

Original Research Article

An Analysis of the Relationship between Pilgrimage and Tourism Using a Holistic Approach Based on the Narration of Travelogues

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Abstract | Mashhad is characterized as a “pilgrimage” city since it daily receives pilgrims from different cultures, all of whom intend to travel to Mashhad to attend the holy place of the Razavi shrine. Therefore, the concept of “pilgrimage” is the most central concept that comes to mind when the name of Mashhad is heard. The importance of the concept of pilgrimage in Khorasan goes back to the historical background of the presence and martyrdom of Imam Reza (AS). On the other hand, the concept of tourism has been introduced as a new phenomenon in today’s world. In recent decades, with the emergence and prosperity of the modern concept of tourism, one of the controversial issues in the city of Mashhad has always been the relationship between pilgrimage and tourism, their contradictions, or compatibility. This issue is so important that sometimes it even causes a serious dispute over the naming of city signs and symbols as a pilgrim’s guide or a traveler’s guide. Proponents of tourism cite several reasons, including high economic return. However, the proponents of pilgrimage raise the issue of identity concerns. This study attempts to examine the relationship between pilgrimage and tourism using a holistic approach. For this purpose, first, a brief review of the basics of the concepts of pilgrimage and tourism was presented, and then travelogues were analyzed as historical sources, to achieve a comprehensive narrative of events and discover the relationship between pilgrimage and tourism. The result shows that the concept of pilgrimage and tourism in Mashhad are not two competing concepts, rather based on analytical findings from travelogues of Mashhad, Pilgrimage is always the main function and the side activities are in line with it. Thus, these two concepts not only do not contradict each other, but if we understand their relationship correctly and apply this understanding in establishing the relationship between the elements of the city landscape, they will be complementary to each other.

Keywords | *Tourism, Pilgrimage, Holistic approach, Landscape, Mashhad.*

Introduction | The first nucleus of Mashhad was formed by the location of the shrine of the eighth Imam of the Shiites, and gradually, by attracting and housing the devotees around this nucleus, the components and structure of the city became organized. A system whose

components were coordinated with each other to realize the concept of “pilgrimage” as the main element of the city. Simultaneously, with the beginning of modernist interventions and the arrival of modernity in Iran, and the requirements of modern life, this system was out of balance and cohesion. In recent years, the lack of a clear view of how to understand the totality, relations, and

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systems that govern the city, has been the main cause of various disputes over identity issues. It seems that the source of these conflicts is the misunderstanding of the mentioned concepts and the lack of correct knowledge of their relation and relationship. Because tourism and pilgrimage are not in conflict with each other, and if the relationship between them is understood, we will not see these conflicts anymore. Therefore, this study seeks to answer the following questions to explain the above-mentioned concepts:

- What is the connection between tourism and pilgrimage?
- What have been the side activities of the pilgrimage in the past?

Research method

This research is qualitative and seeks to read, discover patterns and the relationship between tourism and pilgrimage with a holistic approach. According to the definition of landscape, the separation of the body and the mental aspects of space is not possible due to its single and integrated nature, which is the result of the union of objectivity and subjectivity. Therefore, to discover the relationship between pilgrimage and tourism, the concepts of pilgrimage and tourism were reviewed based on library resources and then travelogues were analyzed as intellectual documents in different periods and historical sources in the holistic narrative of events. The travelogue is one of the intellectual resources in any period in which the author writes his general and direct perceptions of various events of his time. For this reason, studying travelogues and other intellectual works of each period such as movies, books, poems, etc. is one of the ways to read the landscape and understand its meanings at any time. This research believes in the verdict of landscape theory that considers the audience (citizen) as the main beneficiary of each city, so it does not believe in dualities, such as resident-pilgrim or tourist-pilgrim, and considers all those who visit the holy shrine for pilgrimage as "audience".

