



## THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF MUSEUM STUDIES IN KAZAKHSTAN: A REVIEW OF THE RESEARCH OF LOCAL SCHOLARS

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**Abstract.** This review article analyzes the evolution of the goals and objectives of museum work, in particular, how it was formed as an independent interdisciplinary science. The relevance of this study lies in its comprehensive theoretical review of existing literature to track these functional transformations. The research draws upon a robust selection of monographs, dissertations, theses, and peer-reviewed articles. While pioneering studies primarily focused on the chronological cataloging of historical artifacts, contemporary scholarship shifts the focus toward the deeper cultural and spiritual impact of museums. Recent research emphasizes their capacity to awaken historical consciousness and preserve national identity. Furthermore, the digital era has redefined traditional boundaries. Modern academic consensus indicates that cultural institutions are no longer confined to static exhibitions. By forging strong partnerships with schools and universities, museums have transformed into dynamic hubs for informal and experiential learning.

Methodologically, this paper employs a literature review, comparative analysis and systematization. By critically evaluating the content and methodology of local scholarship, we trace the evolution of foundational academic perspectives. As a result of the research, the development of museology in Kazakhstan was divided into several stages, each of which had its own theoretical features: ideologically oriented research during the Soviet period, scientific concepts based on national and cultural revival during the period of independence, and innovative, digital trends in the modern period. Systematizing these theoretical foundations and mapping out current methodological trajectories remains a crucial task for the field.

**Keywords:** culture; museum; museum studies; museology; theoretical foundations; methodological approaches; cultural heritage; scientific research; digitalization; museums of Kazakhstan.

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## ҚАЗАҚСТАНДАҒЫ МУЗЕЙ ІСІН ЗЕРТТЕУДІҢ ТЕОРИЯЛЫҚ-ӘДІСНАМАЛЫҚ НЕГІЗДЕРІ: ОТАНДЫҚ ҒАЛЫМДАР ЕҢБЕКТЕРІНЕ ШОЛУ

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## ТЕОРЕТИКО-МЕТОДОЛОГИЧЕСКИЕ ОСНОВЫ ИЗУЧЕНИЯ МУЗЕЙНОГО ДЕЛА В КАЗАХ- СТАНЕ: ОБЗОР ТРУДОВ ОТЕЧЕСТВЕННЫХ УЧЕНЫХ

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**Аңдатпа.** Бұл шолу мақаласында мұражай ісінің мақсаттары мен міндеттерінің эволюциясы, атап айтқанда, оның тәуелсіз пәнаралық ғылым ретінде қалай қалыптасқаны талданады. Зерттеудің өзектілігі музей ісі тақырыбындағы ғылыми еңбектерге теориялық шолу жасап, олардың қызметінің қалай өзгергенін айқындау. Осы негізде мақалаға монография, диссертация, авторефераттар және бірнеше ғылыми мақалалар зерттеуге тірек болды. Бұрынғы зерттеу еңбектерінде тек тарихи экспонаттарды хронологиялық тұрғыдан тізіп шығуға мән берілсе, кейінгі толқын ғалымдардың ізденістерінде мұражайдың халықтың тарихи санасын оятудағы және ұлттық құндылықтарды сақтаудағы терең рухани мәніне көбірек басымдық беріле бастады. Бүгінгі цифрлық дәуір мұражай жұмысының дәстүрлі шекарасын кеңейтіп, оның тыныс-тіршілігіне мүлдем жаңа толқын әкелгені сөзсіз. Қазіргі заманғы ғылыми тұжырымдар көрсеткендей, бұл мәдени ошақтар тек көрме ұйымдастырумен шектелмей, мектептермен және жоғары оқу орындарымен тығыз байланыс орната отырып, бейресми білім берудің, яғни тәжірибе арқылы үйренудің жаңа бірегей алаңына айналып отыр.

Зерттеу барысында әдебиеттерге шолу, салыстырмалы талдау, жүйелеу әдістері қолданылды. Отандық зерттеушілердің музей ісіне қатысты еңбектері мазмұндық және әдіснамалық тұрғыдан сараланып, олардың ғылыми көзқарастарының өзгеруі анықталды. Зерттеу нәтижесінде Қазақстандағы музейтану ғылымының дамуы бірнеше кезеңдерге бөлініп, әр кезеңнің өзіндік теориялық ерекшеліктері көрсетілді: кеңестік кезеңдегі идеологиялық бағыттағы зерттеулер, тәуелсіздік кезеңіндегі ұлттық-мәдени қайта жаңғыруға негізделген ғылыми тұжырымдамалар және қазіргі кезеңдегі инновациялық, цифрлық бағыттар. Музейтану ғылымының теориялық тұғырларын жүйелеу және әдіснамалық бағыттарын айқындау маңызды ғылыми міндет болып табылады.

