

RELIGIOUS TOURISM: ITS CULTURAL, ECONOMIC, AND SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE IN THE MODERN WORLD

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Annotatsiya: So‘nggi yillarda diniy turizmga bo‘lgan qiziqish tobora ortib bormoqda. Ibodat maskanlari muhim turistik diqqatga sazovor joylar va hududiy rivojlanish markazlariga aylanmoqda. Diniy turizm turistik manzilga iqtisodiy, ijtimoiy-madaniy va ekologik jihatlardan ko‘p qirrali ta’sir ko‘rsatadi. Mazkur maqolada madaniy merosni saqlab qolish bilan birga, barqaror rivojlanishni qo‘llab-quvvatlashda dindan samarali foydalanish imkoniyatlari yoritilgan.Tadqiqot davomida sifat tadqiqot usullaridan foydalanilgan. Polshaning Podlaskie voyevodaligi misolida alohida hududiy tadqiqot amalga oshirilgan. Tegishli ma’lumotlarni olish maqsadida individual chuqurlashtirilgan intervyu (IDI) usuli qo‘llanilgan. Diniy turizm bilan bog‘liq iqtisodiy faoliyatda ishtirok etuvchi shaxslarni tanlashda maqsadli tanlash usulidan foydalanilgan. Mazkur tadqiqotning o‘ziga xos jihati shundaki, unda turli diniy konfessiyalar bilan bog‘liq turistik xizmatlar sohasida faoliyat yurituvchi vakillar tanlab olingan.Tadqiqot natijalari diniy turizm hududning barqaror rivojlanishini qo‘llab-quvvatlashga xizmat qilishi mumkinligini ko‘rsatdi. Eng sezilarli ta’sir iqtisodiy sohada kuzatilgan bo‘lsa, ijtimoiy va ekologik jihatlardagi ta’sirlar murakkab xususiyatga ega ekanligi aniqlandi. Ushbu jarayonlarga rejalashtirish, ta’lim va mahalliy hamjamiyatning ishtiroki ta’sir ko‘rsatadi. Ijtimoiy jihatdan diniy turizm turizm industriyasining turli yo‘nalishlari o‘rtasida hamkorlikni rivojlantirishga, shuningdek, noyob diniy, madaniy va tabiiy meros to‘g‘risida xabardorlikni oshirishga yordam beradi.Tadqiqot doirasida turizm tashkilotchilari, gidlar, joylashtirish va umumiy ovqatlanish xizmatlari vakillari bilan beshta chuqurlashtirilgan intervyu, shuningdek, bir nafar diniy ruhoniy bilan suhbat o‘tkazilgan. Tadqiqotda katolik, pravoslav va musulmon diniy konfessiyalari vakillarining turli qarashlari o‘rganilgan.Natijalar diniy turizm moliyaviy mablag‘larni jalb qilish, madaniy qadriyatlar to‘g‘risida xabardorlikni oshirish hamda madaniyatlararo almashinuvni rivojlantirish orqali madaniy merosni saqlashga yordam berishini ko‘rsatdi. Biroq, ijtimoiy va ekologik manfaatlarga erishish infratuzilma holati, tashrif buyuruvchilar oqimini boshqarish hamda ta’lim darajasiga bog‘liq. Maqolada mahalliy davlat hokimiyati organlari va turizm tashkilotlari tomonidan diniy turizmni kompleks rivojlantirishga qaratilgan tavsiyalar ishlab chiqilgan.
Kalit so‘zlar: diniy turizm, barqaror rivojlanish, ibodat maskanlari, multikulturalizm, Podlaskie voyevodaligi.