The concept of tourism

Tourism is a new field of human knowledge that is still wandering among different interpretations. It is sometimes referred to as an activity rather than a science, and it is associated with move-in-place schedules and is sometimes defined as an interdisciplinary science with close ties to economics, culture, society, and services. In a later definition, tourism is not dependent on its activity, but on the end of the activity: tourism is a system of meaning and knowledge that provides tourists with the opportunity to learn. Although the nature of tourism

is shaped by physical displacement, what sets it apart is the conceptual and sensory transformation it can bring about. This transformation can occur from interaction with society, the environment, man-made things, or thinking and engaging in current issues of the trip and has different levels depending on the level of individual readiness. Therefore, it can be considered an opportunity to experience the outside world and deepen. Tourism's nature, as a new science, is still fluid, and new definitions are constantly being developed. In the definition of this article, tourism is interdisciplinary knowledge and a kind of "cognition system" that is based on replacement and the experience of space and its events (Mansouri, 2020, 6-7).

Concepts of pilgrimage and pilgrimage-tourism

"Ziarat" (pilgrimage) is one of the concepts that can be defined differently according to different purposes. For example in custom and people communicating aspects, the word Ziarat is used to "meeting and visiting" meaning, or vice versa, in "narrative" texts, the authors use "Ziarat" word to indicate a heartfelt connection with Saints or with God, and there are other theories in the "sociological" sciences that offer different definitions of pilgrimage according to different purposes. Since Mashhad or other pilgrimage cities host people with different cultures, religions, and sects from all over the city, country, and the world, and all of these people intend to travel to these places of pilgrimage, so the shrine cannot be just exclusively defined in a particular religion or culture (Durán-Sánchez et al., 2018, 249). Because both the mission of the Imam is not specific to a particular culture, and the spiritual atmosphere that exists in these shrines, can be used by people interested in these spaces with different motives (Fig. 1). Therefore, this research uses the term "pilgrimage" as a universal act that includes the presence of different classes and cultures.

• The meaning of "pilgrimage"

In this study, the term "pilgrimage" has been defined using three approaches: "lexical," "religious," and "sociological," each of which clarifies different aspects of pilgrimage. The "lexical" approach reflects the conventional and general understanding of pilgrimage. The "religious" approach explains the religious aspects of pilgrimage. Finally, the "sociological" approach to the meaning of pilgrimage, considers the experiences of people in the practice of pilgrimage and Finally, the "sociological" approach to the meaning of pilgrimage, considers the experiences of people in the practice of pilgrimage and looks to find out the phenomenon

of “pilgrimage” with the study of their behaviors and motivations.

To achieve a practical meaning for pilgrimage, a sociological study of the concept of pilgrimage is very important in this study.

- “Lexical” approach

To gain a deeper understanding of the concept of “pilgrimage”, the word “ziarat” has been studied in three languages, “Arabic”, “Persian” and “English”. To get a “conventional” and “general” idea of “Ziarat”. In “Dehkhoda Dictionary” Ziarat is defined as follows:

Going to the holy shrines and tombs and praying as an esoteric visit for the Imams, Imamzadehs, and saints (Dehkhoda, 1962, 1590). In “Mo’in dictionary”, Ziarat is interpreted to mean “meeting and going to a holy place” (Mo’in, n.d.). In “Amid Persian dictionary”, Ziarat means “visiting, meeting a great person or going to a holy observation” (Amid, n.d.). What is common among these interpretations regarding the Ziarat of the Imams is the concept of “going to a holy place.” The “lexical” analysis of Ziarat is more important in Arabic because the origin of this word is Arabic. “Fayumi” and some other lexicographers have defined “Ziarat” in custom as “the intention of going to a holy person for his respect and to feel close to him” (Toraihi, 1997, 320; Fayumi, 2000, 165). However, in the root of the word Ziarat, “z-v-r”, there is a kind of “deviation from the external flow and desire for the esoteric” that this main meaning is also seen in the uses of this root. For example, in the meaning of the word “Al-Zur” it is said that it is “a lie because the seeker is turning away from the truth.”

It is worth mentioning that in “Tazvir” it is said that “Tazvir” is “turning away from a path inwardly, but in a way that is seemingly acceptable by the listener” (Ebn-e Fares, 1990, 36; Mostafavi, 2009 AH, 384; Askari, 1980 AH, 38).

Therefore, in the spiritual root and principle of “Ziarat”, a kind of “esoteric deviation” from the “external path” is valid, so that the “external form” is preserved (Mostafavi, 2009, 384).