**Түйін сөздер:** мәдениет; музей; музей ісі; музейтану;

**Аннотация.** В обзорной статье анализируется эволюция целей и задач музейной работы, в частности, как она сформировалась как самостоятельная междисциплинарная наука. Актуальность исследования продиктована необходимостью теоретического переосмысления литературы и фиксации функциональных сдвигов в работе музейного дела. Источниковую базу работы составили монографии, диссертации, авторефераты и ключевые научные публикации. Если ранние труды фокусировались преимущественно на хронологическом описании экспонатов, то современная волна исследователей ставит во главу угла глубокую духовную миссию музея – его роль в пробуждении исторического сознания и сохранении национальных ценностей. Цифровая эпоха окончательно размыла традиционные границы музейного пространства. Сегодня эти культурные центры перестают быть просто выставочными площадками. Активно сотрудничая со школами и вузами, они превращаются в уникальные платформы для неформального образования и практического обучения.

В качестве методологического инструментария использовались литературный обзор, сравнительный анализ и систематизация. На основе содержательного и методологического разбора трудов отечественных ученых была прослежена динамика их научных взглядов. В результате исследования развитие казахстанского музееведения было разделено на несколько ключевых этапов, каждый из которых обладает своей теоретической спецификой: советские идеологизированные исследования, концепции национально-культурного возрождения эпохи независимости, а также современные инновационно-цифровые тренды. Таким образом, систематизация теоретических основ и определение методологических векторов музееведения остаются важнейшей задачей для академического сообщества.

**Ключевые слова:** культура; музей; музейное дело;

теориялық негіздер; әдіснамалық тәсілдер; мәдени мұра; ғылыми зерттеу; цифрландыру; Қазақстан музейлері.

музееведение; теоретические основы; методологические подходы; культурное наследие; научное исследование; цифровизация; музеи Казахстана.

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**Introduction**

Research interest in conceptualizing museum studies in contemporary local humanitarian scholarship shows rapid growth. The museum has long ceased to be a mere static collection of artifacts; today, it functions as a unique sociocultural institution that accumulates societal historical memory, transmits heritage to future generations and thereby strengthens national identity (Kasymzhanov, 2010). This is precisely why the boundaries of history or cultural studies alone are too narrow here. Understanding the museum sphere deeply requires an interdisciplinary, comprehensive approach operating at the intersection of several sciences. A profound analysis of the genesis and contemporary development vectors of Kazakhstani museums allows for a clear definition of key priorities in state cultural policy. Such a perspective helps not only to carefully preserve historical heritage but also to develop applied, effective mechanisms for its popularization in the modern world.

The process of establishing the theoretical and practical foundations of Kazakhstani museology traces its origins back to the Soviet period. Certainly, being subordinate to the political dictate of that era, museums operated primarily as vehicles for state ideology and their activities strictly relied on the concept of historical materialism. Yet, even within rigid ideological boundaries, local researchers continuously sought pathways to form a scientific and methodological framework for museum affairs. Due to this, the works of historians substantiated the value of the museum exhibit as an independent historical source, while also detailing the specifics of collection management and exhibition design principles (Artykbaev, 2013). It follows that, despite the obvious bias of certain postulates, Soviet historiography played a fundamental role by setting up the initial methodological scaffolding for modern national museology.

Sovereignty fundamentally inverted the developmental trajectory of local museum studies. From then on, museums ceased to be associated exclusively with static repositories of objects; they transformed into central platforms for reviving national cultural heritage, decolonizing historical consciousness, and popularizing authentic values (Nazarbaev, 2017). This transformation of traditional approaches brought about a qualitative expansion of the research, educational, and socio-communicative functions of these institutions. This process provided a powerful impetus for the substantive and methodological renewal of Kazakhstani museology. In evaluating this evolution of museum studies as an independent scientific object, we built upon the conceptual conclusions and inquiries of local researchers. Notably, at the initial stage, this topic was approached predominantly by historians who focused on the chronological systematization of museum development phases. Later, the local scientific school moved beyond narrow empiricism, proposing fully-fledged theoretical concepts that deeply accommodate the national specifics of a truly living phenomenon.

