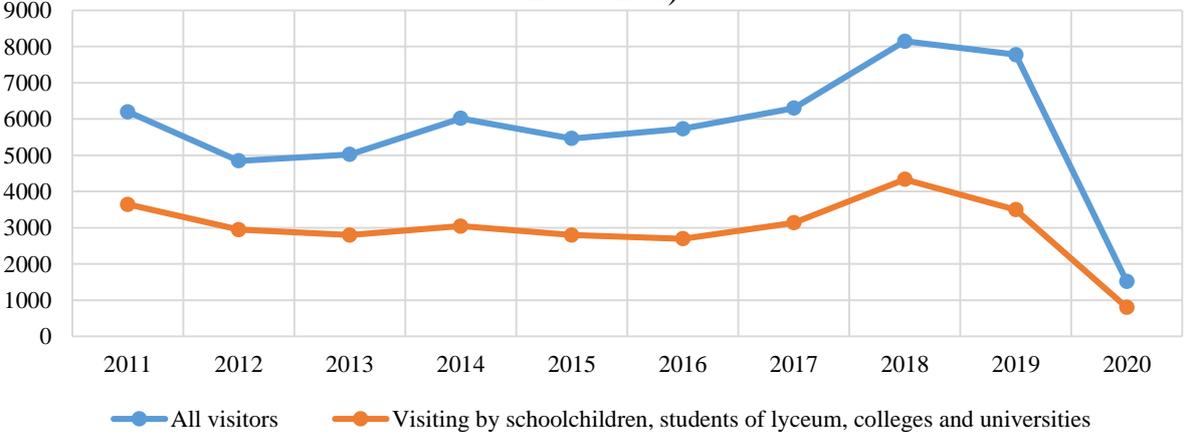
In the first graph, it can be seen that the number of museums in Uzbekistan stood at the almost same level till 2017, and there were an increase and fall in the rate of the museums.

1-graph. Number of museums (in units)



Glancing at the number of visitors to the museums in the second chart, it is clear that the number of visitors is not dependent on the number of museums available in the country. Even the some of the museums are closed in 2018, the flow of visitors did not decrease, which means that opening or closing a museum does not widely affect the number of tourists in the case of Uzbekistan. After 2019, due to the coronavirus pandemics and the restrictive decisions of the authority, the rate of the visitors experienced decreasing trend that had several negative impacts on the tourism industry. For instance, local tourist firms, restaurants, museums, industries that cooperate with tourism lost their budget, and the workforce that supplied these industries worked for less money or experienced unemployment.

2-graph. Number of visitors to the local museums (in thousands)



In addition to this, the rate of visits to the museums by schoolchildren, students of academic lyceums, colleges and universities were almost half of the overall number of visitors, which means that most visitors are under 30 years old. From this argument, it can be concluded that the museums are attracting more youth than the middle-aged or elder people.

Assuming the data above, it is essential to provide the possible ways to improve the attractiveness of museums among local tourists to stimulate the tourism industry. In this way, there are several methods and strategies to raise the number of visits to the museums by the residents.

First of all, both historical and art museums of Uzbekistan are not using their resources efficiently for designing marketing strategies and launching them to attract more visitors. With the usage of a marketing strategy, local museums could create the image, and additionally, marketing generates the awareness of the brand of the museum among locals.

Moreover, almost half of the population of Uzbekistan lives in rural areas which creates a problem in transportation for individuals that have the desire to visit museums. To solve this issue, with the support of the government, museums may organize touristic directions with special vehicles for those people that live in the countryside. Even this solution could cost much for the organizers, it affects the attractiveness of the particular museum positively, due to the providing opportunity to the locals that inhabit the villages.

It is mentioned above that more than 50% of visitors to the museums are young people. The attractiveness of museums among middle-aged and elder residents appears low, which means that this audience should be targeted for attracting more.

Furthermore, museums of Uzbekistan have to use more specific and analytical ways to improve their attractiveness. To promote the historical and cultural heritage of the country, the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan signed a resolution “On increasing the efficiency of marketing activities of museums and theatres of the Republic of Uzbekistan” on the 23rd of May, 2020. The government of Uzbekistan is providing subsidies and opportunities in the tourism field that could stimulate the industry of tourism in both local and international areas.

It is also clear that resolutions alone will not solve the question of strategy. Museum directors in Uzbekistan require support from the academic sector and especially from tertiary institutions. The tourism programs in the country must work together to form working groups to formulate specific strategies based on the statistical data that has been presented here. Because historically museums are a cost center in the national budget, requiring greater investment and producing less revenue than other sources of income, new marketing strategies based on segmentation and crowd-draw must be implemented.

International appeal must be bolstered by investment in branding and advertising. The geographical limits of advertising have been Russia and the states

of the former Soviet sphere. However, promotion in English, targeting the European and North America populations is more problematic, as the number of niche tourists coming to Uzbekistan for “smart” tourism is relatively low and the number from the West who rely on commercial television for programming—more effective in the satellite market in Central Asia and Russia—is proportionally small.

Furthermore, recent political events in the region have a depressing effect on all forms of tourism, incusing museum-based visitors, and the perception that the region is “dangerous” is likely to present new challenges for promotion and marketing.

Ministries of tourism and culture will need to take these challenges into account more proactively in designing a plan for the future of museum based travel to Uzbekistan. At least part of the solution will necessarily include expansion of the base westward, greater emphasis on segmentation of the target audience for visitation, new stratifies based on the demographics of a changing museum-going domestic population, and more sophisticated graphic and linguistic outreach to the more distant visiting public in East Asia and the Euro-American West.

For the formation of the Third Renaissance, it is essential to provide better opportunities for the local visitors to the museums, because without being aware of the history of the country, it is impossible to build a future.

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