“Pilgrim” is linguistically derived from “pilegrin” and “pilegrin” is derived from “pelegrinus” meaning “outsider” or a person entering from outside (Harper, 2020). “Pilgrimage” in English dictionaries refers to “a journey to a sacred place for religious reasons” (Macmillan, 2020; Collins, 2020; Oxford, 2020; Vocabulary.com, 2020; Webster, 2020). In some dictionaries, it has been mentioned that the purpose of traveling is to “show respect” (Cambridge, 2020).

Thus, the English common sense perception of “Pilgrim” is that one travels to see and be present in a sacred place, and has religious motives, and the meaning of “traveling”

and “being in a sacred place” and “Seeing that place” is bold in this definition.

- Religious approach

The purpose of analyzing the concept of “pilgrimage” using a “religious” approach is to study the narrations and verses that exist on “pilgrimage”. The term “pilgrimage” finds a different and new definition in the opinion of Shiite Imams. In the narrations, a concept called “pilgrimage from a distance” is mentioned and recommended, and this shows that the principle of pilgrimage deals with the pilgrimage of the “persons”, not the “Graves”. To put it precisely, pilgrimage to graves is the prelude to the pilgrimage of the people, because if it were necessary to visit the graves, the Imams would not recommend the pilgrimage from a distance. On the other hand, the presence of the Imam is not limited to the area of his grave, while ordinary people usually pay attention to and are present in this area. Therefore, it can be said that “pilgrimage” is a kind of heart connection.

- Sociological approach

The sociological study of “pilgrimage” proceeds with a simultaneous study of the “practical” and “theoretical” aspects of pilgrimage (Collins-Kreiner, 2010 a, 10). Examining the types of trips that people make to different places and different motives by sociologists suggest that some tourists visit holy places to seek spiritual experience or develop knowledge of this experience. On the other hand, some pilgrims follow the aspects of tourism and entertainment in their travels (Niknam, 2014, 47); So the question became serious for them: what is the essential difference between a “pilgrim” and a “tourist”? And different views emerged in response to this question. Some consider “pilgrimage” and “tourism” as two opposite concepts and believe in the theory of “divergence” (Cohen, 1979, 183; Collins-Kreiner, 2018, 9). Others consider “pilgrimage” and “tourism” to have the same nature though they may act differently from each other. and also consider tourism as a “pilgrimage of the modern world” and the theory of “convergence” was formed (Nodehi, Behravan, Yusefi & Mohamadpour, 2015, 199). Some consider this “divergence” and “convergence” together and believe that “pilgrimage” and “tourism” fall on a spectrum “and believe that “pilgrimage” and “tourism” fall on a spectrum. On one side of the spectrum, there are ascetic and devout pilgrims while on the other side, there are completely secular tourists who seek only entertainment and benefits in their travels, and in the middle of this spectrum are those who looking for both “tourism” and the “pilgrimage”. With this classification, along with the concept of the pilgrim, a concept called “pilgrim-tourist” was formed (Collins-Kreiner, 2010 b, 442; Durán-

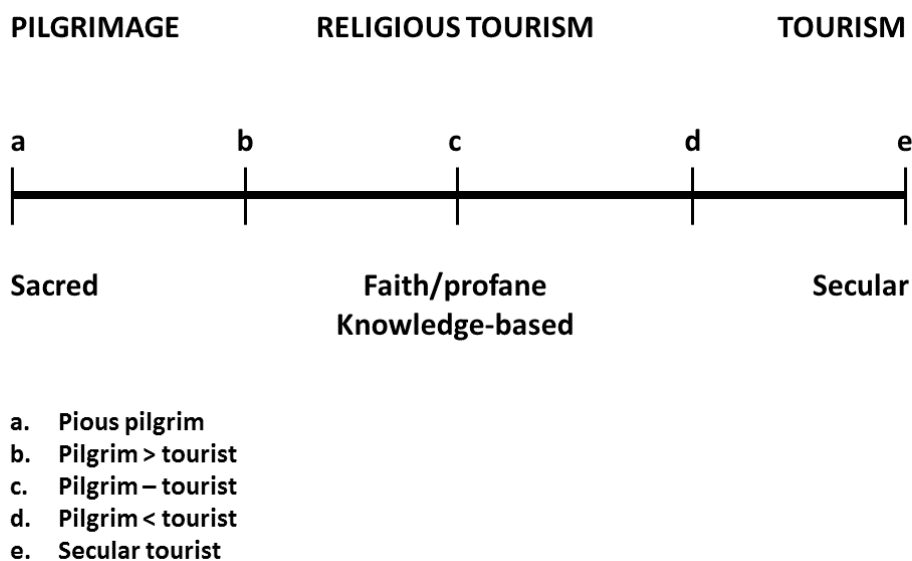


Fig. 1. Smith's spectrum of pilgrimage-tourism. Source: Durán-Sánchez et al., 2018.

