

## FROM CULTURAL RESOURCES TO ECONOMIC VALUE ADDED: A CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS BASED ON CHINESE ETHNIC VILLAGES USING THE JOHARI WINDOW MODEL

O. Y. Zhukovskaya<sup>1)</sup>, Z. Liu<sup>2)</sup>

<sup>1)</sup> PhD in economics, associate professor, Belarusian State University, Minsk, Belarus, zhukovskaya@bsu.by

<sup>2)</sup> PhD student, Belarusian State University, Minsk, Belarus, alex-ly@qq.com

This study examines the cultural tourism development of ethnic villages in Libo County, (Guizhou Province of China), and the current state of cultural tourism in Belarus through the lens of the Johari Window model, combining an economic perspective to explore the dynamic mechanism of transforming cultural resources into consumption scenarios. By analyzing survey data from China Travel Service Culture Development Co., Ltd., this research reveals the impact of cultural information cognition gaps on tourism economy in the Libo case. Based on the data analysis findings, a three-dimensional improvement scheme is suggested. The study discovers that: (1) the transformation of implicit cultural resources into explicit ones is key to enhancing tourism economic efficiency; (2) the “bi-directional feedback loop” can reduce cognitive blind spots; (3) Belarus needs to learn from Chinese experience to construct a “culture – economy” transformer to address its capital and brand deficiencies. The research findings provide theoretical support and practical pathways for Belarusian cultural tourism development.

**Keywords:** cultural industries; Johari Window model; tourism economy; cultural cognition system; cross-case study.

## ОТ КУЛЬТУРНЫХ РЕСУРСОВ К ЭКОНОМИЧЕСКОЙ ДОБАВЛЕННОЙ СТОИМОСТИ: АНАЛИЗ НА ПРИМЕРЕ КИТАЙСКИХ ЭТНИЧЕСКИХ ДЕРЕВЕНЬ С ИСПОЛЬЗОВАНИЕМ МОДЕЛИ «ОКНО ДЖОХАРИ»

О. Ю. Жуковская<sup>1)</sup>, Чж. Лю<sup>2)</sup>

<sup>1)</sup> кандидат экономических наук, доцент, Белорусский государственный университет, г. Минск, Беларусь, zhukovskaya@bsu.by

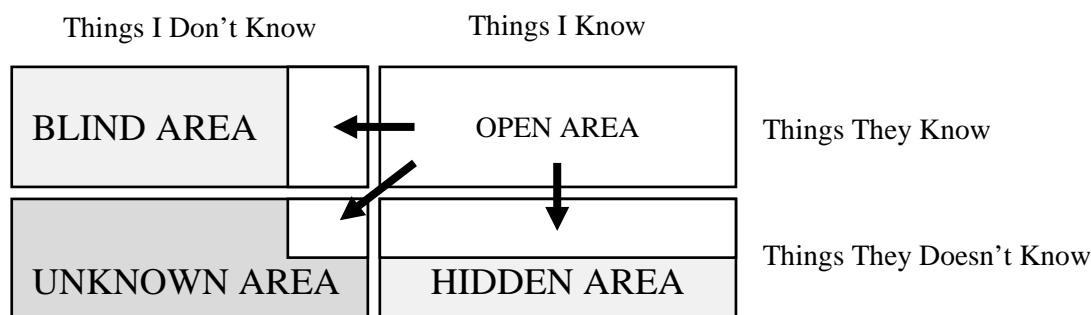
<sup>2)</sup> соискатель, Белорусский государственный университет, г. Минск, Беларусь, alex-ly@qq.com

В данном исследовании рассматривается развитие культурного туризма в этнических деревнях округа Либо (провинция Гуйчжоу в Китае) и современное состояние культурного туризма в Беларуси через призму модели «окно Джохари», сочетая экономическую перспективу для изучения динамического механизма трансформации культурных ресурсов в сценарии потребления. Анализируя данные опроса, проведенного компанией China Travel Service Culture Development Co., Ltd. Данное исследование выявляет влияние пробелов в познании культурной информации на экономику туризма на примере Либо. На основе результатов анализа данных предлагается трехмерная схема мероприятий по улучшению ситуации. В ходе исследования было установлено, что: (1) трансформация имплицитных культурных ресурсов в эксплицитные является ключом к повышению экономической эффективности туризма; (2) «двунаправленная петля обратной связи» может уменьшить когнитивные слепые пятна; (3) Беларуси необходимо изучить опыт Китая для создания трансформатора «культура – экономика», чтобы устранить дефицит средств и брендов. Результаты исследования представляют собой теоретическую и практическую ценность для развития белорусского культурного туризма.

**Ключевые слова:** экономика туризма; культурная индустрия; модель «окно Джохари»; система культурного познания; перекрестный анализ.

