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Historical References in Contemporary North Macedonian Souvenirs

Ferhan Egemen Sunal

Abstract

The Republic of North Macedonia offers both citizens and visitors a unique experience, rich in cultural diversity and historical significance. Skopje, in particular, stands out as a city shaped by the influence of several great empires and nations, with a striking mix of architectural styles, including neoclassicism and brutalism. This study focuses on Skopje, examining how the city's multifaceted history is reflected in the souvenir market. Souvenirs, as tangible symbols of travel, raise an intriguing question about how the essence of a place is captured and preserved. The objective of this research is to analyze the current souvenir market and explore how the designs of these items incorporate historical references. The study centers on the souvenir booths, booths, located on the Old Bazaar side of the Stone Bridge in Skopje's historic center. By conducting a content analysis of souvenir photographs, the study identifies the design elements that connect these objects to the region's historical narrative. To interpret the data, Gordon's classification of souvenir objects is employed, categorizing the items into five distinct types. The findings reveal that these souvenirs reflect the intricate, multi-layered history of North Macedonia with a visitor preference for portable, visually iconic, and culturally meaningful souvenirs, through diverse object types. Through their design, these objects not only commemorate the cultural heritage of the region but also communicate its historical significance to both visitors and locals alike. This study offers insights into how souvenirs function as vessels of cultural memory, capturing the essence of Skopje's past and present.

Keywords: Souvenirs, Skopje, Historical references, Cultural heritage

Introduction

Souvenirs serve as tangible memories of travel, encapsulating the essence of a place, event, or cultural experience. The term “souvenir” originates from the Middle French word *souvenir*, meaning “to remember,” derived from the Latin *subvenire*, meaning “to come to mind” (Hoven & Eggen, 2005). These objects function as both personal keepsakes and cultural artifacts, reinforcing the emotional and intellectual connections between travelers and their destinations. As Hitchcock and Teague (2002) explain, a souvenir’s primary role is to store or evoke memories, acting as a physical manifestation of travel experiences, relationships, and historical narratives (Singh, 2018). Gordon (1986) introduced a typology of souvenirs, categorizing them into pictorial images, piece-of-the-rock items, symbolic shorthand, markers, and local products. These classifications highlight the diversity of souvenirs and their ability to convey cultural and historical significance.

In the Republic of North Macedonia, and particularly in Skopje, souvenirs represent the country’s layered past. With influences ranging from ancient civilizations to contemporary architectural movements like neoclassicism and brutalism, the city offers a rich tapestry of historical motifs. This study examines how these elements are reflected in contemporary souvenir designs, with a particular focus on souvenir markets near the iconic Stone Bridge.

Historical Background

Skopje, the capital of North Macedonia, has long been a significant crossroads in the Balkans due to its strategic geographical location. Situated at the confluence of the Vardar and Morava valleys, the city lies along one of the oldest and most crucial north-south trade routes in Europe. This corridor extends from Thessaloniki and the Aegean Sea in the south to the Pannonian Basin via Niš and Belgrade in the north (İbrahimgil & Aksulu, 2024). As a result, Skopje has historically served as a major commercial hub, facilitating cultural exchanges and economic activity between different civilizations. The city is divided into two main areas by the Vardar River. On one side lies the Old City, which is home to significant historical landmarks, including the Skopje Fortress and a Roman aqueduct to the north (Britannica, 2024). The other side, modern Skopje, represents a contrast between historical influences and contemporary urban developments.

The history of Skopje dates back to antiquity. The earliest known inhabitants were the Dardanians, an Illyrian tribe who settled in the region. The Romans later in-

corporated this area into their empire, establishing the province of Dardania. The city was referred to as Skupi by Ptolemy, signifying its importance as a regional center. However, in 518 CE, a devastating earthquake severely damaged the city (TDV, n.d.). It was subsequently rebuilt under Emperor Justinian I, during which it expanded significantly as part of the Eastern Roman Empire. In 696, the city fell under the control of the Southern Slavs, who renamed it Skoplje (also spelled Skopie or Skopje). Under Bulgarian Tsar Samuil (r. 976–1014), Skopje grew into a prominent trade center. Throughout the medieval period, the city changed hands multiple times between the Byzantines, Bulgarians, and Serbs, each leaving a lasting imprint on its urban and cultural landscape.