Sánchez et al., 2018, 4; Collins-Kreiner, 2010 a, 4); (Fig. 1).

Thus, the concept of “pilgrimage” moved away from its previous form and encompassed a wider range of journeys. For example, a person who wants to travel to a holy shrine or any other holy place to learn about culture, customs, architecture, or spiritual experience, his journey is defined as “pilgrimage”, because the spiritual quality of his journey is more than a mere tour.

The relation between pilgrimage and tourism based on the study of travelogues

One of the ways to understand the perceptions of the audience is to analyze the intellectual works, including films, photographs, poems, travelogues, etc. produced in that historic era. In this research, the relationship between tourism and pilgrimage has been extracted from travelogues written in Mashhad. These texts describe the components of each city, its socio-political, cultural events, activities, and tourists. A narrative of the concepts of the city and its life, which took place in the heart of the place and cannot be separated from it. In most travelogues, in a physical context, a cultural, social, and political narrative of the city is discussed, from which the identity and landscape of the city are read (Mokhles, 2020, 8). “Armin Vamberi”, a Hungarian tourist, arrived in Mashhad on the first day of Azar 1242. He described the whole city and beautifully depicts the physical, social, functional, cultural system and the landscape of the city in general:

“In Mashhad, we moved to the Sharif courtyard along a long and wide street called Payeen Khiaban (in English

Down-street). The wide canal that winds its way into the city and on the shore of which trees with pleasant shade have been planted, offers a pleasant view; In fact, this is a feature that has made Mashhad one of the most attractive cities in Iran. The community of people representing all Asian races and followers of the Shiite religion gives the most interesting feature to the streets, which are full of the pulse of life. Everywhere you look, you see the usual clothing in Iran and all of East Asia. You do not need much time to realize the fact that Mashhad is one of the bases of the Shiite religion “(Vámberý, 1994, 268). In the continuation of the travelogue, the author describes the activities and practices of people around the street leading to the shrine:

“A hundred steps away from the shrine of the Imam is the center of the most confusing sights and sounds. Huge crowds of people are standing on the sidewalk or in front of shops, on either side of the street, or in the streets, carrying their goods on their heads, shoulders, or arms, and make their way through the crowds” (ibid., 269). the importance of the place of pilgrimage as the most important activity and behavior is clearly understood By meditating on the functional system of the audience around the shrine.. So that other activities and functions are defined under it; As Vambery writes: “These crowds are going in and out of the city gates. At the same time, the flow of pilgrimage is going on, agilely with the utterance of words. other Pilgrims say to pilgrims who have completed the pilgrimage “God bless your pilgrimage!” and to those who are at the beginning of the journey “pray for me to god!” (ibid., 269). “ Besides, there is no city in eastern Iran as big as Mashhad with various sights. The greatness of the city of Mashhad, with its richness

of monuments, is equally attractive to students of history, seekers of sacred landscapes, and Literature lovers, and it is difficult to decide where to start” (ibid., 272).

In the following section, the author, while describing the decoration and aesthetic and architectural aspects of the building, expresses his experience of the pilgrimage and then: “Those inside were not just visitors who came to satisfy their curiosity. These were pious pilgrims in a holy shrine whose silent sincerity was engraved on their faces and indicated their deep joy and sincerity and heartbreak and humility ... At the same time, there was a whisper of prayer on their lips, which was sometimes interrupted by loud cries, which filled their breasts. I made my way through the many pilgrims in the same direction that led to the exit of this magnificent building, and I moved to the dining hall of Imam Reza or in the local language, the kitchen of the Imam. He (the Imam) is very hospitable and any newcomer can be his guest; But this hospitality is limited to seven days” (ibid., 274). One of the visits that Vambéry mentions during his trip to Mashhad after the pilgrimage is to visit Toos and Ferdowsi’s tomb: “Among the ruins of Toos in the north of Mashhad, according to the current belief of Iranians, is the tomb of Ferdowsi, one of the greatest epic poets of Iran. Before leaving the city, I made a short trip to Toos” (ibid., 279).