This analytical review is constructed on a systematic analysis of monographs, dissertations and periodical press publications capturing the establishment, evolution and transformation of local museum studies. For the theoretical and methodological systematization of the field, the entire pool of sources underwent rigorous expert selection. Specifically, a detailed analysis was applied to 8 dissertations and abstracts reflecting the fundamental historical stages of the discipline, alongside 13 local scientific articles and monographs capturing contemporary trends and empirical research from recent years. The structural and content-based content analysis of these works provided a solid theoretical foundation for the precise verification of key milestones in the development of Kazakhstani museums.

Today, Kazakhstani museology is undergoing a period of cardinal transformation. Digitalization, which has become a cross-cutting trend in recent years, has expanded the traditional boundaries of the museum space, clearing the path for the large-scale implementation of virtual exhibitions, digital archives and interactive technologies. Such a technological shift inevitably dictates the need to update the very methodological toolkit of the science. In this regard, the contemporary research community seeks to re-evaluate the role of museums within digital reality and clearly articulate their current social functions. It is crucial to emphasize that this process is not limited merely to the technological aspect: the integration of museums into the educational ecosystem – particularly their close interaction with schools and universities – has turned into a mainstream path for modern interdisciplinary inquiries.

The theses outlined in this article clearly demonstrate that the study of museum affairs in Kazakhstan has crystallized into an independent and substantial branch of domestic science. The experience of past years has undoubtedly laid a firm theoretical foundation; however, the challenges of globalization and the current digital era demand an even deeper immersion into the problem space. Driven by this academic necessity and drawing upon a critical analysis of conceptual works by local authors, this study aims to present a scientific-theoretical review of the key methodological currents in Kazakhstani museology.

### **Materials and methods**

This work represents a scientific and analytical review aimed at identifying the theoretical and methodological foundations of museum studies in Kazakhstan. We comprehensively reviewed the works of local researchers, analyzing in detail the development vectors and methodological specifics of national museological thought.

The empirical base of the study comprises scientific works, monographs, textbooks and articles in periodicals published between 1995 and 2026. The primary sources included the works of leading local scholars who made a significant contribution to the conceptualization of Kazakhstani museum business: Zh. Artykbaev (2013), A. Kainazarova (1995), S. Taiman (1999), N. Raimkhan (2010), M. Musakhanova (2007), G. Faizullina (2022), A. Ibraeva (2010), V. Aliyasova (2009), A. Kaliaskarova (2021), G. Seyitova (2022), N. Zhakypova (2023) and other researchers.

Material selection accounted for its scientific significance, alignment with the research problem, depth of content, and publication period. Priority was given to the latest studies focused on contemporary trends and cross-cutting processes of digitalization within the museum space. Official documents and program materials defining the outlines of the cultural policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan served as an additional source.

To achieve the stated objective, the method of content analysis and systematization of scientific literature was applied. This approach made it possible to analyze scientific works related to museum activities in terms of content, as well as to identify the main theoretical directions and scientific conclusions. At the final stage, the entire examined corpus of texts was classified according to thematic and chronological principles.

### **Discussion**

An analysis of the theoretical and methodological foundations of museum studies research in Kazakhstan points to the multidimensional, interdisciplinary, and dynamic nature of this field. A comparative approach to the works of local authors allows for a deeper conceptualization of the evolution of museological thought, its substantive transformation and its methodological renewal.

First and foremost, it is critically important to examine the genesis of museum affairs through the prism of historical stages. During the Soviet period, museum activity possessed a predominantly ideological character, and scientific inquiries rigidly relied on the postulates of historical materialism. The key function of museums in that era was the collection of historical data and its interpretation under a strictly defined ideological angle. Nevertheless, it was precisely then that the practices of collection management, exhibition design, and scientific description were formed, laying the baseline for modern museum business.

With the acquisition of independence, the substantive content of the museum sphere underwent cardinal changes. The tasks of actualizing national cultural heritage, restoring historical justice and strengthening identity moved to the forefront. At this stage, museums outgrew the status of simple repositories, transforming into major research

and educational centers. Moreover, new conceptual interpretations of national history began to manifest distinctly within museum exhibitions.