In 1282, Serbian King Stefan Milutin conquered Skopje, marking the beginning of Serbian dominance in the region, which lasted for over a century. The city flourished as an administrative and trade center during Serbian rule. However, this era came to an end when the Ottoman Empire officially took control of Skopje in 1392. Under Ottoman rule, Skopje became one of the most important administrative and military centers in the Balkans. It served as a base for Ottoman conquests into Serbia and Bosnia and retained its strategic significance until the fall of Belgrade in 1521 (Britannica, 2024). For over five centuries, Skopje remained under Ottoman administration, shaping its architectural and cultural landscape with mosques, markets, and caravanserais that still stand today (Danforth, 2024).

In 1912, during the Balkan Wars, Skopje was occupied by Serbian forces, marking the end of Ottoman rule. The Treaty of Bucharest (1913) officially granted the city to Serbia, integrating it into the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, later known as Yugoslavia. After World War II, Skopje became a key city within the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and was designated as the capital of the Republic of North Macedonia following the country's independence in 1991 (TDV, n.d.). A major turning point in the city's history occurred in 1963, when a powerful earthquake destroyed much of Skopje. The reconstruction efforts that followed, particularly in 1965, introduced the dominant architectural style of brutalism, reshaping the city's skyline (Kızılcıoğlu, 2020). In 2014, further urban renewal projects sought to blend historical references with neoclassical aesthetics (Şerbetçi, 2017), contributing to the evolving visual identity of Skopje.

Methodology

This study examines the most commonly encountered souvenir objects in Skopje's historical city center, specifically within the Turkish side of the Stone Bridge. The analysis follows Gordon's (1986) five-classification framework for souvenirs, providing a systematic approach to categorizing these objects. The classification consists of, Pictorial Images, Piece of the Rock Souvenirs, Symbolic Shorthand Souvenirs, Markers and Local Product Souvenirs. Pictorial images include postcards and photographs that visually capture a destination. Piece-of-the-rock souvenirs are physical fragments, such as shells or stones, taken directly from a place. Symbolic shorthand objects, like keychains or magnets, condense cultural identity into small, recognizable forms. Markers are items that explicitly state their origin, such as T-shirts with city names. Finally, local products encompass artisanal goods and traditional crafts, reflecting a region's heritage. These categories help analyze how souvenirs function as carriers of memory and cultural representation. To ensure a structured and objective study, the research follows three key methodological steps: defining the study area, identifying the target objects, and employing a content analysis of documented souvenirs.

Study Area Definition

The research focuses on the Old Bazaar side of the Stone Bridge, a historically rich area known for its vibrant markets and cultural landmarks. The study area (Figure 1) begins at the Stone Bridge, extending through Philip II Square and the Monument of Philip II of Macedonia. The National Gallery of Davut Pasha Hammam serves as the entrance to the Turkish market, which naturally leads to the uphill streets towards Kurşunlu Han and Bit Bazaar. These boundaries were chosen due to their high concentration of souvenir booths, stalls, and museum stores, making them the most relevant locations for analyzing contemporary souvenir trends in Skopje.

Object Selection and Data Collection

The study focuses exclusively on physical souvenir objects available in touristic booth settings within the designated area. Online stores, websites, and virtual experiences are excluded to ensure that only souvenirs encountered in a real-world, in-person boothping environment are considered. The research emphasizes the natural presentation of souvenirs, capturing how they are displayed and perceived by visitors during a typical stroll through the area. To maintain the authenticity of

this observational approach, no interaction with booth owners or sellers took place, and no effort was made to extract specific objects that could disrupt the natural retail setting.