Abstract: Religious tourism has been gaining increasing interest in recent years. Places of worship have become large tourist attractions and areas of development. Religious tourism can have many impacts on a destination including economic, socio-cultural and environmental aspects. This article discusses how religion can be used to support sustainable development while maintaining cultural heritage. Throughout my research I used qualitative research methods. An individual case study was undertaken looking at Podlaskie Province. Individual In-Depth Interviews (IDI) were undertaken to provide relevant information. Intentional sampling was used to select individuals involved in the economy of religious tourism. This study is different to others as individuals from a variety of services relating to different religions were chosen. It was found that religious tourism can help support sustainable development in the area. Most impacts were seen within the economic aspect however complex impacts were identified within the social and environmental aspects. These were influenced by planning, education and the local community. Socially there can be collaboration across different elements of the tourism industry. Awareness can be raised around the unique religious, cultural and natural heritage. 5 in-depth interviews were conducted with tourism organisers, tourist guides, accommodation and catering. 1 clergy member was also interviewed. A variety of opinions were gained looking at different religions including Catholic, Orthodox and Muslim. Results show that religious tourism helps maintain cultural heritage by providing funding, increasing awareness of culture and intercultural exchange. However, social and environmental benefits depend on infrastructure, visitor management and education. Recommendations have been suggested in this article to help the local government and tourism organisation provide an integrated offering of religious tourism.
Keywords: Religious tourism, Sustainable Development, Places of Worship, Multiculturalism, Podlaskie Province.

Абстрактный: В последние годы религиозный туризм приобретает всё большую популярность. Места религиозного поклонения становятся важными туристическими достопримечательностями и центрами регионального развития. Религиозный туризм оказывает многостороннее влияние на туристические дестинации, включая экономические, социокультурные и экологические аспекты. В данной статье рассматривается возможность использования религии в качестве инструмента поддержки устойчивого развития при сохранении культурного наследия.В ходе исследования применялись качественные методы научного анализа. Было проведено тематическое исследование Подляского воеводства. Для получения необходимой информации использовались индивидуальные глубинные интервью (IDI). При отборе респондентов применялся целенаправленный метод выборки, ориентированный на лиц, непосредственно участвующих в экономической деятельности, связанной с религиозным туризмом. Особенностью данного исследования является привлечение представителей различных сфер туристических услуг, связанных с разными религиозными конфессиями.Результаты исследования показали, что религиозный туризм способен содействовать устойчивому развитию региона. Наиболее заметное влияние наблюдается в экономической сфере, тогда как социальные и экологические последствия имеют более сложный характер и зависят от планирования, образования и участия местного сообщества. В социальной сфере религиозный туризм способствует сотрудничеству между различными участниками туристической индустрии, а также повышению осведомлённости об уникальном религиозном, культурном и природном наследии.В рамках исследования было проведено пять глубинных интервью с организаторами туризма, туристическими гидами, представителями гостиничного и ресторанного бизнеса, а также одно интервью с представителем духовенства. Были изучены различные точки зрения представителей католической, православной и мусульманской конфессий.Результаты свидетельствуют о том, что религиозный туризм способствует сохранению культурного наследия посредством привлечения финансовых ресурсов, повышения осведомлённости о культурных ценностях и развития межкультурного обмена. Вместе с тем социальные и экологические преимущества зависят от состояния

инфраструктуры, управления туристическими потоками и уровня образования. В статье предложены рекомендации, направленные на оказание содействия органам местного самоуправления и туристическим организациям в формировании комплексного предложения в сфере религиозного туризма.
Ключевые слова: религиозный туризм, устойчивое развитие, места религиозного поклонения, мультикультурализм, Подляское воеводство.

Introduction (Kirish/Введение).

