Effects of Visiting Museums on Cultural Development and Literacy in Iran Case Study: Vaziri Cave Museum

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INTRODUCTION

Design, Importance and Necessity, and Purpose of the Research:

Today, museums are used across the world as places to raise people’s awareness of history of civilization, increase public knowledge, and blossom individual talents. Sociologists, therefore, believe that referring to the historical memory of a nation in museums, together with creativity, can cause social changes through changes in beliefs.

At present, museums, in addition to their traditional tasks of collecting historical documents and archaeological objects, have found more important roles such as defining identity, promoting literacy, development of information, study, research and enlightenment, and their cultural role in society have become more important. So studying their role in cultural development of societies is considered an effective effort for development of countries and promoting cultural literacy among their people – which is the main purpose of this study.

Museums are not just places to display objects. They are not lifeless and inanimate structures that just display dead and dull objects. Museums have gradually come to life during the process of society formation, and defined their duties based on various activities that interact directly with the society, and solving some of the problems and having the intention to move towards a bright future.

In other words, museums can be defined as places to transfer the culture of the past to the future, like a mother transferring her generation’s culture to her children. Iran is a country with diverse culture and climate, which have caused the formation of various cultures present throughout the country. Museums, which are among the most important factors in understanding the differences between these cultural groups, protect Iran’s historical culture, make its survival possible, and exhibit wonderful treasures of the past and present.

Visiting museums is not limited to a specific century or a specific nation, and the visitors can come from different cultures, different ethnicities, and different nationalities who are interested in visiting museums and their first goal is to see what has been on display in those museums. Their visual purpose can be to spend time in
an art center and remember the good memories of that place. The works on display in the museum each have a different feel and touch, and when the relationship between the visitors and the work of art is established, it can make them think and has positive effects on their mind.

It seems that as much as the word “tourism” is familiar with us, the phrase “museum visiting” is not as popular. The phrase, which has been made for the purpose of this study, means touring a museum and it also refers to what the museum’s visitors do, they enter the museum with a specific purpose and it seems that their first intention is watching the objects that are on display in the museum.

In studying the relationship between museum visiting and development of cultural literacy, questions may arise which links these two factors together. Anyone who wants to visit a museum, in fact, is a cultural person. In other words, museum visitors could be categorized as cultural tourists, because they bring up the question that what is their motivation for visiting the museum? And what do they gain for the time and money they spend on visiting a museum?

Each one of their observations helps in increasing their cultural literacy. Knowing the cultural background of a society helps in making a better future. Museums are a collection of the past heritage and historical background of the nations. It is for this reason that they are among the important cultural places in a country and bear a huge responsibility for educating people of different ages in a society.

Cultural development means improving cultural living values in society, it means obtaining high cultural values. When we consider culture as a result of thought process, the phrase “cultural development” finds a definitive meaning, and we may assume that development in thinking causes development in the cultural aspects of a society.

Iran’s civilization has a great historical and cultural background. The high number of ancient objects and artifacts and cultural heritages collected by more than 400 museums in the country shows the depth of artistic and cultural values and the important role of the museums.

What proves the importance of this study is the need for the country’s cultural managers, legislators, and heads of cultural organizations to understand the important role of the museums in cultural development.

With regards to the importance of museums in cultural development of countries and societies, the main purpose of this study is to prove the relation between the museum and cultural development in Iran. Such a study has not been done before, both in theory and in practice, and is an important necessity in development of the country.

Culture is a general concept, and museums are a part of it. Museums help people recognize culture or its development. There are concepts of “culture” and “cultural activities.” Museums are categorized as cultural activities. Culture is not quantifiable and has a qualitative concept. Museums should help in developing cultures. It means everyone should try their luck in creating art and culture, and the government should provide the necessary educational means. Of course the government cannot create art itself, so it has to provide the means and support for the creators of art. Museums should be places for cultural development or popularization of culture. Our vision towards museums should become cultural. Museum is not a place for exotic things, in which people only visit to satisfy their curiosity. Collecting statistics and asking people about the museums is one of the means of organizing the matters in this situation. Nowadays, if one for example questions 10 high-culture people of a city to name 10 museums present in that city, most of them cannot provide the right answer. Reaching out to the people about this matter should increase. As they ask people “what is banking?” there should also be questions of “what is a museum?”