Data collection was conducted over two separate field visits, ensuring consistency and reducing the possibility of external influences on the souvenir selection. The first visit took place on May 7, 2024, followed by a second visit on June 14, 2024. Prior to these visits, an exploratory walk was carried out to familiarize the researchers with the layout of the market and the variety of available souvenirs. The primary photographs used in this study were captured during the second visit. Both visits were conducted on weekdays between 11:00 AM and 3:00 PM, ensuring consistency in booth conditions and minimizing variability in product availability.

Data Analysis

Following data collection, a thematic analysis was executed under the category of Content Analysis (Sage1, 2025) methodology. Content analysis was applied after the description of data in the photos, which was assigned to be use in a thematic analysis (Sage2, 2025) in order to classify and categorize the documented objects. Each souvenir was individually analyzed for its visual and thematic connection to historical references. After identifying unique objects, repeated images were eliminated to focus on the most representative examples. The objects were then systematically categorized using Gordon's (1986) five souvenir classifications, providing a structured framework for analyzing their relationship to Skopje's cultural and historical identity. This methodology ensures a comprehensive yet structured approach to understanding the role of historical references in contemporary souvenirs, providing insight into how Skopje's rich past is reflected in its tangible cultural artifacts.

Findings

Figure 1 shows the map of the Old Bazaar side of the Stone Bridge, where the shops and booths in the research were located.

Figure 1

The historic center including the Stone Bridge and the Old Bazaar



Source: Google

Figure 2 shows a group of small souvenir booths positioned near the entrance to the Old Bazaar, just after the Stone Bridge. The booths are arranged side by side, featuring open cabinets and mobile stands filled with various souvenirs. A mix of colors dominates the scene, with vibrant reds and yellows from the North Macedonian flag-themed items contrasting against earthy tones of handcrafted goods. Inside the main cabinet (Figure 3), a collection of magnets is displayed. These magnets vary in shape, including circular, rectangular, and irregular cutouts. Some feature photographic images of Skopje's landmarks, while others have hand-drawn illustrations. Alongside the magnets, mugs and tableware are present, with red and yellow North Macedonian flag prints. The decorative plates are round, featuring engravings or painted designs of historical buildings. There are also glass bottles with engraved monuments, giving them a traditional look. The ashtrays and snow globes depict either Skopje's skyline or national symbols.

Figure 2

Souvenir booths at the grand square



Figure 3

Selection of souvenirs



Two mobile stands are seen in Figure 4, filled with magnets. The magnets are mostly rectangular but include some oval and irregularly shaped designs. The color palette is dominated by red, white, and blue. Some magnets feature golden and silver embossing, adding texture and depth. The artistic illustrations of Skopje's monuments are rendered in either black-and-white sketches or colorful digital print. Figure 5 highlights decorative plates and snow globes, placed alongside handbags made with local traditional craftsmanship. The plates come in various sizes and

shapes, including circular and square, with dominant colors of white, blue, and gold. The snow globes contain miniature models of Skopje's landmarks, with bases painted in red and gold. In the background, handbags made of woven fabric are visible, featuring floral and geometric patterns in earthy tones such as beige, brown, and dark red. Wall decorations in the back may include wooden plaques or textile-based artwork with historical motifs.

Figure 4

Standing towers



Figure 5

Selection of souvenirs



Figure 6

Another souvenir stand on the main square



Figure 6 showcases a bustling souvenir stand in the main square, brimming with a diverse array of items that encapsulate the cultural and historical essence of Skopje. The stand is densely packed, with two upright displays prominently featuring numerous magnets in a variety of shapes, sizes, and designs. Some magnets display photographic images of Skopje's landmarks, while others feature hand-drawn illustrations or embossed details that highlight traditional motifs. On the farthest stand, a collection of postcards is visible, offering visitors a classic keepsake to commemorate their time in Skopje. Below the magnets, several fabric bags are arranged, each printed with the word "Macedonia." These bags vary in design, incorporating national colors and patterns that emphasize local identity. Resting on top of the bags, small accessories such as keychains and folding fans add variety to the display. Each item contributes to an immersive souvenir experience. Figure 7 provides a closer look at the intricate shapes and vibrant colors of the magnets and bags.