Several dissertation works were prepared within these areas; thus, A. Kainazarova examines the emergence and evolution of Kazakhstan's museums from 1831 to 1925, demonstrating how, under the influence of time, the museum became an integral part of culture and public education. One of her key ideas lies in the necessity of comprehensive support and development for museums, which are called upon to preserve and transmit the history and culture of the people to future generations (Kainazarova, 1995). The primary value of A. Ibraeva's research consists of positioning museums not merely as cultural objects, but as a powerful instrument of state policy, national ideology and Kazakhstani patriotism. In her dissertation, the museum is interpreted not as a passive reflection of the historical process, but rather as an active agent of Soviet cultural transformation (Ibraeva, 1999). S. Taiman, in his work, analyzes the post-war development of museum business in Kazakhstan in close connection with state policy, viewing the material, technical and personnel procurement of institutions through the prism of the ideological imperatives of the Soviet totalitarian system. The author specifies the research, educational and exhibition vectors of museum activity, clearly demonstrating its transformation into a tool for broadcasting Soviet ideology (Taiman, 1999). B. Sanankulova systematizes the processes of expanding the museum network, the dynamics of personnel and material bases, as well as the establishment of international cultural ties, reflecting the deep restructuring of the museum sphere in the post-Soviet period (Sanankulova, 2006). M. Musakhanova, in her study, examines the development of Kazakhstan's museums in 1991–2001 as a complex and deeply contradictory process characteristic of the transit era. The author proves that, despite the crisis realities of those years, the industry managed to pivot toward national content and become a vital institution for shaping historical consciousness (Musakhanova, 2007). Another fundamental work by G. Ibraeva is dedicated to a comprehensive analysis of the historical evolution of museum business in Kazakhstan from 1831 to 2006, which allowed for the scientific and methodological systematization of its institutional, functional and ideological shifts. The author proposes looking at the museum not simply as a cultural institution, but as a multilayered social institution constructing the historical memory and ideological discourse of society (Ibraeva, 2010). K. Raimkhan examines museum objects through the prism of historical sources, substantiating their deep scientific significance for understanding the sociocultural processes of the past. Analyzing the attribution and source-study potential of exhibits in local repositories, the author develops the theoretical foundation of museum source studies (Raimkhan, 2010). In the work of V. Aliysova, the paleontological collections of museums in Northern and Eastern Kazakhstan are positioned as a unique object for the preservation and academic study of the regional natural science heritage. Concurrently, it is proven that museums act as the key institutions implementing research, cultural and educational functions through the collection, systematization and representation of such collections to society (Aliysova, 2009).

A special place in this series is occupied by the research of G. Faizullina, in which the development of museum business in the era of independence is analyzed in detail through the prism of the cultural-educational paradigm. The author proves that, by moving beyond the traditional function of preservation, the museum has turned into a crucial social institution actively influencing the spiritual development, upbringing and education of society. The transformation of museum practice is examined inseparably from historical context, which allowed for a clear explication of its new vectors. Among them, special attention is paid to the establishment of museum pedagogy, the introduction of innovative formats of interaction with various audiences – primarily with youth and children – and the transition of cultural-educational activity onto project-based and interactive tracks (Faizullina, 2005).

If, for instance, A. Kaliaskarova focuses on the digitalization of the museum space and the design of virtual exhibitions (Kaliaskarova, 2021), the leitmotif of G. Faizullina's works is the social responsibility of the museum as an effective tool for participation in solving urgent public problems. "The museum is not just a repository of the past, but a living organism that ensures the cultural growth of society and builds a strong emotional connection with it" (Faizullina, 2022, p. ...). In turn, G. Seyitova concentrated on studying innovative approaches within the educational trajectory of museums (Seyitova, 2022). Parallel to this, N. Zhakypova analyzes the burning issues of cultural heritage preservation through digital archiving methods (Zhakypova, 2023).

In addition, while Zh. Tolenova investigates communication strategies and mechanisms of interaction with visitors (Tolenova, 2020), Ye. Smagulov addresses the specifics of regional museum development and the assessment of their tourism potential (Smagulov, 2024). M. Omarova, for her part, details the role of museums in the landscape of

cultural policy and their contribution to constructing national identity (Omarova, 2025). Such inquiries substantially enrich the problem field of museology, anchoring its interdisciplinary status.