**Introduction.** In the context of intensifying global economic competition, the efficient transformation of cultural resources has become a focal point in cultural industry research and a core proposition in regional economic development. The United Nations’ “2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” explicitly identifies cultural-tourism integration as a key driver of inclusive growth in the post-industrial era [1]. However, post-socialist countries generally face the predicament of “cultural resource abundance but inefficient economic conversion” in their tourism transformation [2]. Taking Belarus as an example, its World Heritage Site, Mir Castle, attracts only 150,000 visitors annually, with tourism contributing merely 0.8 % to GDP [3]. Meanwhile, existing research exhibits three major limitations: firstly, cross-cultural brand studies predominantly focus on Euro-American contexts [4]; secondly, traditional communication theories struggle to quantify cultural discount effects [5]; and thirdly, post-socialist countries lack a systematic theoretical framework for cultural tourism transformation [2].

Therefore, this study innovatively introduces the Johari Window model. Originally proposed by Joseph Luft and Harrington Ingham in 1955 to analyze information asymmetry in interpersonal communication, this model has gradually expanded its application to other fields amid profound changes in new media formats and emerging sales trends. The core framework of the Johari Window model divides the cognitive domain into four quadrants: “open area (known-known)”, “blind area (unknown-known)”, “hidden area (known-unknown)”, and “unknown area (unknown-unknown)”. Through analyzing user cognitive levels and applying different methods accordingly, practitioners can enhance the conversion rate from cultural to economic value (Figure). The ethnic villages in Libo County (China) successfully doubled their tourism revenue through the application of the Johari Window model, receiving 896,000 visitors to Libo Ancient Town in 2023 [6], and achieving tourism revenue of 4.67 billion yuan, representing a year-on-year growth of 17.4 % [7]. This improvement demonstrates the profound impact of cultural cognitive gaps on economic conversion and highlights the Johari Window model’s capacity for dynamic matching and commercial potential development (see Fig. 1).



*Fig. 1.* The Johari Window model and development direction

### Data analysis based on actual research

China Travel Service Culture Development Co., Ltd. in Shenzhen conducted a field sampling survey, distributing 1,000 questionnaires with 916 valid responses [6]. The survey was designed with two control groups: local residents and tourists. Following the Johari Window model framework, the author aggregated and reorganized the original data into four core dimensions: cultural resource cognition, operational management cognition, market demand cognition, and market competitiveness cognition. The components of each dimension, including their constituent factors and integration logic, are presented in tab. 1.

Based on the four quadrants of the Johari Window Model, this study expands it into a Four-Quadrant Cultural Transformation model to provide a deeper interpretation of the original data. Specifically: the open area reflects direct economic output from explicit cultural symbols; the blind area

reveals tourist demands unrecognized by local residents; the hidden area indicates undeveloped implicit cultural capital; and the unknown area demonstrates the potential for cross-cultural innovation. Through field research in the case of Libo's ethnic cultural tourism in China, several key developmental contradictions were identified:

Table 1

**Factor classification, reconstruction, and integration basis for local residents and tourists**

Core dimensions	Constituent factors	Integration logic
Cultural resource cognition	Landscape features, cultural customs, Panoramic lifestyle	Reflects the perception level of explicit cultural elements between local residents and tourists
Operational management cognition	Management entities, construction funding	Points to institutional elements of village governance and sustainable development
Market demand cognition	Core tourism demands, in-tour experience, post-tour evaluation	Depicts tourist behavioral characteristics and satisfaction dimensions
Market competitiveness cognition	Market branding, innovative products	Measures market adaptability and innovation of tourism products

Based on: [6].

The aggregated survey results are presented in tab. 2.

Table 2

**Cognitive distribution of local residents (self or I) and tourists (others or they)**

Core dimensions	Group	Know (%)	Partially know (%)	Don't know (%)	Cognitive gap (don't know + partially know)
Cultural resource cognition	Local residents	77.7	20.0	2.3	22.3%
	Tourists	53.0	43.0	4.0	47.0%
Operational management cognition	Local residents	33.0	31.5	35.5	67.0%
	Tourists	4.5	34.0	61.5	95.5%
Market demand cognition	Local residents	10.7	33.0	56.3	89.3%
	Tourists	92.0	8.0	0.0	8.0%
Market competitiveness cognition	Local residents	3.5	16.5	80.0	96.5%
	Tourists	10.5	25.5	64.0	89.5%

Based on: [6].

**Cultural cognitive discontinuity.** Tourists' superficial recognition: 73 % of tourists only recognized explicit attractions like "Da Xiao Qikong" (open area), while awareness of the "Ancient Terraced Field System" representing the Buyi people's millennium-old rice cultivation civilization (hidden area) was below 5 %. Although local residents' overall awareness of cultural resources reached 77.7 % (significantly higher than tourists' 53.0 %), tourists still showed a 47 % cognitive gap in understanding deeper cultural connotations, particularly in comprehending the "panoramic lifestyle" experience. Implicit resource underutilization: the conversion rate of intangible cultural heritage skills reflecting local characteristics, such as "traditional papermaking" and "batik workshops", was merely 7 %, exposing weak cultural resource encoding capabilities.

