



Tourist Perception of Waqf as Spiritual heritage in Iran

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Abstract

As a symbol of the Islamic spiritual economy, *Waqf*¹ has been always present and alive in all aspects of the Islamic countries, and it has attracted the attentions of many researchers of different fields due to its multidimensional functional. Based on their desire for eternity, they defined *Waqf* in terms of a proverb saying “I benefit from whatever I endow”. In several tourists’ travelogues such as travelogues by Nasir Khusraw, Jean Chardin, etc. has mentioned this spiritual tradition as a humanistic economy showing the effects of *Waqf* on perceiving the tourist destination. Since the modern generation of tourists look for new experiences, thus obtaining a rich content of this spiritual heritage can satisfy them and help the promotion of humanistic models of economy such as *Waqf*. In terms of its objective, this is a practical research, and it is descriptive-analytical based on its data collection method. The results are obtained in meta-synthesis of documents, articles and travelogues relation to the *Waqf* tradition. Indeed, the main objective of this article is to provide the mentioned introduction, promotion and reinforcement to understand the different aspects of *Waqf* tradition based on the travelogues in order to reinforce the perceived value by the tourists of Iranian cities so that the

¹. In Islamic terms, *Waqf* means the preserve and maintenance of properties and assets and to use them exclusively for the altruistic goals

modeling of these concepts leads to the promotion of this spiritual economy model among the other cultures. The results show that considering the perceivable aspects of *Waqf*, this intangible heritage can be introduced to the tourists in terms of four main aspects including the emotional, cognitive, functional and social aspects and to promote this spiritual heritage based on the religious background of tourists at the international level with regard to the environmental-humanistic aspects of economy; as in Iranian culture, it is believed that “give bread to everyone who enters this house and don’t ask his faith, because the one who deserves a life for god, deserves a bread for us”.

Keywords: *Waqf*, Spiritual economy, Tourist perception, Iran cultur





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1. Introduction and problem statement

Islamic cities have unique requirements and unique cultural heritages whose lack of suitable introduction leads to the weakness of the perceived value of such destinations in the tourists' minds. Such a value implies the benefits that the tourists gain against their spent costs (Bianchi, et al., 2014: 217). It is too simplistic to consider the value only as an exchange of quality with the price (Lee, Yoon & Lee; cf. Mosalman, 2007: 82) because the perceived value is a complicated and multidimensional concept containing the tangible and intangible characteristic of the destination (kalantari, 2010: 52). However, introducing the spiritual heritage of the cities we can reinforce the tourists' perception of the destination; and *Waqf* is one of such heritages.

In Iranian cities, the spiritual tradition of *Waqf* has led to the adjustment of wealth, social balance and cooperation in different historical eras (Kashi Poormohammdi, 2012: 34). Accordingly, *Waqf* has the sufficient social and cultural power to be introduced as one of the practical spiritual heritages worldwide and it can reinforce the tourist's perception of the Islamic cities. Moreover, from the economic point of view, since the spiritual economy, i.e. the volunteer or non-beneficial part of the economy that has some volunteering motivation based on altruism with low costs and high efficiency is opposed to the governmental or public section, nowadays it gets more and more important among many societies (Jahanian, 2017: 109). Thus we can introduce this spiritual tradition as an operation model of the spiritual economy at international level. Such an effect of *Waqf* can be searched and found in the documents and writings of neutral individuals such as foreign tourists and researchers.

The available documents show that the tourists have stated the followings as the main socio-economic functions of *Waqf* in Islamic cities: (1) preparing and facilitating the religious rituals in the cities, including the organization and preparation of some part of all of the current expenses, repair and maintenance of the mosques, religious schools, etc.; (2) providing charities for the poor people, students and schools and maintaining some hospitals, public bathes, and other charitable affairs from the profits of endowed buildings; (3) constructing inexpensive houses for the poor people and conceding the endowed lands, shops, and workshops to people in long-term contracts; and (4) creating jobs in the fields of real estates, holly places, facilities,

commercial and industrial lands and in the Waqf organizations of different cities of Islamic countries. The effects of Waqf in the cities is such considerable that the researchers believe that the morphology of Islamic cities have been influenced by Waqf along with other factors such as the climate, economy, communicational networks, political regimes, health, etc. (Shokouhi, 1994: 781).

