

# Culture of Tourism

## Based on a Conceptual Difference between “Culture” and “Cultural”

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**Abstract** | Tourism, the act of traveling across the geographical locations, is the product of a systemic combination of meaning and knowledge taking place in the context of culture and is part of it. An essential concept in tourism, culture both gives it meaning to promote and makes it possible to be conceived. How to view and question the culture distinguishes “culture tourism” from cultural tourism, the concepts which often are interchangeably used. Regarding this difference, culture tourism rather than cultural tourism has been selected. It should be borne in mind that when the quiddity of a cultural product questioned by “What is it like?” is a matter of concern, cultural tourism is involved whereas, if the ontology of culture is questioned, culture of tourism is considered. Differentiating between culture and cultural as two key concepts, this paper examines the effect of this difference on plans and measures done in the neglected culture tourism field which requires to be underscored.

**Keywords** | *Culture Tourism, Cultural Tourism, Epistemological System, Cultural Product.*

### “Culture” and “Cultural Product”

What is the difference between culture and cultural? How does “culture tourism” differ from “cultural tourism”?

The letters “al” in the word “cultural” is a suffix whereby cultural is an independent entity closely related to culture. Accordingly, culture must be known as an initial basic concept so that it could be given a new identity called cultural product by developing a relationship between an object and culture. Therefore, culture is a basic concept, and culture is a subordinate one.

A new phenomenon being explained today, tourism along with cultural tourism plays a prominent role in grasping the public attention to cultural products. However, this attention is often drawn to the quiddity of cultural products of communities with their historical and geographical classifications and less has been drawn to the ontological argument of cultural products. In other words, studies regarding cultural tourism are mostly conducted

by employing an epistemological approach instead of the ontological.

Moreover, the cultural tourism approach results in the emergence of a large number of human civilization aspects that “may” lead to a reflection of why they have been created. At the same time, this approach may stop in case of recognizing a list of cultural products and may change into a long list of human life achievements in the developing history and geography of the earth. “Tourism of Culture” emphasizing the concept of culture, attempts to explain the thought and culture system of nations through their cultural works. It also intends to make tourism as an opportunity for exploring the works of the ancients to identify why they have emerged and to recognize the relation of the nations’ choice with their fate.

Culture is usually defined as a set of customs, arts, laws, beliefs, and skills that a person acquires from society. Then traditional and ritual events, artworks, and patterns of social behavior are correspondingly introduced as

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the manifestations of culture. Each artwork is a cultural element. To illustrate, nations' architecture manifests their culture. Human activities whether individual or social are categorized as cultural practices. Cooking, clothes, behavior, favorites, aesthetics, poetics, religion, etc. are regarded as different cultural elements.

Gardening art, literature as well as the patterns of cities and villages are typical examples of society's culture. Beliefs and rituals of society in religious, national, or social events constitute the prominent cultural examples of nations. To put it differently, culture is deeply embedded in every human action while society based on norms considers a certain group especially the above-mentioned as the cultural works and practices, based on the compactness of human mind intervention in cultural products.

Culture reflects the main differences in society, without which all places are alike (Papoli Yazdi & Saqai, 2006). In this view, culture is not an element attached to society, but a distinguishing feature giving meaning to it. It also accounts for the "quiddity" of society throughout history. Culture is a complex series obtained by humans in the way of their social and historical evolution in the environment. Every social culture contains its territorial properties formed by the influence of history, geography, religion, and other features that keep its people distinct from the others. The relation of culture to society is similar to the soul and body's— that's why some features or properties such as knowledge, art, sculpture, film, behavior, rituals, beliefs, and language of a nation are considered as its culture. Even a lifestyle (e.g. Food, education, levels of life,...) of a group of people in a certain geographical location is considered as that society's culture. (Mahdavi & Ahmadi, 2011; Pourahmad, 2007; Williams, 1976). A review of present definitions of culture shows that most of them refer to cultural objects rather than culture itself. Although culture is implicit in the objects and they can be part of the culture (Berger & Smith, 1971), it is not culture in general terms.

### The essence of cultural element

As different definitions of culture represent, the very essence of "cultural element" has been disregarded. On the contrary, the main focus has been on recognizing and describing the common features of cultural elements. Thus, what is explained as culture is the benefit and property resulting from the cultural object, not the essence which has created it.

As the culture difference is referred to as the main difference between nations the subsequent features of their life manifestations are explained, which are taken different forms under the influence of independent "cultures". Therefore, recognizing, explaining, and

determining cultural features of nations acquired of studying aspects and manifestations of their social and individual life, constitute the main body of cultural studies, which is necessary and beneficial for its part. But examining "manifestations of culture" is not the same as "culture" and each requires its method.

Cultural studies are a series of researches and reflections that seek to identify and explain the nature of "cultural element". Although herein lies a question of why "cultural element" emerged and what its aim was, experience suggests that the main focus of cultural studies is on recognizing the features and how the quiddity of the cultural element is explained. A series of studies, known as the history of art, anthropology, history of civilization, archeology and such like, conducted by scholars, are the answers to the quiddity of art, ancient people's life, civilization, and the ancient life; these studies have dealt with the subject without employing a proper methodology and posing relevant research questions. For these researchers who have dealt with a diversity of art and civilization besides other arguments, the question of "culture" as the essence of producing cultural elements has not been a fundamental tenet since they do not question the reason for the formation of a cultural element and explanation of "ontology" stages of a civilization having generated certain cultural forms.

