

HERITAGE OF WAQF PROPERTIES IN TÜRKIYE: EXPLORING TOUR GUIDES' ROLES IN SPREADING WAQF APPRECIATION AMONG TOURISTS

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative research study looks into tour guides' important role in disseminating waqf knowledge to tourists visiting Türkiye. Waqfs, which are embedded in Türkiye's historical and cultural landscape, represent an important aspect of Islamic heritage dating back to the Ottoman Turkish Empire and include institutions such as mosques, madrasahs, and charitable foundations. Despite its historical significance, waqf property in Türkiye remains the primary attraction for tourists visiting the country. As a result, the purpose of this study is to explore the role of tour guides who lead tours to Türkiye, with a focus on the significance of waqf among tourists. Based on this qualitative research approach, an observation method was used by a Turkish tour guide who led a tour of 30 Malaysian tourist groups from February 28 to March 8, 2024. Observations were made of the tour guide's explanations and speeches when dealing with Malaysian tourists. Thematic analysis was used to find recurring patterns, themes, and narratives in the collected data. The findings revealed that the tourist guide's focus is not





on waqf properties specifically. The explanation provided fails to define the role of waqf in shaping the development of Türkiye since the Ottoman Caliphate's reign. In fact, the tourist guide focuses heavily on Turkiye's history after and before the fall of the Ottoman Empire. The study's findings are expected to contribute to the existing literature on the importance of tourism waqf heritage, particularly in Türkiye and other countries around the world, in order to establish waqf as a tourism tool that must be preserved and its role introduced to those who visit countries with waqf assets. Tourism stakeholders, particularly policymakers, should incorporate waqf heritage into tourism narratives and encourage responsible tourism practices in order to respect and preserve waqf cultural heritage in Türkiye and neighbouring countries.

Keywords: Waqf, Heritage, Tourists, Türkiye, Tour guides

INTRODUCTION

The Ottoman Empire developed the institution of waqf, a significant construct in Islamic civilisation, during its dominance in Eastern Europe from the 15th century until the end of the 17th century (Haris, 2022). The waqf practice, which was prevalent during that time period, provided residents of the community, including those who did not practice Islam, with a variety of facilities and benefits (Ahmad, 2015). Over time, the Ottomans were responsible for introducing Islamic civilization to an important part of Eastern Europe. Not only was it the responsibility of the waqf institution of the Ottoman government to introduce Islamic civilization to the entirety of Eastern Europe, but it was also responsible for spreading Ottoman civilization throughout the region. Through the establishment of waqf institutions, several different aspects, including economics, socio-cultural, educational, religious, and humanitarian, have also developed successfully. The establishment of this waqf institution has a beneficial effect on the community that is located in the territories that were conquered by the Ottoman Empire (Rashid, 2018).

In addition to expanding its power through the conquest of new territories, the government also seeks to achieve the dissemination of Islamic civilization and to provide for the welfare of the community. A noble example of waqf was left for us by the Ottomans. It is not an exaggeration to assert that one will be born in a waqf house, sleep in a waqf cradle, eat and drink from waqf property, read waqf books, attend a waqf school, receive a salary from the waqf institution, and be interred in a waqf coffin and buried in a waqf cemetery in order to reflect its immense importance and unrivalled leading role in the Ottoman Empire. Since the Ottoman era, waqf has served as an inclusive force in society (Al-Mubarak, 2016). Even a century after the fall of the Ottoman Empire, waqf properties still play a big part in Turkiye's wonderful waqf practice. Thus, the purpose of this study is to explore how Turkish people in modern times, particularly tour guides, contribute to the promotion of Turkiye's waqf heritage to foreign visitors. The specific goal of this research is to explore how tour guides disseminate awareness of and appreciation for highly valued waqf properties on a historical, cultural, and social level.

Tourists from all over the world are drawn to Turkiye by its Mediterranean climate and cultural and historical sites. Many of the tourist attractions in this country have been influenced by both the West and the East, as a result of its location between Southeast Europe and West Asia. Additionally, the country boasts stunning waqf-inspired buildings. The total contribution of travel and tourism to Turkiye's GDP will exceed 525 billion Turkish lira in 2021. Approximately 2.4 million jobs are generated in Turkiye as a result of the contribution of travel and tourism to employment (Zeynep Dierks, 2024). As of June 2021, Istanbul was one of the top global cities in terms of the number of cultural attractions due to the tourism sector. The city is a popular destination for travellers because of its cost-effectiveness in comparison to the bustling cities of Europe, in addition to its diverse cultural offerings.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The tourism sector is of paramount importance to Turkiye, a developing nation. Turkiye has prioritised the advancement of tourism, particularly subsequent to 1980, and has implemented numerous studies in this regard, particularly the Tourism Incentive Law (L.Karadag, 2022). In terms of both the number of tourist arrivals and tourism revenue, Turkiye is among the top 20 tourism destinations in the world. Russia, Germany, the United Kingdom,