Accordingly, one of the interesting and important phenomena of the Islamic cities is the continuance of the real estate ownership through the Islamic rule of Waqf while a considerable part of the historical heritage of touristic cities has been created and maintained on the basis of the mentioned tradition. Despite the effective functions of this tradition, unfortunately the authorities have failed to introduce it as a spiritual heritage of the Iranian cities to the foreign tourists, while it could enrich the tourists' perception of the Iranian destination. To meet such a goal, we can re-read the travelogues of the foreign tourists and analyze their perception at the times when the mentioned old economic tradition was more concrete for the tourists in order to identify the effective aspects of Waqf in the tourists' minds in form of a conceptual model, then based on the obtained model, we can generate more interesting and practical content on the functions of the spiritual economy in order to shape the tourists' perception of the Iranian tourist destinations.

The results of such attempts in the tourism industry would lead to the reinforce of the tourist's sense of belonging based on a richer perception of a destination and realization of the people's lifestyle. Besides, it can play as an effective factor reselecting the destination and tourist satisfaction.

2. Theoretical concepts

2.1. Definitions and concepts of *Waqf*

Waqf is one of the oldest valuable Islamic heritages and it has attracted the attentions since the beginning of Islam in all Islamic cities. Despite all ups and downs, *Waqf* has had valuable and considerable effects in different cultural, social and economic aspects of the Islamic cities. In Islamic terms, *Waqf* means the preserve and maintenance of properties and assets and to use them exclusively for the altruistic goals (Reymon, 1991: 23). *Waqf* is the permanent possession of the asset and using its benefits for the charitable affairs. Prophet Muhammad was the first person in Islam who endowed some properties for *Waqf* purposes (Ansari, 2014: 84-92). *Waqf* has 14 centuries history. At the

beginning of Islam, it was called *Sadaqa Jaria* (current charity). The term *Waqf* is derived from a Hadith by Prophet Muhammad who said “the best heritages for the man are three things: *Waqf*, knowledge and good child” (Kalantari, 2010: 45).

In Iranian-Islamic cities, the endowed elements and spaces are higher than the cities of other Islamic countries. Among such Iranian cities one can refer to Mashhad, Isfahan and Qom. According to the available researches, there are about 114.000 endowed spaces in Iran Like inns, schools, mosques, bathrooms mills, bazaars, etc. (Nezafat, 2008: 96). Nowadays, this tradition not only engages in creating educational and health and business infrastructures, but it plays role in maintaining the buildings and forming the urban spaces, job creation and the development of public services.

In Sunni jurisprudence, waqf, also spelled wakf (Arabic: *وَقْفٌ*; plural *أَوْقَافٌ*, awqāf; Turkish: *wakıf*) (Peter et al., ٢٠١٢, ٧٨) is synonymous with *ḥabs* (*حَبْسٌ*, also called *ḥubs* *حُبْسٌ* or *ḥubus* *حُبُوسٌ* and commonly rendered *habous* in French). *Habs* and similar terms are used mainly by Maliki jurists. In Twelver Shiism, *ḥabs* is a particular type of waqf, in which the founder reserves the right to dispose of the waqf property. The person making the grant is called *al-waqif* (or *al-muhabbis*) while the endowed assets are called *al-mawquf* (or *al-muhabbas*) (Yaacob, 2006: 12).

2.2. Spiritual economy

The main theme in the spiritual economy is to share the assets without catching any profit or financial benefit. All above, in case of *Waqf*, it is believed that *Waqf* causes the increase of the individual wealth and it is considered as charity for the hereafter life besides the spiritual benefits for the endower. In the spiritual economy, it is believed that the person benefits from whatever he endows without catching any profit for it (Amini, 1992: 10-12).

Anthropological analyses of the assemblage of religious practice and economic action have often been viewed as evidence of mystification and have focused on the ‘occult’ dimensions of late capitalism. In contrast, the magic of capitalism not in terms of occult or millennial practices, but rather as the tricks and sleight of hand techniques deployed by economic experts (Rudnycky, 2016: 6).