The collective work of B. Kozhakhmetov, G. Safarova and E. Usmanova, "Museums of Kazakhstan in the XXI Century: Situation Analysis," is rightfully considered one of the first fundamental empirical works to offer a systemic diagnosis of the industry's state. Despite a certain chronological distance, the conclusions of this study still serve as a reliable scientific guide for explicating the baseline problems and evolution vectors of modern museum business (Kozhakhmetov, Safarova, and Usmanova, 2010).

At the contemporary stage, the study of Kazakhstani museums has reached a new level. While at the dawn of the 2000s scholars predominantly recorded the general state and obvious deficits of the museum network, the focus of contemporary authors lies on its institutional transformation, structural development and the specifics of interaction with society. In particular, the latest works clearly illustrate a consistent departure of museums from the Soviet model toward an open cultural-communication institution. Concurrently, digitalization, visitor experience design and the reinterpretation of the museum as an educational space have moved into the vanguard of the research agenda. Local authors today show an increased interest precisely in the mechanisms of the post-Soviet transformation of institutions. Thus, Kapyshev and Iskakov reconstruct the development stages, functionality and operational structure of Kazakhstan's museums in the independence era (Kapyshev & Iskakov, 2021); G. Faizullina, in one of her articles, proposes a roadmap for bringing Kazakhstani museology to a new academic level (Faizullina, 2020); finally, the conceptual value of Satubaldin's work lies in the deconstruction of the museum as a static object and its representation as a multilayered dynamic system generating the historical memory and cultural capital of society. The scholar convincingly demonstrates that the institutional hierarchy of museums – from the national to the rural level – determines not just their administrative status, but the real scale of their cultural influence and volume of symbolic capital (Satubaldin, 2020).

Overall, the generalized corpus of literature describes the evolution of Kazakhstani museums through three key milestones: the colonial practice of ethnographic collecting, the Soviet stage of total ideological institutionalization and the period of independence, marked by the construction of national cultural memory. Along with this, current trends indicate the formation of new theoretical approaches aimed at denoting the museum object not merely as an exhibit, but as a fully-fledged historical source.

At the contemporary stage, the museum business is making a qualitative leap, developing under the powerful impact of globalization and cross-cutting digitalization. The integration of IT tools into daily practice has significantly increased the inclusiveness of museums, allowing for the effective engagement of new audience segments (Parry, 2010). Virtual tours, 3D exhibition methods, and electronic archives are firmly establishing themselves as new formats of institutional activity. These trends have noticeably enriched the methodological arsenal of museology, catalyzing the emergence of original research vectors. Modern museum management stands in an inseparable link with rapid sociocultural shifts. A reinterpretation of museums is occurring, viewing them as vital hubs that execute social communication, an educational mission and the distribution of cultural values. Accordingly, their management today requires a complex alignment of administrative, economic and socio-psychological methods (Nurgazina, Musabaev, 2023).

The most important task for researchers is to showcase the large-scale transit of Kazakhstan's museum system from a rigid, centralized Soviet model to a modern, open, polyphonic matrix centered on cultural memory. The authors convincingly prove that the museum has outgrown the boundaries of a simple object repository, turning into an active social institution that shapes historical consciousness, civic identity and a platform for public dialogue. The digitalization of the museum environment and the implementation of interactive solutions have brought historical education to a fundamentally different level, multiplying the opportunities for live, dialogic interaction with the visitor (Ibraev & Nurusheva, 2026).

Examining the problem of integrating digital technologies into the activities of local cultural institutions through the prism of global experience, researchers interpret digitization as a key tool for the preservation and broad representation of heritage: virtual tours, 3D modeling, electronic archives, mobile applications and online platforms make collections accessible to a global audience, stimulating a sustained interest in culture. The experience of developed countries clearly demonstrates that virtual and augmented reality technologies, artificial intelligence and gamification implemented within cultural institutions qualitatively enrich the immersive and interactive experience of visitors.

In Kazakhstan, these advanced technological solutions are being introduced in stages. However, to fully unlock the potential of this direction, a long-term systemic strategy, targeted training of qualified personnel and tangible state support are required. In general, digital tools act as a dominant factor in the modernization of the cultural sphere, directly contributing to heritage protection, the stimulation of cultural tourism and the consolidation of national identity (Babamuratov, 2025).

Over the years of independence, the museum system of Kazakhstan has completely liberated itself from the role of an instrument of totalitarian ideological control, transforming into a multifunctional cultural and social institution safeguarding historical memory and generating national identity.