and Iran are the primary sources of tourism for Turkiye (Gozdegul Baser, 2018). In the 1990s, discussions regarding tour guide training in Turkiye commenced, and the majority of the concerns pertain to the ethical and educational foundation of the training that is insufficient (Çokişler, 2022). Güzel et al., (2021) defines the sustainable tourism approach as a method to guarantee the growth and preservation of a destination.

Given the significant correlation between tourists and the places they visit, tour guides play a crucial role in the effective utilisation of destination resources and exert influence on the economic and socio-cultural aspects. They can cultivate profound connections with tourists at the destination and influence their sustainable behaviour in a positive manner. It is noticeable that, despite some minor variations, the occupational problems faced by tour guides are essentially the same throughout different parts of the world. A well-crafted training programme, the creation of regional and national professional associations, and laws that fulfil all industry standards must form the cornerstone of the tour guide industry(Ayaz & Demir, 2019). The significance of effective tourism management skills is widely recognised as a global priority due to their substantial contribution to the economic prosperity of a variety of countries. Tourism is inextricably linked to the concept of long-term sustainability (Ismail et al., 2023).

Given this, the Turkiye government should prioritise the promotion of waqf tourism in Turkiye to tourists, particularly those from abroad. The trends in the tourism literature authored by researchers in Turkiye are illustrated in Table 1. Based on the literature review, there is a limited number of researchers who link Turkiye waqf with the tourism aspect. The themes that receive attention include cultural tours, gastronomy for tourists, the influence of tour guides' performances on tourists' moods, tourists' cognitive experiences, tourist guiding services, geotourism activities via marine excursion, inbound tourism and the significance of tourism for the Turkish economy. Nevertheless, Kartal et al., (2015) states in an article that religious monuments and sites are used as elements of the marketing mix to promote the product in the study.

Table 1. Tourism Literature Written by Researchers Studying Turkiye

Authors	Title	Key Findings
1.Kul et al., (2024)	The role of tour guide competency in the cultural tour experience: the case of Cappadocia	Discoveries about tour guide competency's importance in Turkiye's cultural tours.
2.Cifci et al., (2023)	Demystifying the authenticity experience of locally guided wine tours in the meal-sharing economy	Meal-sharing economy
3.Koç& Ulema, (2024)	The Effect of Tourist Guide Performance on Memorable Tourism Experiences and Revisit Intention	The tourist's decision to repeat the visit is influenced by the tour guide's performance.
4.Nguyen et al., (2023)	Visitors' experiences of UNESCO World Heritage Site: evidence from G€obeklitepe, T€urkiye	Three dimensions of the tourist experience, namely cognitive, emotional, and relational experiences, have been identified during visitors' trips to G€obeklitepe, Turkiye.
5.Kartal et al., (2015)	Examining the religious tourism potential of Manisa, Turkiye with a marketing perspective	Religious monuments and sites are utilised as components of the marketing mix to advertise the product in the research.
6.Aktas et al., (2003)	Tourist Profile Research: Antalya Region Example 2001	Tourism plays a significant role in fostering global peace, cultural exchange, and trade, while also generating employment opportunities, promoting intercommunity interactions, and providing economic support.
7.C. Koç et al., (2023)	Impact of tourists on urban water needs in Marmaris, Türkiye	The exponential regression method is employed to calculate the quantity of water necessary for the tourist population.
8.Çetinkaya & Öter, (2016)	Role of tour guides on tourist satisfaction level in guided tours and impact on re-visiting Intention: research in Istanbul	The Turkish tourism industry benefits from the substantial correlation between tourist satisfaction, revisit intention, and tourist guiding services.
9.Gül & Küçükuysal, (2023)	Geotourism activities via marine excursion: Muğla, SW Türkiye	As geotourism becomes more recognised, it is highly likely that this location, which holds significant geological value, could be designated as an open laboratory and included in a protection programme.
10.Ağazade, (2022)	The effect of cultural exports on inbound tourism: An empirical analysis of Türkiye	The number of tourists in Turkiye increases by 0.2844% when cultural exports increase by 1%. It clarifies the reason for the consistency of the results with expectations regarding the influence of tourist income and the real exchange rate.