What is obvious here is that museums are important educational places in a society. In the paper “Changing Museums to a Changing World” by René Marcuse, this possibility is even more important than a school classroom. The author’s reasoning behind this claim is that a museum is in equal terms with a classroom, with the added advantage that there are no scores involved. Literacy is important for having clairvoyance. Not everything is taught at schools, and besides education, reading and seeing cultural values are important too. [27]

Museum visitors make a deep contact with their ancestors that founded their present cultures. In fact, museums act as a bridge between the past and present. Seeing objects in museums also shows the evolution in human beings’ thought process in creating and inventing various devices and their culture, because every society’s culture is reflected in its various objects and devices.

Museums nowadays are becoming a center and a shelter for the richest documents, evidences, artifacts, and historical and cultural objects of the nations, and in the words of P. Mary Louise, they are “contact zones” in national, regional, and global scales. Museums have a profound influence on our historical perspective and knowledge, and have given us a vibrant perception, although not any more than the reality itself. They are effective on our historical interpretation of the events.

In this study, two major questions are answered:
1. Does museum visiting have a relation with cultural development of a society?
2. Does museum visiting have a relation with cultural literacy?
It seems that there are not enough number of researches done in Iran on the subjects of the role and situation of the museums, audiences and visitors of the museums (which are called “museum visitors” in this research), and scientific discussions are lacking in defining the important and effective role of museums in domestic and global aspects, and increasing the number of visitors.

The author, who herself has an extensive art résumé and a lot of passion for art and culture of her homeland, decided to fill parts of this gap by conducting a case study on Vaziri Cave Museum (which belongs to her father) and also analyzing the previously published studies and researches.

Research Literature and Theoretical Framework:

Definition of Museum:

The word "museum" in English comes originally from the Ancient Greek word Mouseion, which denotes a place or temple dedicated to the Muses (the patron divinities in Greek mythology of the arts), and is called Musée in French. Around 1870, the French pronunciation entered the Farsi language. The roots of the Farsi pronunciation dates back to Naser al-Din Shah Qajar and his visits to Europe and the museums there, and his decision to build similar places in Tehran’s Royal Citadel.

In simple terms, museums are places to collect objects for the purposes of researching, investigating, and using such objects.

Museums are a collection of unique and exquisite works and objects, and each of the objects preserved there is useful to the scientists and people of grace in which it reveals information and secrets. Museums are mirrors that reveal secrets of the past, which should be used as experience by the future generations. They are a treasure full of thoughts, manners, cultures, and lifestyles of the past generations, and are prospects of vanished magnificence and glory of the past pioneers.

In simple terms, museums are places to collect, document, protect, display and interpret items of significance for the education of public. This definition by the International Council of Museums later underwent some changes.

History of Museums in the World:

Collection is an innate part of human beings and undoubtedly they have tastes in doing so. In the Neolithic era, humans collected oyster, scallop, pebbles and animal bones and used them for decoration. In later stages of civilization, these collections reflect the beliefs and ritual practices of different tribes. Collections of decorative and luxury items, especially those found in cemeteries of ancient civilizations in Mesopotamia and the Iranian Plateau, showed that there was a belief in the afterlife. In ancient times, precious objects that were considered votive for meeting the needs of the community were collected in shrines. This is seen in all societies of many ancient civilizations. In our present society, the museums reflect the institutionalization of the general trend of collecting items. [17]

The first museums were like today’s libraries and research institutions, and were considered sources of inspiration and enlightenment for the people. Pharaoh Akhenaten (1353 – 1335 BC) built a large library in his capital city and kept all the gifts he received from around the country in it. In ancient Greek, works of art was considered public property, and were kept for use by researchers and the general public. Greek temples often exhibit endowments, gifts, paintings and sculptures for the public. In the fifth century BC, the Propylaea in the Acropolis of Athens was in fact used as a public art exhibition.