2.3. Intangible Cultural heritage

Intangible cultural heritage is the rites and rituals, representations, knowledge, skills, tools, handicrafts and their relevant cultural spaces that the societies and communities recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage is transferred from a generation to the other. It is constantly recreated by the societies and groups in response to the environment, and in interaction with their nature and history leading to the sense of identity for those societies and groups, and hence it promotes the respect to the cultural diversity and human creativity (UNESCO, 2003).

2.4. Perceived value of destination

Perceived value is the overall evaluation of the consumer on the desirability of a product or service for his payment. This evaluation is done based on comparing the payments and benefits of a product or service. In other words, perceived value is considered as a two-fold structure: one is the received benefits (e.g. economic, social and relational benefits) and the other is the spent costs (e.g. price, time, effort, risk, and ease) (Zeithaml, 1988: 28).

Perceived value is an important antecedent of satisfaction and has direct positive relationship with customer satisfaction in tourism industry. Reference defined it as “the consumer's overall assessment of the utility of a product based on perceptions of what is received and what is given”. It can be further explained in relation to pricing as the distance between customer perceptions of what is received (utility derived from quality) and what is sacrificed (price and other costs). So, in general tourist perceived value is measured by the gap between the sum of customer's benefits and the total sacrifices (expenditures/time/effort) for taking the trip (Chen & Tsai, ۲۰۰۷: ۱۵)

Besides measuring value only in accordance to price/money, many authors have used different ways to develop a set of dimensions to conceptualize and measure value as a multi-dimensional construct (Table I).

3. Theoretical concepts

In recent years, a new approach has been proposed in which the perceived value is considered as a multidimensional structure. In this approach, it is too simplistic to consider the concept of value merely as an exchange of two variables of quality and price, because the perceived value is a multidimensional and complicated concept (Battour, 2014: 52). This concept has attracted the attention of researchers in the tourism field as well. For

example, Korean introduced the brand, price and risk as the main components of value in restaurant industry (Rudenckyi, 2016: 209) and Battour et al. found that the satisfaction with the recreational services is indeed a function of emotional and cognitive evaluations while the emotional evaluations are more determinant (Battour, 2011: 532).

Leisure time-related activities such as tourism require the imaginations, emotions and feelings of the tourist to explain the purchase behavior. Many tourism products have symbolic meanings beyond their tangible characteristics such as the quality and price, and the emotional interests impact the consumers' choice (Sweeney & Soutar, ۲۰۰۱: ۲۱۲). Based on reviewing the available literature, Table 1 summarizes the different aspects of the perceived value.

Table 1: Identifying the aspects of perceiving the destination

Author	Aspects
Sches et al. (1991)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social • Emotional • Functional • Cognitive • Situational
Growth et al. (1991)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cognitive (perceived benefit) • Psychological • Internal • External
Gronross (1997)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cognitive • Emotional (psychological)
De Reurter et al. (1997)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional aspect or internal value • Functional aspect or external value • Logical aspect
Gilbert, (2000)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social (social desirability) • Emotional • Functional (price or monetary value) • Functional (performance or quality) • Functional (diversity)
Gallarza & Saura (2006)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Functionality • Service quality • Social value • Recreation • Aesthetic aspect • Perceived monetary cost

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceived risk • Spent time and effort
Eid & El-Gohary (2015)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualitative value • Monetary value • Emotional value • Social value • Islamic physical evidences • Islamic nonphysical evidences
Sanchez et al. (2006)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Functional value of the travel agency (facilities) • Functional value of the travel agency's personnel communication (professionalism) • Functional value of the bought travel package (quality) • Functional value of the price • Emotional value • Social value
Source: Gallarza and Saura (2006); Sanchez et al. (2006); Eid & El-Gohary (2015)	

4. Research method

This study is a qualitative research in a meta-synthesis type through reading previous studies on the tourists' perception of different destinations (18 articles and researches) in order to extract the perceived value indexes. Although there is no specific criterion for choosing the number of articles, but Sadelowski, et al. suggest at least 10-12 initial articles in the research (Shirazi, 2017: 101).

After identifying the inclusion and exclusion criteria, we selected those researches that had the needed criteria. In order to search the articles, we used the terms "perception of tourist destination", "spiritual heritage" and "Waqf" as the keywords. Then we found the articles being published between 1991 to 2017 from Scopus, Science Direct, Magiran, SID and Noormag data banks. In this regard, first we extracted 21 articles and 8 travelogues; then the titles and abstracts of the articles were reviewed and evaluated by two experts independently.