The following section in Table 2 focuses on the tour guide's role in promoting waqf heritage during tourist tours in different destinations that possess waqf property. This comparison can also highlight the prospective advantages and constraints of incorporating the waqf principle into the tourism sector, as implemented by tour guides. Mansor et al., (2015) discovered that the World Tour Guide Association (WFTGA) has partnered

with the Sabah State Islamic Religious Council, Malaysia, to generate waqf income for mosques by adopting a tourism training model that has been developed. This study contributes to the current literature on religious tourism and waqf management in Malaysia, which is currently limited. Additionally, it offers recommendations for enhancing the financial sustainability of mosques through religious tourism certification. Furthermore, it is difficult to find more studies on the role of tour guides in promoting tourism in waqf. Generally, many writers focus on the use of cash waqf as an instrument to preserve tourism(Man et al., 2019). Some writers advocate for the collection of cash waqf as a way to reduce government spending on tourism(Ratnasari et al., 2024). As a result, this study proposes developing a conceptual framework to investigate how tour guides help tourists understand and be aware of waqf property preservation.

Table 2. Significant Literature Exists on Tour Guides' Promotion of Waqf Heritage in Different Countries

Authors	Title	Key Findings
1.Mansor et al., (2015)	Mosque Tourism Certification in Waqf Management: A Model by Ukhwah Samara	To generate waqf income for mosques by adopting a tourism training model that has been developed.
2.Pauzi et al., (2021)	Waqf Tourism Model as A Driver for Transformative Change in Tourism Sector During the Post-Covid-19 Outbreak in Malaysia: A Conceptual Paper	Waqf funding can help the tourism sector in Malaysia to reduce their critical expenditure.
3.Ratnasari et al., (2024)	Waqf model and sustainability of tourism industry: Malaysian and Indonesian perspectives	The waqf model can help the government reduce tourism spending while preserving the industry.
4.Muhardi et al., (2023)	Value Chain Model and Management of Waqf-Based Halal Tourism Development	Value chain model and waqf- based halal tourism development management.
5.Man et al., (2019)	Potential of Waqf Instrument in Tourism Industry in Malaysia	Development of historical places through the waqf instrument.
6.Jahanian & Movahedi, (2019)	Tourist Perception of Waqf as Spiritual heritage in Iran	Intangible heritage can be introduced to tourists in four main ways: emotional, cognitive, functional, and social.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

A conceptual framework was developed to provide guidance for this study

in order to accomplish its objectives. An in-depth analysis of the role of tour guides, particularly in the context of waqf tourism in different countries, such as Turkiye, can offer a methodical approach to comprehending and evaluating the key factors at play. The proposed conceptual framework utilises the theory of Fiqh Al Awalwiyyat (Fiqh of Priorities) as the foundation of the study. The Fiqh Al Awlawiyyat principle prioritizes action based on its importance and necessity. Sheikh Al Qardawi, a contemporary scholar, developed this principle by emphasizing the evaluation of priority aspects in every action (Qardhawi, 2004). Even Fiqh Al-Awlawiyyat helps tour guides understand the priorities of actions and resources in waqf tourism.

This principle helps identify important aspects of the tour guide's role in promoting wagf assets in the context of tourism. The three main roles of tour guides are cultural interpreter, educator, and guardian. Each of these roles has its own importance in ensuring tourists get a meaningful experience and accurate education about waqf. Key factors assessed in this study include knowledge, communication skills, cultural sensitivity, tourist satisfaction (McDonnell, 2001) and impact on waqf sites. It is crucial to analyze these factors to guarantee the effective implementation of the tourist guide's role and its positive impact on both tourists and the waqf site. The primary objective of the conceptual framework is to enhance the role of tour guides in promoting the recognition and understanding of waqf property heritage among tourists. Figure 1 presents a comprehensive conceptual framework that has been constructed by integrating significant components from prior research, the Figh Al-Awlawiyyat theory, and the author's own insights. A conceptual framework was utilised to create an observation protocol aimed at evaluating tour guides' management practices in their interactions with Malaysian tourists during visits to Turkiye.