Religious tourism can be an important factor in regional development. Significance can be created with the history, geographical location, accessibility, facilities and development of surrounding areas. With a large impact on the economy, social factors and environment, planning and managing religious tourism is becoming an increasingly important factor. Pilgrimage is a key aspect of religious tourism. Overall religious tourism has a long history and is an important aspect to many religions and can play a key role in individual's personal spirituality (Niezgoda & Markiewicz, 2025). Religious tourism is well known to be one of the most significant phenomena in the 21 st Century. Overall religion tourism is becoming increasingly important. (Collins-Kreiner & Wall, 2015; Rashid, 2018). Many individuals will visit places of faith and piety but others will visit for religious reasons and knowledge. Some individuals will visit purely for the culture and knowledge. (Niezgoda & Markiewicz, 2025). Individuals may visit places of religious importance for spiritual purposes but may also visit for the aesthetic value of the buildings, artwork and historical significance. Religious tourism is a type of cultural tourism therefore it is an ethical duty to protect cultural heritage for future generations. This can help protect historical and cultural sites giving the destination a unique identity. To attain the benefits planning and management must take place. Sustainable tourism development will help increase competitiveness, tourist attractions, increase local income and protect cultural heritage and natural resources. (Niezgoda, 2024). Pilgrimage sites often give rise to the economic impacts of tourism. As more tourists begin to visit the number of entrepreneurs will increase within local businesses such as retail, accommodation and catering. An integrated product will be created to meet the needs of pilgrims and tourists. This can help protect the heritage whilst providing a positive relationship with the local community. This can increase tolerance, acceptance and understanding. Often there will be more cultural tourism around religious sites. This can include new hotels, restaurants, markets, galleries, exhibitions and festivals. Improved transport links and social facilities can help regional development. (Jaremen, 2017). If managed correctly it can help achieve sustainable development. Different regions should be looked at to understand how sustainable development can be achieved. Podlaskie Province is an interesting region to look at as there is a wide variety of people, religions and complex social, economic and environmental factors. There is a wide variety of cultural groups including Polish, Belarusian, Ukrainian, Lithuanian, Russian, Tatar and Roma. There are also many religions including Catholicism, Orthodox Christianity, Muslim, Judaism and Protestantism. This can create many tangible cultural heritage sites including sanctuaries, Orthodox Churches, Mosques and Synagogues. There is also many intangible cultural heritage sites including religious traditions, pilgrimage, rituals and festivals. There is plenty of potential for ecumenical and interfaith tourism with a wide variety of religions. Religious sites often link to areas of Outstanding Natural Value therefore can combine cultural tourism with a passion for nature. There are some geopolitical issues due to it being near the Belarusian border. There are some security issues within the region due to the war in Ukraine. This can threaten the cultural traditions and heritage. Religious tourism is one of the oldest forms of tourism and attracts devout pilgrims and individuals who enjoy culture, history and art. This creates a useful resource to understand how tourism can work alongside protecting heritage. This article will understand how stakeholders view the contribution of religious tourism to economic, social and environmental aspects of sustainable development. How it contributes to protecting cultural heritage in the region. And what actions need to be taken to increase the positive impact. This article provides a stakeholders view from a range of service providers in different religious communities. This is rarely done in the literature. The main aim of this article is to understand how religious tourism can contribute to achieving sustainable development within Podlaskie Province by exploring how cultural heritage can be protected. Firstly there will be a literature review.

Literature review (Mavzuga oid adabiyotlar tahlili/Обзор литературы).

Religious tourism has become one of the increasingly important areas of academic research in the modern tourism industry. In recent years, scholars have paid growing attention to the role of religious tourism in preserving cultural heritage, promoting regional economic development, strengthening intercultural dialogue, and satisfying people's spiritual needs. Contemporary studies emphasize that religious tourism extends beyond traditional pilgrimage activities and represents a multidimensional phenomenon involving cultural, economic, social, and spiritual dimensions.

Kim, Kim, and King (2020) examined the evolution and development of religious tourism studies, identifying major research directions and future prospects in this field. The authors highlighted that religious tourism should not be considered solely as a form of pilgrimage but also as an important component of the broader tourism industry. Their research emphasized the relationship between religious travel, cultural experiences, and tourism development, providing a theoretical foundation for further academic investigations [1].

Choe (2024) explored religious tourism as an evolving phenomenon in contemporary society. The study highlights that interest in religious destinations is no longer limited to individuals motivated by religious beliefs. Historical monuments, sacred places, and religious heritage sites increasingly attract visitors interested in cultural, educational, and historical experiences. Religious tourism can therefore contribute to regional development, economic diversification, and the promotion of spiritual and cultural values [2].