Figure 7

Close look at some objects



Figure 8

Souvenir booths while entering the bazaar



Figure 8 depicts another row of souvenir booths standing side by side, positioned closer to the entrance of the Old Bazaar. These booths display a wide selection of traditional and culturally significant items. Figure 9 provides a closer look at the objects in one of these booths, revealing an assortment of souvenirs similar to those previously seen, including magnets featuring Skopje's landmarks. However,

this booth also offers additional magnet designs depicting folk figurines, adding a unique cultural touch. A collection of mini bags with traditional patterns is also prominently displayed. These bags showcase intricate floral and geometric motifs in rich shades of red, dark blue, and earthy beige. Some are adorned with embroidered local symbols, while others feature tassels or decorative buttons, enhancing their artisanal appeal. A set of prayer mats, neatly arranged on a metal hanger, is also visible, further contributing to the booth's selection of souvenirs.

Figure 9

A close-up look at the objects



Figure 10

A close-up look at the objects



Figure 10 showcases a wider selection of bags, pouches, and wallets, each featuring traditional elements of hand-woven textiles. These items display intricate patterns and rich colors, reflecting the country's artisanal heritage. In the background, a standing display holds a variety of magnets, predominantly rectangular in shape. These magnets showcase Skopje's landmarks, cultural motifs, and traditional designs, adding to the diverse souvenir collection. The combination of fabric goods and decorative magnets highlights the craftsmanship and cultural significance of the items available. This display provides visitors with a range of keepsakes that embody North Macedonia's artistic and historical identity.

Figure 11

A booth window display



The route continues with the first booth inside the Old Bazaar, where a glass display case showcases a diverse selection of objects, with ceramic tableware being the most dominant (Figure 11). The bottom shelf holds various traditional metal artifacts, including an ornate coffee set, a tea glass encased in a decorative metal shell, a decorative helmet, and a lighting fixture with intricate glass components. These metal objects reflect traditional craftsmanship, blending both functional and ornamental elements. Moving upward, the middle shelves feature an array of ceramic decorative pieces and tableware, adorned with patterns reminiscent of traditional Ottoman pottery. Among these ceramics, a small box filled with what appears to

be antique watches is also visible, adding a historical dimension to the display. Additionally, the middle shelf includes a set of beaded bracelets, introducing a hand-crafted jewelry element. The top shelf presents an assortment of gold pendants, which contrast with the more rustic and cultural artifacts below, as well as additional antique watches. While the ceramic items prominently display Ottoman-inspired patterns, some of the other objects appear more universally recognizable, offering a blend of local heritage and broader, timeless appeal. This booth provides a glimpse into the cultural fusion present in Skopje's Old Bazaar.

Figure 12

A souvenir booth on the street



Figure 12 shows a booth deeper within the Old Bazaar, featuring displays of magnets and postcards at the front. The magnets prominently showcase local symbols, incorporating North Macedonian flag colors alongside folk clothing and figures. The postcards highlight city landmarks or the national flag. In the background, framed illustrations are visible, though they lack local or traditional elements. The glass display holds various ceramic tableware pieces, predominantly in red and yellow, reflecting the colors of the national flag. A closer look at the ceramic objects provide us the functions as mugs, teapots, tea glasses, plates and shot glasses. The decoration of the objects consist of the national flag combined with the national colours and the map of the Republic of North Macedonia.

Figure 13

A selection of ceramic tableware



Figure 14

A display of magnets



Figure 14 presents a display of magnets, all featuring the same design—miniature replicas of traditional shoes. These items emphasize cultural heritage through their detailed craftsmanship. Figure 15 showcases a vertical stand displaying a diverse selection of objects. The most prominent among them are miniature versions of traditional musical instruments, meticulously crafted to replicate their full-sized

counterparts. Below, several pouches and keyrings are arranged, with the keyrings also designed as small-scale reproductions of traditional footwear, reinforcing the theme of cultural symbolism. In the background, authentic leather shoes are displayed, representing the original versions of the footwear featured in the magnets and keyrings.