Colonel McGregor of Scotland (1875) described the city of Mashhad as follows: “In fact, Mashhad has nothing for a person to travel to this city to see, or if his fate brings him to this place, nothing will encourage him to stay longer. Only one building is worth seeing, and that is the shrine of Imam Reza (AS), which, of course, Europeans are never allowed to enter, except at their own risk, which

is not worth the consequences (McGregor, 1987, 249); (Fig. 2).

The completely straight Street is The characteristic feature of Mashhad, through which water passes and there are trees on both sides. People bathe in this water, wash their clothes and drink from it. ... This “street” passes through the city except where it reaches the shrine. Dirty water flows through that stream, on which platforms have been built in several places, and people sit on these platforms and have fun, regardless of its bad smell. Both sides of the street are said to have been planted with trees in the past, but now only the top of the street is adorned with these magnificent trees. The “street” undoubtedly has what a beautiful street should have (ibid., 255).

Curzon, a British statesman who traveled to Mashhad a few years after McGregor, writes:

“McGregor was right in his quote in 1875 that there were few things in the city that would encourage a person to travel there or if his fate brings him this place, nothing will encourage him to stay longer. There is just one very spectacular building, and it is the court of Imam Reza, which the Europeans are not allowed to see, except with the possibility of danger, which is contrary to caution and foresight. And indeed, it is extremely disturbing that a man walks through the street and suddenly finds his way blocked by an arch that is in the middle of a wall that surrounds the sacred buildings, and for the Christians, it is hidden with the same rigidity that the Aaron rope creates a separator between the living and the dead. But from the explanations left by some Europeans who have seen it, and from the description of Muslims who have written and said, we can get a correct idea about it” (Curzon, 1969, 218). “There is nothing noticeable

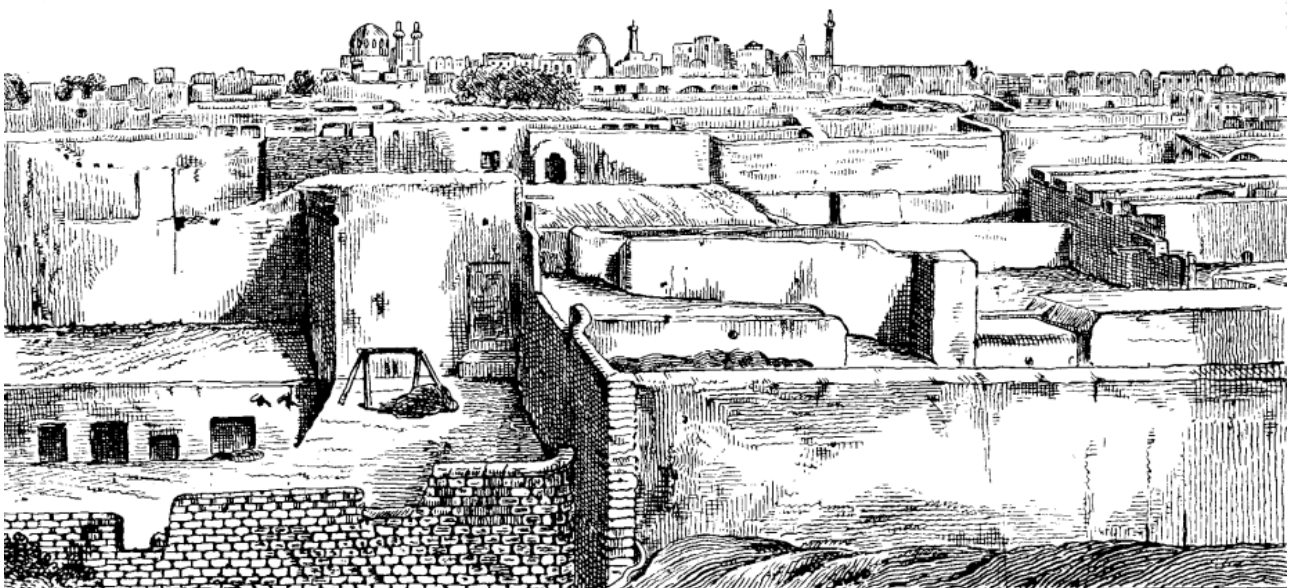


Fig. 2. Shrine of Imam Reza (AS) in Mashhad. Source: McGregor, 1987, 252.