Around the end of the fourth century BC and the beginning of the third century BC, Egypt became the source and inspiration for most of the Greek art. Ptolemy I (321 BC – 283 BC), one of the generals of Alexander III of Macedon, began efforts to improve Greek’s art and culture. As a result of this, most prominent scientists in Greek, Asia Minor, Egypt, and other countries in the region became attracted to Egypt. Ptolemy built a complex near his residential palace in the city of Alexandria, which consisted of a university, a library, laboratories, an observatory, a garden for plants and animals, where it was called a "museum," but this idea was left behind after Ptolemy and the few existing references to this "museum" are in the ancient books.

Art works in ancient Rome had a different usage. Elite Roman generals would put on display the trophies obtained during wars in parks, baths and other public places in Rome and the public could see them. In the Middle Ages (500 to 1450 AD), due to lack of a proper financial and banking system, being rich was synonymous with owning expensive items. Because the rich and the owners of capital often prevented loses to their money by buying and collecting rare art works. In addition, religious places in the East and Christian churches in the West often possessed different types of rare objects such as jewelry and ornaments, weapons which were decorated with precious stones, and exquisite fabrics. Therefore the wealth of the churches was incalculable, and they were in full care of their reserves. Their collections would put on display only in exceptional circumstances.

In the Renaissance Era (fourteenth to sixteenth century AD), due to major changes and developments that emerged in European societies, collectors would not only see their assets as capital, but found artistic and cultural values in them. Therefore, collections were came out of hideouts and moved into exhibition places. At
this time having a collection of art works was not only a sign of wealth, but also represented their owner’s interest in arts and culture. Some scientists and art enthusiasts would even send people around the world to gather art works. As the number of objects in their possession increased, they would invite experts and people who had cultural knowledge to study the objects and write articles about them. To exhibit large art works such as sculptures and paintings, they built light rooms with long length and narrow width and called it a “gallery.” Some collectors, inspired by the word “muse,” named their galleries as “museums.” Since then, the word museum has become common for referring to collections of art work. Among the features of these luxurious museums were that they were places to collect objects, and also their visitors were few and limited to specific groups of people.

**History of Museums in Iran:**

Information regarding formation of the first museums in Iran is recorded in valuable treasures obtained by archaeologists.

Ministry of Education and Cultural Industries founded Iran’s National Museum in 1916. The museum began in one of the classrooms in Dar Al-Fonun School and its founder was Morteza Gholi Khan-e Moltaz Al-Molk. After some time, the collection was transferred from Dar Al-Fonun School to the Masoudieh Building. With the establishment of Ancient Iran Museum, the collection – which included 280 items – was moved to the newly founded museum.

The Military College Museum was established in Tehran Military College in 1923 for arms and weapons training to the cadets. In 1930, the Arts and Industries Museum was founded by the late Hossein Taher-Zadeh Behzad. The museum collected art works by various artists, art professors, and students. Tehran Museum of Anthropology was founded in 1933. The museum was at first a part of the Ministry of Education and Cultural Industries called the “anthropology department.” Then its name was changed to the “anthropology department firm,” and finally, it was named as Tehran Museum of Anthropology. In 1968, the museum was transferred to the White Palace in Golestian Palace complex and placed under control of the General Directorate of Museums.

The establishment of Ancient Iran Museum is a milestone in the history of museums in the country. This museum is the first science museum in Iran, which is a result of the New Law of Research, enacted in 1930. The museum was designed by the French architect André Godard. Its building was constructed solely for the purpose of becoming a museum, and was in compliance with all the required provisions for museums.