Figure 15

A display of musical instruments



Figure 16

A display of magnets



Figure 16 presents another set of magnet displays, featuring designs that depict prominent monuments and cityscapes of Skopje. Some of these magnets incorporate the name “Skopje” within the design, reinforcing their role as location-based souvenirs. The visual representations range from detailed architectural depictions to stylized artistic interpretations of the city’s landmarks. In Figure 17, a display of T-shirts is arranged in a manner that highlights national identity and cultural symbolism. The majority of these garments feature prints of the North Macedonian flag, the country’s map, or a combination of both. One particular T-shirt on the left prominently showcases an image of the Stone Bridge, accompanied by the text “Macedonia,” emphasizing an iconic city landmark. Below the T-shirts (Figure 18), a densely packed arrangement of handbags is visible, crafted from both leather and fabric. These handbags incorporate traditional handwoven patterns, reflecting local textile craftsmanship. In the background, on the left side, a set of copper Turkish coffee pots is displayed. These pots, commonly associated with the Ottoman coffee culture, signify the historical and cultural ties between North Macedonia and the broader Balkan region.

Figure 17

A display of Tshirts



Figure 18

Bags and coffee pots



Figure 19 illustrates a glass display in a booth window featuring three metal replicas of the Alexander the Great Statue. Positioned on the top left, the statues are accompanied by tambourines, a traditional musical instrument (Britannica, 2017). The reflection on the glass offers a glimpse of cushion covers hanging in front of the booth, showcasing local fabrics adorned with intricate patterns and tassels. The vibrant colors and designs of the fabrics further emphasize the cultural richness of the display. In Figure 20, a different booth is seen displaying an array of framed calligraphy, adding an artistic touch to the booth's offerings. The variety and elegance of the calligraphy are displayed in neatly organized frames, reflecting the artistry of the region. A wider view in Figure 21 captures a more extensive selection of items from the same booth, providing a broader perspective of its merchandise. The booth presents a diverse collection, including not only calligraphy but also shoes, flags, bags, and magnets.

Figure 19

A booth window display



Figure 20

A display of framed calligraphies



Figure 21

Behind the calligraphy stand



Figure 22 showcases a booth display featuring an assortment of pouches, bags, keyrings, and postcards. The items are arranged attractively, with each showcasing unique designs that represent local culture and heritage. The pouches and bags come in various sizes and colors, some decorated with traditional patterns, while the keyrings offer small, souvenir-sized keepsakes for visitors. The postcards depict local landmarks and scenes, providing a glimpse into the region's beauty and history. In Figure 23, another booth display features soccer balls and uniforms in national flag colors. The vibrant red, yellow, and black hues of the items are striking and symbolize national pride. The soccer balls are prominently displayed, with the flag colors adorning each, while the uniforms offer a sense of unity and passion for the sport. This display caters to both sports enthusiasts and those looking for patriotic memorabilia.

Figure 22

A souvenir booth



Figure 23

North Macedonian components



Results

This study, based on Gordon's (1986) typology of souvenirs, categorizes the various objects encountered in Skopje's Old Bazaar. The analysis identifies five primary types of souvenirs—Pictorial Images, Piece-of-the-Rock Souvenirs, Symbolic Shorthand Souvenirs, Markers, and Local Products. The findings reveal how these souvenir types reflect the cultural and historical identity of Skopje and the Republic of North Macedonia.

The most prevalent souvenir type observed in the study was pictorial images, which include postcards, magnets, and framed photographs. These items serve as visual representations of Skopje's landmarks, landscapes, and cultural icons. Postcards, often showcasing notable cityscapes, such as the Stone Bridge and Skopje's skyline, offer a tangible way for visitors to capture and share memories of their visit. Magnets also play a significant role in this category, often displaying photographs or artistic renderings of key monuments, such as the Alexander the Great statue or the city's historical buildings. These items allow visitors to take home a small, portable image of the place, encapsulating the city's unique atmosphere. In Figure 6, a souvenir stand offers a wide range of magnets, some featuring photographic images, while others are adorned with hand-drawn illustrations of Skopje's famous monuments. These items, with their focus on visual representation, act as effective reminders of the city's history and landmarks.