The obtained results testify that in modern Kazakhstan, museums act not merely as depositories of material culture, but fulfill the function of critical communication spaces, reconstructing public consciousness and historical memory. This dynamically developing sphere will always retain its relevance and demand, although the trajectory of its further progress is bound to solving a large-scale complex of tasks.

Contemporary trends in the development of the museum business in the Republic of Kazakhstan are determined by the planned implementation of state strategic programs. Beginning with the state program “Madeni Mura” (“Cultural Heritage”) initiated by the First President N. A. Nazarbaev, the discussion regarding the need to move away from archaic, purely conservative formats toward modern models was conducted quite intensively. Later, this vector, organically linking with the concept of “Rukhani Zhangyru,” transformed into a powerful driver for actualizing the national code and historical memory, while an unprecedented focus of attention shifted toward rural, district, and regional local history museums. A powerful catalyst was the “Year of Culture” - 2025, within the framework of which the activity of 275 local museums was elevated to a fundamentally different qualitative level. A direct consequence of these systemic reforms was the launch of a single portal, “e-museum,” which, through the total digitization of artifacts, increased the openness of national heritage, awakened a lively interest among the younger generation, and strengthened the international image of the country. Thus, thanks to the synergy of state support and IT solutions, modern museums have ceased to be passive repositories of objects; today, they stimulate cultural and cognitive demand in society and serve as a firm anchor for fundamental academic research in the fields of local history, cultural studies, ethnography and archaeology.

In parallel, a noticeable strengthening of the position of museums within the general system of education is noted. Current scientific approaches position the museum as a space of informal learning, where schoolchildren and students master the historical and cultural stratum through interactive experience and practice. In this context, museum pedagogy has definitively shaped itself as one of the priority directions of modern museology.

An analysis of the works of Kazakhstani authors reveals the formation of several key research platforms. First, there is the historical-cultural direction, which interprets the museum as a key institution for safeguarding national heritage. Second, the cultural approach, which investigates the museum space through the prism of intercultural communication. Third, the pedagogical vector, focusing on the realization of the institutions’ educational function. Fourth, the newest digital direction, aimed at studying the integration of museums into virtual reality. All these research trajectories are interconnected and complementary. This circumstance underscores once again the pronounced interdisciplinary character of museology.

In scientific publications of recent years, it is precisely the social function of museums that is distinctly accented. They are conceptualized as effective platforms for public discussion, contributing to the strengthening of mutual understanding between various cultural groups (Message, 2014). In addition, their tourism potential is becoming an independent object of academic interest (Smagulov, 2024).

Summarizing, one can state a progressive drift of Kazakhstani museological thought from classical historical description toward modern digital and interdisciplinary methodologies. Such a shift reflects a qualitative expansion of the social functions of museums, proving that today they act not merely as keepers of antiquities, but as fully-fledged centers of education, communication and innovation.

## Results

As a result of the conducted scientific analysis, the theoretical and methodological foundations of museum studies research in Kazakhstan have been systematized. Its developmental logic and contemporary vectors have been determined. The obtained results are aggregated into several interconnected scientific propositions.

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First, it has been established that the development of museology in Kazakhstan bears a pronounced evolutionary character, rigidly determined by historical stages. While during the Soviet period museum affairs executed a predominantly ideological function, during the years of independence its content reoriented toward the actualization of national values. At the contemporary stage, the activity of museums acquires a polyfunctional character. Today, they have transformed into authoritative centers for research work, education, cultural communication and digital transformations. These shifts visually testify to a qualitative expansion of the methodological base of museological science.

Second, based on the results of analyzing the works of local authors, four key research directions have been verified: historical-cultural, cultural, pedagogical and digital. The historical-cultural direction examines museums through the prism of safeguarding national heritage and introducing unique sources into scientific circulation. The cultural approach interprets the museum environment as a space for cultural communication and broad social interaction. The pedagogical vector substantiates the educational and upbringing potential of the institutions. Finally, the digital direction accumulates issues regarding the integration of information technologies into everyday museum practice.

Third, during the research, the diversity and interdisciplinary character of the applied methodological toolkit have been proven. System analysis, the comparative-historical method, content analysis and the method of cultural interpretation have definitively established themselves as the core apparatus of museology. It is precisely the synergistic combination of these methods that allows for a comprehensive investigation of museum processes.