At the next phase, the full text of the mentioned articles was studied again considering the quality and appropriateness criteria, and the qualified articles were selected. In case of the disagreements between the two experts we

referred to a third expert and the final appropriateness of the articles was confirmed. In this phase, the inclusion criteria of the studies include their focus on the perception of destination and Waqf, the fitness between the nature and subject of the research, and being conducted in different conditions. The exclusion criteria included the validity, confirmability, reliability and transmissibility. This name is most frequently mentioned in Islamic texts

At the third phase, all selected articles were reviewed precisely and their type and location of the research, target population, objective and data collection methods were explored. Then at the fourth phase, the findings of each research were analyzed, key themes and concepts and their indexes were extracted, and the content of travelogues were studied to find the tourists' opinions on the spiritual economy of Waqf in order to understand the relationship between the aspects of perception of destination on one hand, and the Waqf tradition on the other hand. At the sixth phase, the main themes were specified and classified, and then the final result of the meta-synthesis was visualized in the research model. The external validity of the finding of this research was confirmed through comparing the findings against the theoretical resources and obtaining the experts' opinions.

Reviewing the mentioned studies and classifying different types of perceptual values of the tourist destinations led us to four general classes for the evaluation including, emotional value, social value, and psychological value. The related indexes are summarized (table 2).

Table 2: Indexes of the perceived values the aspects of perceiving the destination

Aspects	Indexes	Resources
Functional and monetary value	• Infrastructures	Gallarza & Saura (2006); Heung & Quf (۲۰۰۰); Eid & El-Gohary (2015); Sanchez et al. (2006); Gilbert (2000)
	• Shopping centers	
	• Accommodation facilities	
	• Presented information	
	• Economy	
	• Efficiency	
	• Effectiveness	
Emotional value	• costs	Eid & El-Gohary (2015); Lee ey al. (2007); Sweeney
	• Perceived pleasure	
	• Freshness	
	• Control	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidence • Comfort 	& Soutar (2001); Sanchez et al. (2006)
Social value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-concept • Position • Value with a product for society • Prestige of consuming the product 	Eid & El-Gohary (2015); Sanchez et al. (2006); Gallarza & Saura (2006)
Cognitive value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faiths • Intangible factors • Symbols and beliefs 	Eid & El-Gohary (2015); Gallarza & Saura (2006); Battour et al. (2011)

Source: Yavari Gohar, 2016: 12

Being influenced by the Islamic worldview, Waqf tradition has played considerable role and function in financial supply of different economic activities up to now, and it is indeed an apparent sample of the spiritual economy as seen in the tourists' perceived value of the Islamic destinations. In this regard, the travelogues are evidences of the effect of Waqf tradition on the tourists' perception. If we divide the components of supply in the tourism industry simply to accommodation, transportation, hospitality, guide and other needed services and facilities, then we can review the role of Waqf in the mentioned components based on the historical experiences of the tourists. Historical evidences show that the Waqf tradition has had the most considerable role in the fields of accommodation and hospitality. For example, one can refer to dar-altalaba (religious school houses), dar-alziafa (party houses), caravanserai, and zavia. Of course the perceived value of Waqf in different destinations is different depending on the religious backgrounds of the tourists, as table 3 shows. Moroccan Ibn Battuta, Nasir Khusraw and Ibn Howqal are the samples of Muslim tourists and Jean Chardin, Pietro Della Valle, Engelbert Kaempfer, Henry d'Allemagne, etc. The visitors are English, French and German are the samples of non-Muslim European travelers who have written about this spiritual heritage.