in Mashhad's outskirts. I have already mentioned the description of Khajeh-Rabi' Mosque, which was originally built in 1699 for the Eid-Al-Adha ceremony. McGregor wrote that it was the only significant ruined building located around Mashhad. but now it is not been cared, because it had been completely destroyed and the travelers might decide to drive to ruins of Toos" (*ibid.*, 241). He also compared the similarity between Mashhad Street and the Champs Elysees from the easterner's point of view: "It is called "street" (or boulevard), and easterners think it shines like the Champs Elysees. There is a channel in the middle... It is said that in past times the edge of the canal and the floor of the street and the stairs were made of stone. Plantain, mulberry, elm, and willow trees have been planted irregularly on both sides of it (the canal). On either side of the trees are sidewalks and then market shops, which is very interesting" (*ibid.*, 216-215).

Arthur Campbell Yate traveled to Mashhad in 1885. He wrote about the city of Mashhad, its street (Chaharbagh), and the gardens built along this street:

"The main route here is called 'Street', which is really beautiful and has a wide width. Shops, houses, and gardens are located along with it, and there are two rows of beautiful sycamore trees in the center, In addition, the telegraph office is located on this street and the tomb of Imam Reza is located in the southeastern part. ... on the west side of the city as far as the eye could see, the palm gardens were everywhere; But on the east side, there were a few gardens or no garden" (Yate, 1887, 365).

Mirza Hassan Mousavi Esfahani is one of the scholars of Isfahan. For a year (1276 AH), he first went to Mashhad and from there to Mecca and Atbat with the intention of pilgrimage and wrote his travel information:

"... and the door of Mirza Jafar's school is in the holy courtyard. It is a very glorious school. And the Imam's library is located in Naderi's golden porch towards the door of Tohidkhaneh, where expensive books and Qurans can be found. It is known that the Imam himself was the owner of this slaughterhouse, and the land of the courtyard and the street on this side, and the other side of the courtyard, which used to belong to Hamid ibn Qahtaba and the Imam bought it in the period of Ma'mun. the down-street and above-street of the holy courtyard are very wide and long. You should enter this street from the lower gate and go out from the upper gate, and you can see many shops next to each other on both sides of the street, where there are the main shopping center of the city, a lot of schools, baths, and public houses. The land rent of these shops is said to be taken in the name of Imam and it is spent on the threshold of Mubarak. Someone said that they make ninety thousand

tomans annually. It is said that the Imam has 1,500 crew and 2 kitchens, one belongs to the crew, which is located in the new courtyard, and the other belongs to the pilgrims, which is located in the upper street, on the left. And it is said that every day and night, two hundred trays of meals are given to the crew of Astaneh Mubarak from Imam's kitchen" (Mousavi Esfahani, 2013, 116).

Naser al-Din Shah Qajar (1361, 165-190) in his travelogue of Khorasan in 1300, described rituals of pilgrimage to the holy shrine, and valuable buildings and decorations in the area of the shrine such as Gohar-Shad Mosque. He also mentioned the various private and government gardens of Mashhad where he stayed and his visit to the shrine, the garden of Khajeh Rabi' and the summer villages around Mashhad such as Torqabeh.