### Changes in the concept of tourism

Tourism is a modern epistemological domain, of which human is still confused among its various concepts. Sometimes it is read as an activity, not science and depends on actions based on spatial movement; sometimes it is defined as an interdisciplinary science that is closely tied to economics, culture, society, and services.

In Rahnamaei's (2017) terms, tourism is a noun derived from the verb "tour" which means going around a place for pleasure. It refers to trips starting from one point and ending in the same point, provided that a tourist does not get a job and earn money in the destination, stays at the destination about one night at least, and less than one year at most. The British Tourism Association defined tourism as a short and temporary trip to places away from home and as an activity to meet predefined objectives (Rahnamaei 2017; Goeldner & Brent Ritchie, 2003).

At the same time, in a recent definition of tourism, activity is not considered but the main objective of tourism has been underscored: Tourism is a system of meanings and cognitions which provide a learning opportunity for tourists. Although the nature of tourism is determined by relying on the physical movement of people, what makes tourism distinct is a conceptual and sensory change it makes. Such a change can occur during a trip, as a consequence of

interaction with society, environment, artifacts, thinking, and reflecting on current issues; based on individual readiness, it has different levels. Therefore, we can view it as an opportunity for experiencing and examining the outside world (Mansouri & Shafi'a, 2019; Imani Khoshkhou, Pourjam Alaviche & Nadalipour, 2015). The dynamic nature of tourism as modern science is still existing, and new dimensions are being added to it. In the definition selected by this paper, tourism is an interdisciplinary science and a type of "epistemological system" which is based on moving in places, experiencing places, and spatial events. Thus, to achieve the main objective of the tourism system as an "epistemological system", in parallel with studying "culture form" that includes cultural elements, we have to deal properly and separately with "the essence of cultural element" which is "culture".

### Culture tourism's question

In terms of culture tourism, the main question starts from the point when a tourist takes a trip to special places of different cultural forms. Experiencing a place and its events, s/he questions the reason for the emergence of forms and different cultural elements. A culture tourist intends to discover how cultural forms and manifestations of civilization in different lands have appeared and does not aim to know the cultural differences of nations. If s/he examines artifacts, as the cultural elements of a nation, or pays attention to places, cultural events and products such as food, cities, and villages his or she aims to be able to open the way for conceiving the labyrinth in "culture of destination land" as the example of culture.

"Culture" is a valuable entity that inspires the formulation and formation of products and industries for humans. An attribute inspired by culture produces a cultural product. Generally, every human attribute is tied to its culture. But there are two points here: Firstly, industries taking more advantage of "culture" has added meaning to land should be recognized and distinguished; secondly, the type of inspiration being added by culture to the process of cultural products should be identified. In other words, culture of tourism is not about to know the features and attributes of cultural products, but it seeks both to reveal the origins of different attributes of a cultural product and know what the relationship is between a cultural product and culture, as a source of inspiration.

In this approach, culture is another interpretation of the system of values and perfections achieved by a culture tourist through an encounter with cultural elements and going through them. In culture tourism, visiting and experiencing nations' cultural products such as cities, arts, events, and their lives are representative of means of achieving the objective. Cultural elements have a

mediating role and knowledge of them is not the goal of culture tourism.

Culture tourism's ultimate goal is a new reading of nations' experience in different lands and more importantly the knowledge of the historical trend of their world-view and value system which has been developed by geographical, historical, social, economic, religious, and other factors.

The Quran also has emphasized movement in places (Go through the earth) and discovery of dynamics and authority over the evolution of societies (Travel through the land and observe how was the end of those before), indicating culture tourism. In this approach, "viewing" (as in Quranic verse it is "so observe"), as a holistic method, which simultaneously highlights both atomistic ontology and scientific knowledge as well as holistic ontology and sensory knowledge, is recommended. As long as the conditions for such an approach are provided, humans will reach their own objective, namely "what should we do? The conditions that can be attributed to understanding this Quranic verse refer, in the first step, to considering cultural tourism as a movement in space and the understanding of cultural details and products. In the next step, culture tourism involves moving across cultural forms, without any stops, through the scientific-sensory dual perception of "viewing" to know the ontological essence of them. Consequently, the trend of the above-mentioned verse can be set as two parts starting from cultural tourism and ending in culture tourism. In this way, general knowledge of cultural works of societies paves the way for clarifying values and perfections, the result of which has been clear in the ultimate fate of the ancients.

### Conclusion

Cultural tourism is a step to achieve cultural tourism. Cultural tourism mainly focuses on historical and scientific knowledge of cultural products and their analysis revolving around the question "How has it happened?". In this respect, the features of cultural forms of societies and similar questions are explained: What does this product mean? What features does it have? And what constituents have affected on this product?

When the "ontology" of the cultural product and manifestations of human civilization is known, the question of why it has been created is posed: Why has such a phenomenon created? What dimensions and steps does its essence have? When did it happen? To where does it go? And where does it end? Culture tourism questions the essence of tourism, thereby seeking the "ontology" of nations. This trend provides the possibility of understanding the relationship between nations' world-view and their ultimate fate.

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