Tejedor Calvo, Cervi, and Romero-Rodríguez (2024) conducted a systematic bibliographic review of 500 scientific documents published between 2019 and 2023 concerning religious tourism. Their research identified major academic trends, including the economic and cultural dimensions of religious tourism, pilgrimage development, the influence of information and communication technologies, and the integration of different religious traditions into tourism activities. The findings demonstrate the growing academic relevance of religious tourism as an interdisciplinary research field [3].

Shinde (2024) examined the development and evolution of religious tourism, emphasizing its changing role in the contemporary tourism system. The author discussed the historical foundations of religious travel, the transformation of pilgrimage destinations into tourist attractions, visitor motivations, and the influence of technological developments. The study provides valuable insights into the changing nature of religious tourism and its future development opportunities [4].

The relationship between religious tourism and cultural heritage preservation is also addressed in the study entitled Managing Visitor Experience at Religious Heritage Sites (2023). The research examined visitor experiences at religious and cultural heritage destinations associated with Hinduism and Buddhism. Its findings suggest that religious and cultural characteristics significantly influence visitors' overall experiences. This highlights the importance of preserving the historical, cultural, and spiritual identity of religious heritage sites while developing tourism activities [5].

Singh and Bhuyan (2025) conducted a comprehensive review of approximately four decades of academic research on religious tourism. Using bibliometric analysis and systematic examination of scientific publications, the authors identified major research themes, methodological approaches, and emerging directions. Their findings emphasize the importance of examining religious tourism through an integrated framework that considers its economic, social, cultural, and spiritual dimensions [6].

Phanpanya, Chanchaipitiphat, Boonmun, and Kumar (2025) investigated the transformation of religious tourism in the twenty-first century, focusing on authenticity, cultural resilience, and changing visitor expectations. Their research highlighted the growing importance of digital technologies, virtual pilgrimage experiences, and innovative tourism services. The authors also emphasized the need to maintain cultural authenticity while adapting religious tourism destinations to contemporary tourism demands [7].

Khoiriyah, Pujiyanto, Damayanti, and Yuniaristanto (2025) explored the relationship between religious tourism and sustainable development through a systematic literature review. Their study examined the

economic, social, and environmental impacts of religious tourism. The authors emphasized that sustainable religious tourism requires effective cooperation among government institutions, local communities, tourism organizations, and other stakeholders. Such cooperation can contribute to local employment, business development, cultural preservation, and environmental protection [8].

Furthermore, the study entitled The Structure and Content of the Religious Tourism Destination Image Construct (2025) examined the perceptions of visitors to Makkah and Medina. Based on the analysis of 913 online reviews, the research identified cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions of religious tourism destination image. The findings indicate that the development of religious tourism depends not only on the availability of sacred sites but also on visitor experiences, destination reputation, service quality, and emotional satisfaction [9].

Methods (Tadqiqotni amalga oshirishda foydalanilgan usullar/ Методы).