Fourth, the dominant influence of cross-cutting digitalization processes on the development of modern museum affairs has been proven. Virtual exhibitions, electronic archives and interactive solutions actively shape new formats of institutional activity. This trend substantially increases the inclusiveness of museums, substantially expanding their target audience. Furthermore, digital tools elevate the research and educational activities of the institutions to a fundamentally different qualitative level.

Fifth, a sustained growth in the social and cultural role of museums within the life of society is recorded. The obtained results demonstrate that modern museums have outgrown the status of traditional depositories of material heritage. Today, they act as effective platforms for public dialogue, centers of enlightenment and strategic tools of cultural policy. This visually confirms the strengthening of the institutional status and significance of museums in contemporary society.

Sixth, the defining role of the national component in the genesis of local museological thought has been revealed. Within the Kazakhstani research discourse, the focus of attention is rigidly centered on reinterpreting historical heritage from national positions, safeguarding ethnocultural codes and consolidating identity. This vector substantially enriches the problem-thematic field of museology, increasing its academic value.

## **Conclusion**

The conducted study has allowed for a comprehensive conceptualization of the theoretical and methodological foundation of museum studies in Kazakhstan. Scientific analysis demonstrated that local museology formed progressively, passing through distinct historical stages. And while at the initial stage museums merely preserved and exhibited artifacts, today their substance has cardinally expanded, transforming them into multifunctional sociocultural institutions.

In the course of the work, it has been proven that the evolution of museology in the country is clearly divided into three periods: the Soviet phase, the independence stage and the contemporary era. Undoubtedly, during the Soviet years, the activity of museums bore a purely ideological character, yet it was precisely then that the professional baseline was laid – collections, exhibition methodologies, and scientific description principles were formed. During the years of independence, museum affairs acquired new meanings, becoming a key instrument for reviving national heritage and shaping historical consciousness. At present, under the influence of globalization and innovations, the work of museums is entering a fundamentally different qualitative level.

Furthermore, the results of the work point to the formation of several independent research directions. Today, the historical-cultural, cultural, pedagogical and digital approaches constitute the methodological core of museology. Developing in close interconnection, these directions allow for a comprehensive study of the museum business. The

growing weight of the digital direction is particularly noticeable: the integration of IT technologies into museum practice has firmly entered the current agenda of scientific discussions.

The methodological toolkit applied in the study has fully proven its effectiveness. The chosen methods allowed for examining the object from different angles and exhaustively disclosing its structural and functional specifics. Ultimately, it was possible to substantiate the necessity of perceiving museum business not simply as a historical or cultural phenomenon, but as a complex sociocultural system.

High public interest in local museum affairs, which has become the backbone of contemporary culture and state policy, is visually confirmed by figures: the number of museums has grown to 286, while the flow of visitors has reached 6.7 million people. The transformation of the industry from a simple repository of artifacts into a “center for constructing historical consciousness” requires large-scale theoretical and empirical inquiries from scholars. Digitalization within the framework of the “E-Museum” project remains a special research challenge, where it is necessary to scientifically describe more than 4.5 million exhibits without losing their authenticity. It is obvious that the development vector of modern museums today is inextricably linked with cross-cutting digitalization processes. The launch of virtual platforms, the creation of digital archives, and the implementation of interactive technologies noticeably increase the accessibility of institutions, expanding their target audience. In parallel, their educational function is also strengthening: museums increasingly assert themselves as centers of informal learning. This trend directly stimulates the evolution of museum pedagogy and the emergence of flexible educational methodologies.

An analysis of the works of Kazakhstani authors shows that local museology firmly rests upon national specifics. The reinterpretation of historical heritage from national positions, the safeguarding of ethnocultural values and the strengthening of identity invariably remain within the focus of researchers’ attention. Such centralization substantially increases not only the scientific but also the social value of museum projects. Nevertheless, general conclusions frequently suffer from one-sidedness, since the majority of the proposed models of historical-cultural transformation blindly copy the experience of large capital and republican complexes. To understand the real picture of local museum affairs, theoretical propositions ought to be correlated with the daily practice of small regional, district, or rural museums. If the authors had subjected the acute personnel deficit on the ground, the formal approach to digitizing exhibitions and the still-living inertia of Soviet conservatism to critical review, the validity of such studies would have increased, multiply expanding their applied utility for the development of local cultural tourism and creative industries.

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