Table 3. Perceived aspects of the *Waqf* tradition in Muslim and non-Muslim travelers' points of view

Traveler	Description	Perceived aspects	Religion
Henry d'Allemagne	Many lands are endowed for the mosques, schools and holly shrines. They are tax-exempted.	Social	Non-Muslim
Polak, German physician and traveler	Public bathrooms, and Tekkias in the main square of the city for the religious rites, whose maintenance costs was supplied by the incomes of endowed lands.	Social	Non-Muslim
French Madam Jane Dieulafoy	Benevolent Muslims usually endow 1/3 of their properties to the mosques, schools and other good things such as <i>Rawda Khwani</i> and sustentation, and the two remaining part of their properties are spent for the lives of religious students. There is a precise organization for spending those expenses and management of the endowed properties. The endowment of the places was a good escape from being occupied by the rulers of the time.	Cognitive, social	Non-Muslim
French traveler, Jean-Baptiste Tavernire	At Safavid period, 999 caravanserais were constructed and endowed. They were called East Guesthouses. They were precisely supervised. He classified them into two groups: royal guesthouses and general guesthouses. The chairman of royal endowments was called <i>Sadr al-Khas</i> and the chairman of the general endowments was called <i>Sadr al-Mowqfat</i> .	Cognitive, Social	Non-Muslim
German Engelbert Kaempfer	Constructing the mosques, public bathrooms, roads, bridges, and all above, the religious schools by the royal court and rich people. The chairman of the related organization was called Sadr-e Mowqfat, Ministry of Mowqfat, Mowqfat authority, etc. each of which used to manage and administer the endowed properties.	Cognitive, Social	Non-Muslim
Professor Ann Lambton	Safavid rulers used to endow most of their properties for the charity purposes, especially for constructing Shi'ite holy shrines in particular and for Imam Reza (in Mashhad) and his sister, Hazrat Masume (in Qom). Some of these endowed lands and properties belonged to the Safaid nobles before they govern the country.	Cognitive, Social	Non-Muslim
Jean Chardin	He mentions the Sadr-e Mowqfat and Sheikh al-Islam as the highest authority of the endowed properties. Moreover, he mentions a position as the Sadr-e Khasse (Special Sadr) who was in charge of the royal endowed properties.	Cognitive, Social	Non-Muslim

Traveler	Description	Perceived aspects	Religion
Moroccan Ibn Battuta	Everyone who is eager for the science and knowledge, and everyone who is thirsty for religion and faith can benefit all sort of services in the Iranian cities because the accommodation and food is always supplied for the travelers and the Iranians' interest in hospitality is so prominent that they sometimes conflict with each other to catch the guests.	Emotional , social, cognitive	Muslim
Ibn Howqal	In his travelogue (written in the 977 AD), he mentions visiting a person who had endowed his properties for the <i>Waqf</i> purposes and had made caravanserais in those properties whose incomes was used for supplying the expenses of those caravanserais. The endower's name was Abu Jafar Sahl bin Marzban. In his endowed properties, fresh milk was always given to the travelers for free. Ibn Howqal states that the number if caravanserais was really more than the needs of the travelers.	Emotional , social, functional	Muslim
Nasir Khusraw	Everyone who arrives there, can take a bread, a bowl of lentils cooked with olive oil and currant. Sometimes the number of the guests is more than 500 persons who arrived there and take part in the party.	Emotional , social, functional	Muslim
Moroccan Ibn Battuta	A part of these endowed properties is assigned for those who are not rich enough to go to Mecca for Haj, and the expenses of their Haj is supplied by the incomes of those endowed properties. Another part of the incomes is spent for making roads.	Social	Muslim

Sources: Amiri (2016); Afshari (2004); Al-Kasibi (1985); Ehlerz (1995); Saeidi Rezvani (1993); Kashi PourMohammadi (2012)

5. Findings and Conceptual model of the research

After identifying and combining the main themes, the final results of the meta-synthesis was visualized in the following conceptual model. This model shows that we have to pay attention to four values (i.e. social, cognitive, functional and emotional values) based on the recorded experiences of the travelers in order to introduce the aspects of Waqf tradition such that we can reinforce the foreign tourists perceived values of the Iranian cities. Since Waqf is a model of spiritual economy, we have to consider the religious background of the tourists in choosing and introducing the values of those destinations. The relationship between all these factors are drawn in the conceptual model of the research.