This research has been carried out using a qualitative approach using a case study design to understand the impact of religious tourism on culture heritage and sustainable development within the region. I have used a qualitative approach due to the nature of the research needing to go into depth. Whilst qualitative research cannot be generalized it can provide deeper insight into the processes that take place in society and the economy. Identifying new needs and developing hypotheses for the research. Qualitative research is best used to answer what?, how? and why? (Maison, 2001; Denzin & Lincoln, 2009). My research has taken place within Podlaskie Province, Poland. This region has a rich cultural, religious and historical background with many places of worship to attract individuals and organised pilgrimage groups from across the country. There are many Catholic places of interest such as Białystok, Święta Woda (Wasilków), Sokółka, Hodyszewo, Krypno and Różanystok. There are many Orthodox Christian places of interest such as Supraśl, Białystok, Grabarka (Important centre of Orthodoxy in Poland) and Hajnówka (Hosts an important European festival of Orthodox Church Music). There are many Islamic places of interest with active Mosques and historical Muslim graveyards in Bohoniki and Kruszyniany. There are many Jewish places of interest in Białystok and also significant places in Tykocin with one of the oldest Synagogues in Poland. This region has been chosen as it suffers from development issues due to it being on the periphery of the country. This means I could look at how religious tourism can contribute to boosting the local economy, helping people identify with their community and keep their culture. There are many religious places of interest and beautiful natural surroundings meaning there are lots of opportunities to develop sustainable tourism. Data was collected through Individual In-Depth Interviews (IDI). This was chosen as it allowed me to understand people’s experiences, views and opinions on the phenomenon. They are a useful tool when looking at economic case studies. (Pizło, 2009). In depth interviews are not just question and answer they are structured conversations allowing people to share their opinions. (Pilch & Bauman, 2001). This method is useful when trying to understand the processes around a phenomenon and looking at complex issues. (Kiryluk et al., 2020). Participants were chosen as they were directly involved with providing religious tourism. Tourist Organisers, Tourist Guides, Accommodation Providers, Catering Managers and Religious Site/Sanctuary Managers (Clergy). They were also chosen to represent the variety of religions in the area. Catholic, Orthodox Christians and Muslims. The data was collected using a Semi-Structured Interview. This consisted of open ended questions so participants could share their opinions and experiences. And closed ended questions to collect specific data and assess certain parts of religious tourism. There were three sections to the interview. An introduction explaining the Moderator’s role and what the research was about. Two blocks of questions. And a conclusion to summarise and thank the participants. The main questions focused on how religious tourism relates to sustainable development and how tourism helps keep the culture within the region. Observation was used to get insight into non verbal communication. The interviews were detailed in Microsoft Word and the observation notes added. This meant there were two parts to the data. Participant responses and non verbal behaviour. The participants have been assigned codes (W1-W5, WP1-WP2).

Analysis and rezults (Tahlil va natijalarlar /Анализ и результаты).

This section examines religious tourism through three interconnected dimensions: cultural, economic, and spiritual. The analysis is based on a qualitative, literature-informed approach and a conceptual assessment of how visits to sacred places, pilgrimage routes, religious festivals, and heritage sites may affect destinations and host communities. Rather than presenting invented survey statistics, the section identifies impact mechanisms, potential benefits, risks, and indicators that can be used in future empirical research.

Religious tourism is not a uniform activity. Visitors may travel primarily for worship or pilgrimage, while others may be motivated by history, architecture, education, cultural curiosity, or personal reflection. These different motivations influence visitor behaviour, length of stay, demand for services, and the type of experience expected from a destination.

Cultural Significance

The cultural contribution of religious tourism is most visible in the preservation, interpretation, and transmission of tangible and intangible heritage. Visitor interest can create incentives to maintain historic religious buildings, sacred landscapes, traditional crafts, manuscripts, rituals, music, and local festivals. Tourism income may also help heritage institutions improve conservation, interpretation, and visitor facilities.

Religious destinations can function as spaces of intercultural learning. Visitors encounter different traditions, architectural styles, forms of worship, and community histories. When interpretation is accurate and respectful, these encounters can strengthen cultural awareness and mutual understanding. However, commercialisation, overcrowding, inappropriate visitor behaviour, and simplified representations of religious traditions may weaken the authenticity and dignity of heritage sites. Cultural benefits therefore depend on community participation, heritage-sensitive planning, and clear visitor guidelines.

Economic Significance

Religious tourism can support destination economies by generating demand for accommodation, food services, transportation, guiding, retail, handicrafts, and cultural activities. Pilgrimage events and religious festivals may produce seasonal peaks in visitor spending and create opportunities for small and medium-sized enterprises. Employment effects may extend beyond tourism businesses to suppliers, local producers, maintenance services, and cultural organisations.