**Demand cognition lag.** While tourists' awareness of potential demands for immersive night tours and intangible cultural heritage study programs reached 92 %, local residents showed an 89.3 % cognitive gap in recognizing these needs. This directly resulted in overnight tourists accounting for only 12 % (compared to 38 % in the neighboring Xijiang Miao Village) [8].

**Technological cognition deficiency.** 73 % of tourism revenue relied on traditional attractions, while market demand response lag resulted in innovative products (such as AR guides) having less than 7 % coverage. In comparison, the Forbidden City's "Digital Cultural Relics Database" received over 300 million visits during the same period, indicating a significant gap in technological empowerment.

**Competitiveness cognition collapse.** Both parties showed cognitive gaps exceeding 60 % regarding management entities and fund allocation, with village governance displaying "closed operation". Market competitiveness cognitive gap exceeded 80 %, with product homogenization leading to per-customer spending 23 % below industry average.

To address these contradictions, the local government, based on the Johari Window model, implemented four major improvement strategies to establish a bi-directional feedback loop of "Cultural Resources-Digital Assets-Consumption Scenarios".

**Open area optimization:** Established a dynamic monitoring system, implemented a "rotation system" for 78 over-developed explicit attractions, Ecological sensitive areas experienced a 23 % decrease in visitor flow [8].

**Blind area breakthrough.** Developed "Tourist Demand Heat Map", Precisely identified unfulfilled "intangible heritage workshop experience" demands (41 % of potential consumption), after adding 12 experience points, secondary consumption ratio increased to 29 % [8].

**Hidden area activation.** Launched "Decode Libo" campaign on Douyin (120 million views), transformed 17 implicit skills including "traditional papermaking" into study tour products, related revenue reached 230 million yuan in 2023.

**Unknown area innovation.** Launched China's first "Metaverse Village", Enabled tourists to participate in virtual folk festivals through digital avatars, generated online consumption of 46 million yuan (9.7 % of annual revenue).

Consequently, Libo's comprehensive tourism revenue reached 5.89 billion yuan in 2023 (26 % year-on-year increase) [8], with average tourist stay duration increasing from 1.2 to 2.1 days, successfully earning recognition as one of "China's Top Ten Cultural Tourism Integration Innovation Cases".

**Cultural tourism development in Belarus: challenges and solutions.** Belarus has a long history, abundant natural landscapes, numerous cultural sites, and a population with high cultural standards. However, the development of cultural tourism in Belarus still faces three major dilemmas. The first is the cognitive blind spot: 60 % of international tourists lack sufficient recognition of the uniqueness of historical and cultural heritage sites such as the Slavic Epic and the ancient city of Polotsk. The second is brand obscurity: the Belarusian cultural and tourism market lacks a unique and unified top-tier IP. The third is a shortage of funds: investment in cultural tourism is low, and the updating and maintenance of infrastructure in scenic areas lag behind. Therefore, for Belarus, it is crucial to build a tripartite collaboration system among the government, enterprises, and communities to jointly promote the development of cultural tourism.

Drawing on the experience of Libo County in China, which used the Johari Window model to promote tourism development, this paper proposes a three-dimensional migration improvement plan:

Firstly, conduct cultural decoding to break the cognitive blind spot and activate the hidden cognitive area. For example, adopting real-life stage performances to develop an immersive theater for the Slavic Epic can expand the dissemination of Belarusian cultural symbols. Additionally, leveraging existing international cooperation frameworks to link cultural heritage tourism resources and carry out a series of large-scale exchange activities can help discover the cultural value of Belarus through comparative exchanges.

Secondly, implement investment empowerment to eliminate the unknown area. For instance, introducing financial instruments such as Cultural Assets Securitization (CAS) can enrich the capital reserves of relevant tourist attractions, enabling increased investment in infrastructure. By improving the tourism environment, the actual experience of tourists can be enhanced.

Thirdly, promote technological collaboration to consolidate the open area. This includes applying new digital and artificial intelligence technologies to develop digital twin systems, utilizing new media and virtual tourism to increase the exposure of Belarusian culture. Furthermore, information technologies such as the Internet of Things and big data can be used to obtain real-time tourist dynamics, thereby improving the accuracy of services.

**Conclusion.** In summary, based on the Johari Window model and through cross-case analysis, this paper reveals the key mechanisms and practical paths for transforming cultural resources into economic value. The empirical analysis has established three main findings: 1) the explicit transformation of cultural resources is a key element in enhancing the effectiveness of the tourism economy; this transformation process requires systematic planning based on the four-quadrant framework of the Johari Window model; 2) the “bidirectional feedback loop” mechanism can effectively reduce cultural cognitive blind spots; 3) Belarusian cultural and tourism transformation needs to construct a “culture-economy converter”. This three-dimensional improvement plan involving cultural decoding, investment empowerment, and technological collaboration can be considered.

The practical significance of this study lies in providing an operable optimization plan for the development of Belarusian cultural and tourism industry. Future research can further explore the enabling mechanisms of digital technology in the process of cultural resource transformation, as well as comparative studies of transformation models under different cultural backgrounds.

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