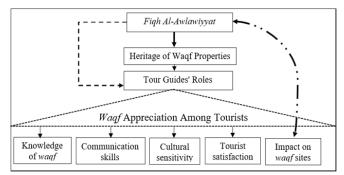


Figure 1. A Framework of Tour Guides to Promote Waqf Heritage Awareness and Comprehension Among Tourists

METHODOLOGY

Qualitative methodology is employed by researchers to gain an understanding of complex phenomena that cannot be measured by quantitative data. Qualitative methodology diverges from quantitative methodology by prioritizing the gathering and examination of descriptive and interpretive data, rather than emphasizing measurement and statistical analysis. Qualitative research aligns harmoniously with cultural studies to delve into a more profound comprehension of human behaviour, experience, and social interaction within a particular context. Qualitative methodology is highly suitable for the study on "Heritage of Waqf Properties in Türkiye: Exploring Tour Guides' Roles in Spreading Waqf Appreciation Among Tourists" in its specific context. Researchers can gain a comprehensive understanding of how information about waqf property is transmitted and received by tourists by directly observing them with the assistance of tour guides. The utilization of a qualitative methodology facilitated the gathering of comprehensive and intricate information regarding the dissemination of appreciation for waqf. Additionally, it sheds light on the specific roles and strategies employed by tour guides in this endeavour. In general, qualitative methodology is a valuable tool for investigating and comprehending intricate social phenomena. In this particular study, it will be used to uncover the ways in which tour guides can contribute to the protection and appreciation of waqf heritage in Türkiye. The observation protocol's development was guided by the conceptual framework, as shown in Table 3. Simultaneously, simplifying the process of data analysis.

Table 3. Observation Protocol's Development Was Guided by The Conceptual Framework

Elements		Description
Content of Information	History of Waqf	Does the tour guide explain the origins and history of waqf properties?
	Importance of Waqf	Does the tour guide explain the social, cultural, and religious significance of waqf?
	Examples of Waqf	Is there information on how waqf functions in modern contexts?
Delivery Style	Communication Style	What is the communication style of the tour guide (formal, informal, interactive)?
	Use of Visual Aids	Does the tour guide use visual aids like pictures, maps, or videos?
	Narratives and Stories	Does the tour guide use stories or anecdotes to explain the concept of waqf?
Interaction with Tourists	Tourist Response	How do tourists respond to the information provided ?
	Tourist Engagement	To what extent are tourists involved in discussions or activities related to waqf?
	Environment	Are there any challenges or obstacles faced by the tour guide in conveying information about waqf?
	Effectiveness of Delivery	Is the information provided by the tour guide well-structured and easy to follow?

Source: Author, 2025

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Utilizing NVivo to systematically analyze observational data regarding tour guides enables researchers to effectively structure the data. The software facilitates the organization, categorization, retrieval, and graphical representation of data in order to uncover significant patterns. Figure 2 depicts the procedure for compiling the analysis. This analysis focuses on the waqf content that the tour guide from Turkiye wishes to emphasize. The findings indicate that the tourist guide does not specifically prioritize waqf property. The provided explanation lacks a clear definition of the influence of waqf in shaping Turkiye's development during the rule of the Ottoman Caliphate. The tour guide places significant emphasis on the historical events that occurred in Turkiye both before and after the decline of the Ottoman Empire. The Hagia Sophia Mosque, renowned as a symbol of Muslim waqf, is not even linked to the elevated notion of waqf. Each visited site, which has its own historical waqf background, is completely independent and not connected in any way. Tour guides may lack adequate expertise

regarding waqf, including its historical background and its significance in Turkish culture, which hinders their ability to effectively advocate for it among tourists. Tour guides might not have adequate training on waqf, impeding their capacity to offer precise information and appeal to tourists. Tourists may possess diverse expectations regarding their desired knowledge about waqf, and tour guides may encounter difficulties in fulfilling these expectations due to restricted resources or expertise. Tour guides may not have adequate resources, such as educational materials or training programs, to effectively promote waqf. Tour guides might not be familiar with the cultural and historical nuances of waqf, hindering their ability to deliver a comprehensive and captivating experience for tourists. These obstacles can impede the efficacy of tour guides in promoting waqf and delivering significant experiences to tourists.