While not as common, piece-of-the-rock souvenirs were also present in the form of objects that reference Skopje's natural and historical heritage. These included small decorative items, such as stones, fragments, or materials associated with local landmarks, though they were less directly sourced from specific monuments or locations. For instance, in Figure 11, glass bottles engraved with Skopje's monuments evoke the city's rich architectural history while embodying the concept of a piece of the rock—albeit in a more symbolic sense. These objects help visitors connect with the physicality of the place, providing a tangible fragment of Skopje's environment or a landmark that remains part of their souvenir collection.

Symbolic shorthand souvenirs are small, simple objects that encapsulate the cultural identity of a destination in a compact form. In Skopje, this category was represented by keychains, magnets, and small figurines designed to resemble traditional items, such as shoes and musical instruments. These items symbolize local traditions and crafts, condensing Skopje's cultural identity into easily recognizable forms. For example, in Figure 14, keychains in the shape of traditional shoes are

displayed alongside magnets bearing the same design. These items serve as affordable, easily portable reminders of cultural symbols, offering visitors a piece of the local culture that can be taken home and shared with others. Similarly, in Figure 15, miniature versions of traditional musical instruments, such as the “tambourine,” reflect the region’s cultural heritage while also serving as functional souvenirs for visitors seeking to remember their experience.

Markers, which explicitly identify the origin of the object, were widely present in the souvenir displays around Skopje. Items such as T-shirts, bags, and ceramic plates bore inscriptions of the word “Macedonia” or images of national symbols, serving as markers of place. For instance, Figure 17 showcases T-shirts adorned with prints of the North Macedonian flag and the country’s map, making them clear markers of national identity. These souvenirs explicitly link the visitor to the country’s cultural and national heritage, allowing the wearer or owner to assert their connection to Skopje or North Macedonia. Additionally, Figure 12 presents ceramic tableware decorated with national colors and symbols, reinforcing the idea of markers that visually identify Skopje as the object’s origin.

The category of local products, encompassing artisanal goods and traditional crafts, was perhaps the most diverse in terms of cultural significance. In Figures 5 and 10, a wide selection of handcrafted items, including bags, wallets, pouches, and other fabric-based products, reflect the intricate artistry of local weavers. These products often featured traditional patterns and motifs, demonstrating a fusion of function and artistry. The woven bags and fabric goods, frequently found alongside other souvenirs such as magnets and postcards, highlight the craftsmanship of local artisans while preserving textile traditions. Additionally, traditional metal artifacts, such as coffee sets, tea glasses, and decorative helmets (Figure 11), exemplify the local production of functional yet ornamental items. These objects connect visitors with the artisanal heritage of the region, offering them a piece of Skopje’s long-standing traditions.

The collected data provides an overview (Table 1) of various objects categorized into four main groups: Personal Items, Decoration, Home, Clothing and Accessories, and Miscellaneous. Each object type is associated with the number of times it was observed.

Within the **Personal Items** category, keychains were seen five times, making them one of the more frequently observed objects. Magnets were the most frequently seen item in this category, appearing eight times. Postcards were noted twice. The

Decoration category includes a range of ornamental objects. Decorative objects and snow globes were each observed once. Decorative plates and figurines were seen twice each, while framed objects appeared four times. The **Home** category consists of various household items. Coffee pots and mugs were both observed twice, while tableware was seen three times. Cushion covers, drink bottles, and lighting were each noted once. The **Clothing and Accessories** category features a diverse selection of items. Bags were the most frequently seen item, appearing nine times. Hats and shoes were each observed twice. Jewellery, scarves, and watches were each seen once. T-shirts appeared three times. Lastly, the **Miscellaneous** category includes a variety of objects. Flags were seen three times, while musical instruments and soccer balls were both observed twice. Praying mats and drink bottles were each noted once. The data reflects a diverse range of objects across different categories, with some items appearing more frequently than others.