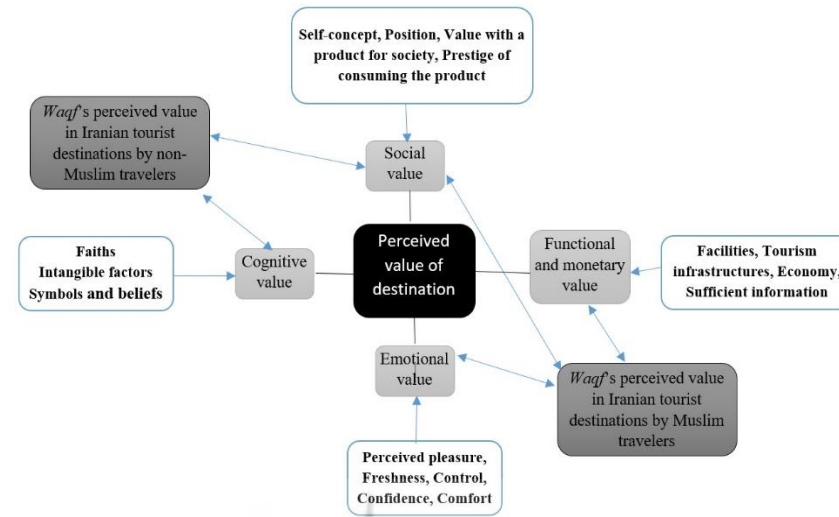


Fig. 1. Conceptual Model of the Waqf tradition aspects in reinforcing the perception of destination

6. Conclusion and discussion

Travel and movement are valuable factors in enriching the culture. This characteristic can connect the spiritual heritage of the countries. In contemporary world, the interaction between Waqf tradition and travel industry has deteriorated in Islamic societies such as Iran. This is why it is so important to clear the historical background of the role of Waqf in the development of travel industry, and to specify the experiences of others along with introducing their works in the development of the societies.

According to the findings of this research, the travelers' religious background has been effective on their perception of Waqf in their tourist destination, through content analysis on the indicators put forward by in the travelogue of travelers. Since non-Muslim travelers had not experienced Waqf in their ordinary life, they had especial attention to its cognitive and social values; but Muslim travelers who knew this tradition, paid more attention to the emotional, social and functional aspects of the Waqf tradition in different tourist destinations. Accordingly, considering the mentioned points, we can conclude that it is necessary to introduce the concepts and functions of Waqf in the Islamic societies for non-Muslim tourists in order to reinforce their perceived value of the Waqf spiritual tradition such that they come to a better

understanding of this spiritual heritage. On the other hand, it is necessary to create an understandable space for the Muslim tourists to experience the different functional aspects of Waqf such that they can enrich their prior experiences of this divine tradition and get more familiar to other aspects and functions of Waqf in Iranian cities. Moreover, with regard to the social values, some cases of the effects of the mentioned tradition on the Islamic societies can be counted as the practical cases of spiritual economy through generating intercultural practical functions in the enrichment of the quality of life in different societies.

The impact of intangible cultural heritage is at least two-fold: on the host society and on the tourists themselves. The impact on the host society is, beside the economic and social consequences of tourism, often a matter of strengthened self-esteem and perceptions of one's own identity. The impact on the tourists lies in providing a wide spectrum of experience. It has to do with the fulfillment of expectations, the perception of events, the attractions experienced, and in the end the memories of the experience. Cultural heritage is a necessary base from which the heritagization process must work. The process aims at establishing solidarity among members of a group.

The effects of Waqf on the development of tourist destination one can refer to maintenance of valuable monuments, creation of the new income sources, reduction of poverty and increase of the welfare, improvement of the public space, and the health development, all of which reinforce the tourists' perceived value of qualitative aspect of the life in destination, and enrich the image of destination for re-choosing the destination by the tourist and his final satisfaction on one hand and make them more aware of the benefits of spiritual economy in the tourist destinations. Another important spiritual aspect of Waqf is its humanistic aspect as asserted by the Islamic doctrine and it can be introduced to the tourists as a content or practical experience.

Required policy is to revive the past endowed properties whose interests and incomes used to be spent for promoting the travel and facilitating the tourists' needs. It is a policy to be operationalized by the authorities of the Organization of Endowment and Charity Affairs. Obviously, it is important to have a scientific view to the distribution of the interests and executive solutions for reviving these endowed properties and revising the exploitation of their physical spaces. It is a matter of professional tourism, both from the scientific and the religious points of view.

In future research, it is suggested to examine how to present spiritual heritage in different tours with different cultures.

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