The scale and distribution of economic benefits are not automatic. A destination may attract large visitor numbers while a substantial share of spending flows to external operators. Seasonal demand can also create unstable jobs, pressure on infrastructure, and rising prices for residents. Local procurement, support for community-owned businesses, transparent destination management, and investment in public infrastructure can increase the share of benefits retained by the host community.

Spiritual and Social Significance

The spiritual dimension distinguishes religious tourism from many other forms of travel. For pilgrims and worshippers, travel may provide an opportunity for prayer, religious observance, repentance, gratitude, reflection, or a renewed sense of belonging. For visitors without a direct religious motivation, sacred places may still offer opportunities for contemplation, learning, and engagement with questions of meaning and identity.

At the social level, religious tourism can encourage dialogue between faith communities and visitors from different cultural backgrounds. It may contribute to tolerance when destinations communicate the meaning of religious practices and establish respectful codes of conduct. At the same time, religious sensitivity, accessibility, crowd management, and the protection of worshippers' privacy must remain central to destination planning. Tourism activities should not interfere with religious services or reduce sacred spaces to commercial attractions.

Comparative Analysis of the Three Dimensions

Table 1 summarises the main pathways through which religious tourism can create value, together with possible risks and practical indicators. The indicators are proposed for assessment; they are not reported empirical findings.

Table 1.

Comparative assessment of the cultural, economic, and spiritual dimensions of religious tourism.[1]

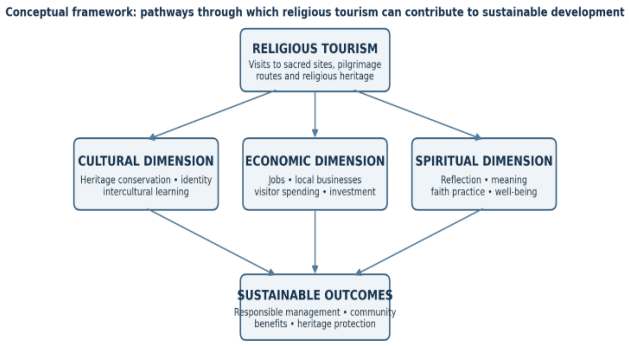
Dimension	Potential contributions	Main risks / challenges	Suggested indicators
Cultural	Conservation of sacred sites; safeguarding traditions; cultural education; intercultural exchange.	Commercialisation; loss of authenticity; damage to fragile heritage; cultural misunderstanding.	Conservation expenditure; condition of heritage assets; community participation; visitor knowledge and satisfaction.
Economic	Employment; income for local businesses; demand for transport and hospitality; investment in infrastructure.	Seasonality; leakage of revenue; congestion; price increases; unequal distribution of benefits.	Local jobs; visitor spending retained locally; SME participation; length of stay; seasonal employment patterns.
Spiritual and social	Pilgrimage and worship; reflection and meaning; community identity; dialogue and tolerance.	Disruption of worship; disrespectful behaviour; overcrowding; exclusion or inadequate accessibility.	Visitor respect for site rules; access for diverse groups; community perceptions; satisfaction of pilgrims and residents.

Conceptual Diagram

Figure 1 presents a conceptual framework showing how religious tourism may influence cultural, economic, and spiritual outcomes. These dimensions interact and can contribute to sustainable development when supported by responsible planning, community involvement, heritage protection, and appropriate visitor management.

Figure 1.

Conceptual framework linking religious tourism with sustainable development.[2]



Key Results of the Analysis

1. Cultural heritage is both an attraction and a resource to be protected. Religious sites draw visitors because of their historical, architectural, artistic, and spiritual value. Tourism can help finance conservation and raise awareness, but only if visitor use is managed within heritage-protection limits.

2. Economic benefits depend on local value retention. Visitor spending can support employment and local enterprises. The developmental effect is stronger when local suppliers, guides, accommodation providers, craftspeople, and community organisations participate in the tourism value chain.

3. Spiritual experience requires respect and appropriate management. The quality of religious tourism cannot be measured only by visitor numbers or revenue. The protection of worship, privacy, sacred practices, and the expectations of pilgrims is essential.