Table 1

Object Types

Object Type	Category	Number of times to see
Keychain	Personal Items	5
Magnet		8
Postcard		2
Decorative Object	Decoration	1
Decorative Plate		2
Figurine		2
Framed Object		4
Snow Globes		1
Coffee Pot	Home	2
Cushion Cover		1
Drink Bottle		1
Lighting		1
Mug		2
Tableware		3

Bag	Clothing and Accessories	9
Hat		2
Jewellery		1
Scarf		1
Shoes		2
Tshirt		3
Watch		1
Flag	Miscellaneous	3
Musical Instrument		2
Praying Mat		1
Soccer Ball		1

Table 2

Findings in Gordon's categories

Souvenir Type	Description	Examples
Pictorial Images	Visual representations of Skopje's landmarks, landscapes, and cultural icons.	Postcards, magnets, framed photographs showcasing cityscapes and famous monuments such as the Stone Bridge.
Piece-of-the-Rock Souvenirs	Objects referencing Skopje's natural and historical heritage, often symbolic fragments of local landmarks.	Glass bottles engraved with monuments or replicas of monuments
Symbolic Short-hand Souvenirs	Simple, compact objects representing local cultural symbols and traditions.	Keychains, small bags, musical instruments.
Markers	Items explicitly identifying the origin of the object with national or local symbols.	T-shirts and bags with the word "Macedonia," ceramic plates with national symbols, and national flags.
Local Products	Artisanal goods and traditional crafts reflecting local craftsmanship and heritage.	Handcrafted woven bags, wallets, ceramic coffee sets, and metal artifacts like tea glasses or decorative helmets.

The analyzed data (Table 2) highlights notable patterns and comparisons across different souvenir categories and object types. In terms of frequency, **Bags** from the “Clothing and Accessories” category were the most observed item, appearing 9 times. This is significantly higher compared to several other object types, such as **Snow Globes**, **Cushion Covers**, and **Lighting**, each observed only once, making them the least frequently seen items.

Among the broader categories, **Clothing and Accessories** had the highest number of observations overall, with items like bags, hats, T-shirts, and shoes contributing significantly. In contrast, the **Decoration** category, while diverse with items like decorative objects, plates, and figurines, had fewer total appearances, with most items observed only once or twice.

Magnets were the second most frequently observed item, appearing 8 times, followed by **Keychains** (5) and **Framed Objects** (4). On the other hand, symbolic and functional items like **Jewellery**, **Scarves**, and **Drink Bottles** were observed minimally, each appearing only once.

When comparing categories, the “Miscellaneous” group, including items like flags, musical instruments, and praying mats, showed limited variety and frequency, with none of the items appearing more than three times. In contrast, the “Home” category, which includes mugs, tableware, and coffee pots, maintained moderate visibility with items generally appearing 2-3 times.

The results illustrate the diversity of souvenir types in Skopje’s Old Bazaar, showcasing notable variations in frequency and representation. Highlighting the diversity of souvenirs in Skopje’s Old Bazaar, showcasing variations in frequency and representation. The prominence of portable and visually representative items reflects their appeal to visitors, offering a tangible connection to the city’s identity. Many souvenirs, such as magnets and engraved glass bottles, draw on historical and cultural references, emphasizing Skopje’s landmarks and heritage. Traditional crafts, like woven bags and ceramic artifacts, further highlight the region’s artisanal traditions. The frequency of portable and visually representative items such as magnets, keychains, and bags suggests that producers may focus on enhancing visual storytelling and portability in their designs. Additionally, integrating traditional motifs into functional items like woven textiles or ceramics can increase cultural value while maintaining practicality. These patterns emphasize the prominence of portable, practical, and visually representative items in the souvenir market, reflecting a connection to Skopje’s cultural, historical, and artisanal identity.

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