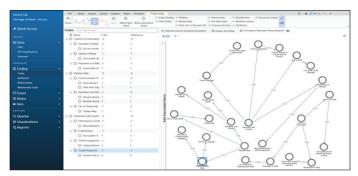


Figure 2. The Procedure for Compiling the Analysis using NVIVO

DISCUSSION OF FINAL FRAMEWORK FOR TOUR GUIDES' ROLES IN SPREADING WAQF APPRECIATION AMONG TOURISTS

Tour guides serve as educators who impart knowledge about the history, purpose, and significance of waqf in society. They must possess a comprehensive understanding of waqf in order to effectively and persuasively elucidate this concept to tourists. During the tour, activities such as question-and-answer sessions and interactive discussions can be organized to deepen tourists' comprehension of waqf. Tour guides should employ diverse presentation techniques, including narratives, historical anecdotes, and instances of successful waqf that are pertinent to the locations

being visited. In addition, they can utilize visual aids such as maps, images, and brief videos to enhance the appeal and comprehensibility of their explanations. Tour guides have the ability to motivate tourists to participate in waqf by providing detailed explanations on how they can engage, either through direct or indirect means. By making a modest financial contribution or purchasing goods that allocate their proceeds to waqf, individuals can also coordinate visits to waqf institutions or projects in need of assistance. This enables tourists to witness firsthand the tangible effects of their contribution. Tour guides have the ability to promote tourism destinations that are established using funds from waqf, such as mosques, schools, and hospitals. Offer exclusive tours that specifically emphasize heritage and waqf initiatives to deliver a distinctive and enlightening tourism encounter.

Nevertheless, there exist certain obstacles that must be surmounted. To address the issue of insufficient knowledge and training, it is necessary to offer targeted and regular training sessions to tour guides, focusing on the concept, history, and significance of waqf. To ensure better acceptance and understanding, it is necessary to adapt information delivery methods based on the cultural and language backgrounds of tourists, due to the diversity of their backgrounds. To improve the attitude and perception of tourists, it is possible to counteract them by constructing a favourable storyline and associating waqf with universal principles like compassion and wellbeing. This approach aims to capture the attention of tourists from diverse backgrounds. According to Figure 3 in this study, a framework is proposed that should be implemented by different parties, particularly the stakeholders of the waqf industry. Given that the authority over waqf lies within the jurisdiction of State Islamic Religious Councils (SIRC), it is imperative that the final framework designates SIRC as the primary party involved. Furthermore, the participation of the Ministry of Tourism is essential in order to enhance the promotion efforts and offer comprehensive training to tour guides who possess a thorough understanding of the functions and rights of waqf.

Furthermore, it is imperative to allocate financial resources to the mutawwali, who assumes the responsibility of overseeing the tourism waqf properties as an impartial intermediary. Furthermore, it is crucial to prioritize the ongoing promotion of the role of tour guides who have received comprehensive training on the history and principles of waqf. Engaging

in the practice of waqf entails not only making financial contributions to waqf funds, but also developing a deep affection and admiration for waqf properties. Waqf properties are classified into different categories. The collaboration between SIRC and the Ministry of Tourism aims to identify waqf properties with significant historical and cultural value that can be promoted as tourism products.

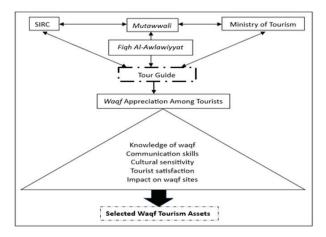


Figure 3. Final Framework for Tour Guides' Roles in Spreading Waqf
Appreciation Among Tourists

CONCLUSION

Therefore, the collaborative effort between SIRC, the Ministry of Tourism, and mutawwali, which aims to enhance the influence of tour guides, holds significant promise in promoting awareness and understanding of waqf among tourists. By means of education, efficient information dissemination, encouragement of tourist involvement, and promotion of waqf-based tourism products, they can contribute to the enhancement of awareness and admiration for the waqf concept. Nevertheless, this necessitates ongoing endeavours in delivering instruction and assistance to tour guides, while also adjusting tactics in response to the diverse obstacles encountered.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

Siti Nadiah Mohd Ali (Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing, Original Draft): She formulated the primary theoretical structure for the research, devised the approach, and composed the initial version of the manuscript. Huraizah Arshad was in charge of gathering and organizing data, performing a thorough analysis, and making substantial contributions to the review and editing of the manuscript. Nurul Sahida Fauzi was responsible for leading the investigative team, overseeing the research activities, and handling the overall project administration. Nur Atika Atan (Funding Acquisition, Resources, Validation): She successfully obtained the necessary financial support for the study, supplied crucial resources, and verified the accuracy and reliability of the research findings. Lizawati Abdullah (Software, Visualization, Writing, Review, and Editing): She handled the utilization of NVIVO for data analysis, generated visual representations, and provided support in the evaluation and refinement of the manuscript.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest for the written manuscript.

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