4. The three dimensions are interdependent. Cultural preservation can strengthen destination appeal; tourism income can support heritage maintenance; and meaningful spiritual and intercultural experiences can improve destination reputation and community relations.

5. Sustainability requires coordinated governance. Local authorities, religious institutions, tourism businesses, heritage professionals, and residents need shared policies for visitor flows, interpretation, infrastructure, accessibility, environmental management, and benefit-sharing.

Discussion and Implications

The analysis suggests that religious tourism should be planned as a sensitive form of cultural and spiritual tourism rather than treated simply as a strategy for increasing arrivals. Destination managers should distinguish between areas intended for worship and areas designed for visitors, provide multilingual and culturally accurate information, and establish visitor rules in consultation with religious authorities. Infrastructure improvements should respond to the needs of residents and worshippers as well as tourists.

For policymakers, a balanced strategy should include heritage conservation plans, training for guides and service providers, support for local entrepreneurship, accessible facilities, waste and transport management, and monitoring of resident perceptions. Tourism performance should be evaluated through a balanced set of economic, cultural, social, and spiritual indicators rather than visitor volume alone.

Conclusion

The analysis confirms that religious tourism has the potential to generate significant cultural, economic, and spiritual value in the modern world. It can contribute to the safeguarding of heritage, strengthen local economic activity, and create opportunities for reflection and intercultural understanding. Nevertheless, these outcomes are conditional rather than automatic. Over-commercialisation, environmental pressure, unequal economic benefits, and disruption of religious practices can undermine the positive effects. A sustainable approach therefore requires integrated planning, active participation of local communities and religious institutions, protection of sacred values, and continuous assessment of impacts.

Methodological note

This is a literature-informed conceptual analysis. No primary survey, interview dataset, or destination-level statistical series was supplied for this section. Accordingly, the table and figure present analytical categories and proposed indicators, not measured scores or causal estimates. If the article later includes fieldwork, this section can be updated with actual results from interviews, questionnaires, visitor statistics, or case-study data.

Conclusion and Recommendations (Xulosa va takliflar/Выводы и предложения).

This shows that religious tourism can have a positive effect on sustainable tourism. The service providers felt this would help their business gain more business and become more competitive in the region. Overall the results have shown that economic, social and environmental impacts can be generated from using religious tourism. Stakeholders did not perceive religious tourism to have a positive impact on the social and environmental aspects. Businesses within the region should showcase their unique aspects of their business at tourism fairs and in their marketing. Religious tourism can help boost the sense of identity in the local area and can help improve understanding between cultures when working with the host community. Education should be provided to tourists, locals and entrepreneurs. The local government should be coordinating this by raising awareness, supporting tourism businesses, collaborating between businesses and religious communities, reducing conflict and hosting events to raise awareness of other religions traditions

[1] Author's own work.

[2] Author's own work.

and heritages. Information and education should be provided to show how important the religious sites are and how to act as a tourist. Extra training could be provided to tour guides, teachers and local culture facilitators. Raising awareness of the religious sites within the local community can help improve understanding between cultures and make an inviting environment for tourists. Improvements should be made to tourism facilities such as parking, accommodation and sanitation. Religious sites/buidings should be preserved, restored and digitised. Controlling the number of tourists can help meet environmental objectives by ensuring they are on the correct route. Raising awareness of the environment can help meet environmental objectives. An attractive tourism product should be created which can encourage people to explore, stay longer and come back. Themes can be created for religious tourism, using the natural attractions. These activities should be led by the local government and Podlasie Regional Tourist Organisation. In order to maximise the potential religious tourism has to create sustainable tourism and preserve heritage, there needs to be a strong relationship between local authorities, religious institutions, tourism businesses, tourism organisations and others. Religious tourism should be incorporated into the tourism development strategy for the region to ensure marketing, economical, cultural and environmental activities are all consistent. This can help improve competitiveness in the region whilst also encouraging cultural diversity, community engagement and long term heritage preservation.

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