Haji Davood Naser, a wealthy Mumbai native, left for Mashhad in 1305 with his wife and seven children. During his 30 days' stay in Mashhad, he recorded useful information about the city. "We arrived at our destination at 4:30. We took a bath and then entered the holy shrine by reciting Salawat and supplicating. We thank God that with his care, we started our journey from Mumbai without any trouble or problems and we arrived in Mashhad in 9 days and 20 hours (Naser, 2016, 37). He further writes: "There are two public gardens in Mashhad. There is a large one called the National Garden, which is full of trees and has benches for relaxation. In addition, there is a place to drink tea, Falooda and a variety of drinks. Many people come there for a walk. This garden is next to the citadel of Mashhad. Another garden is called Naderi Garden in memory of Nader Shah, who invaded India and is now buried there. There are other gardens in Mashhad's suburb where Mohammadi flowers are brought from and they are very fragrant. All the rich and poor have this plant in their houses" (*ibid.*, 47-48). "In addition to the main and big streets, there are many narrow alleys and streets in the city. There are all kinds of shops in the upper and lower streets, the origin of both of the streets is Imam's square" (*ibid.*, 49). "There are three major hospitals in Mashhad. One of them is managed with the budget of the holy threshold. Imam's Dar-Al-Shafa for the public treatment, especially pilgrims. The other hospital is under the control of the British government and is run by a Zoroastrian doctor named Ms. Damari. This hospital treats 300 patients free of charge every day" (*ibid.*, 48).

Conclusion

In all the travelogues studied in this research about the city of Mashhad, usually, the main part of the writing describes the role and position of the shrine in the city and related activities. And it can be understood that the

holy shrine and pilgrimage have been the most important features of Mashhad throughout history so that all other side activities in the city of Mashhad were a subset of it. Therefore, “pilgrimage” is the most original and important element of identity in Mashhad, which has always affected the landscape of the city. The study of the pilgrimage patterns of the audience shows the difference in their behavior before and after the pilgrimage and its relationship with tourism. The pre-pilgrimage activities focus on it. The pilgrimage pacifies and relaxes the soul, and after it is done man may need to spend happy and leisure time. The main side activities of the pilgrimage mentioned in the travelogues are as follows: visiting the historical and valuable monuments of the shrine, tombs of religious and political figures; meeting with religious scholars and elders; going to a guest house; eating the votive food of the Imam; buying souvenirs and travel necessities; going to Dar-Al-Shafa and Imam’s Hospital, and sometimes traveling to the city’s countryside such as Kuh-Sangi and surrounding villages (Fig. 3).

Therefore, just as the holy shrine was the initial nucleus for the appearance of the city, it has also long been the origin of all the various activities and functions in it. In fact, this is the only feature and superiority of Mashhad over other cities. However, today, due to the expansion of amenities and infrastructure necessary for travel and tourism, plan actions and interventions should be implemented based on this original pattern while meeting the recreational and leisure needs of citizens. This can be facilitated by an accurate reading of these patterns and recording them. Recognize this model and use it in planning and positive intervention measures to improve the urban landscape, improve the audience’s perception of the city. Therefore, any intervention in the general system and consequently in the activity and functions of the city, in which significant elements and functions

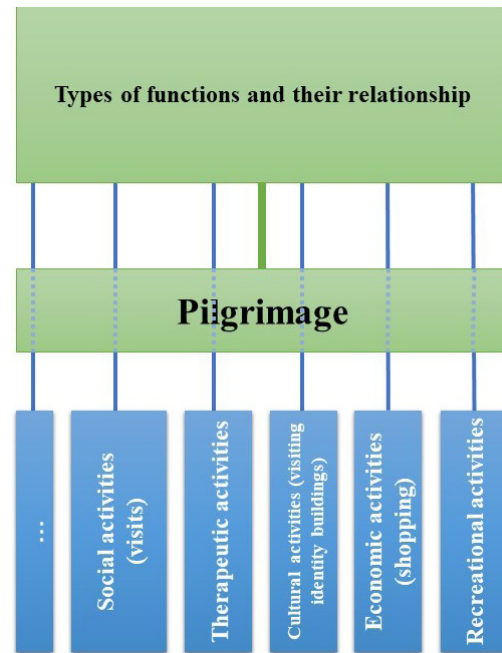


Fig. 3. The relationship between pilgrimage and tourism. Source: Authors.

are located parallel with the shrine, undermines the identity and landscape of the city. However, if these interventions are by recognizing the main identity of the city, it will be located along with it and can meet the needs of different segments of society, a step towards the continuation of the identity of the city and the prevailing tradition. It is obvious that in this approach, tourism and pilgrimage are not in conflict with each other, but are complementary. It should be noted that the experience of urban interventions in recent years and the lack of a holistic view of the city and its development, especially in the Mashhad, shows that interventions that were not in line with the continuity of city identity and were indifferent to its meanings, they usually have been destructive and have failed.

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