As the museums gain more popularity, attracting visitors becomes one of their main issues and even their first priority. Today, the issue of attracting visitors has changed to believing in visitors, and the museum sees them as human beings without limitations. The museum should recognize the visitor’s needs and provide solutions for them in its planning, which in turn, causes more success for the museum.

Cultural aspects of different societies are rapidly spreading in Iran. The youth, because of their more receptiveness, are affected by this issue. They create and re-create their identity by continually using available resources and facilities.

The museum, in addition to preserving objects, recognizes their identity, and this is the beginning of becoming knowledgeable about an object and connecting to it. At no other period in time, have human beings experienced acceleration, complexity, diversity, scope, being global and universal, transfer of products, trading of cultures, societies and populations, conflicts, engagements, confrontations and exchanges of ideas, wisdoms, tastes, beliefs, values, traditions and heritage. And they as well were not equipped with such elegant, sophisticated and complex communication technologies. The changing of the face and the great and fundamental changes of history in the new era, which can be witnessed in museums and museum spaces, is sensible in many tangible and perceptible aspects of human life.

The museum’s mission is to understand diverse cultures, promote cultural democracy and peace, and deny the reality of constant violence, conflicts, and the fanatical wars in the world. Responsibilities and tasks assigned to the new museums are much broader than what the traditional ethnic societies had assigned to them, and are much more diverse than the views of traditional employees of the museums. As a result, museums should develop new and proper work methods. [29]

This relationship is the symbol and manifestation of cultural development and is the civilization link between the nations.

The International Council of Museums (ICOM), a subsidiary of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), defines museum as “a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment.”

The functions of the museum reflect the ideals and ideas, social and cultural environments, works and inexhaustible creativity of human beings in the past and present.
Museums are classified (based on their subject) in groups, such as historical museums, art museums, natural history museums, science and technology museums, outdoor museums, music museums, sports museums, military museums, etc.

**Museums for All:**
Museums are educational places and also offer educating experiences, which are the two main services that are available. It is noteworthy that based on researches done in the United Kingdom, in addition to agencies and organizations that help people visit the museums, the environment of the museum and its activities also play important roles in attracting visitors. This can be done for example by allowing visitors participate in some of the museum’s activities.

A museum’s transformation from a product to into a visitor-friendly place makes it a place for all. If museums can provide means for visitors’ participation in some activities, the visitors can have a tangible experience. For this purpose, the museums should be more open and accessible, and cater to the needs of visitors. A visitor-friendly museum has dynamic relations between the planned activities and visitors. By performing creative activities with the most compatibility with quality standards for a great number of visitors, museums can be recognized as wonderful places that cause great changes in people’s lives. [31]

Many museums have found that it is better to exhibit the collections in three separate groups:

The first group has a simple exhibition with proper colors, which is suitable for kids that are twelve years old or younger. This is to satisfy the needs present in the world of these children — the needs to wonder and explore – which begin by wondering about their homes and surroundings and expands into the wider horizons of exchanging thoughts and understanding the causes and effects.

For the second group, which is also the largest of the three, the power of thinking in the youth and adults is considered. But there is not a specific setting required. For these visitors, museums can set up exhibitions with unlimited arrangements that contain enough information for them to analyze the reasons for displaying such objects. Because there is possibility that many of these visitors would be unfamiliar with the museum, attracting their attention by means of setting up interesting exhibitions with artistic lighting and decorations is very important. The description printed on the labels of the objects should also be interesting and informative. Placing a set of objects in a specific position could lead to having a general opinion on another set of objects, and if done properly and enough times, the visitor might pay a special attention to a set of objects, and therefore gain new levels of perception, experience, and knowledge.

The third group of visitors consists of experts and academics that have a considerable amount of theoretical and practical knowledge about the objects exhibited in the museum. Their main purpose of visiting museums is observing as high number of the objects on display as possible, with added attention to their details. They are enthusiastically looking for new materials for their research projects. Such visitors do not need artistic shows or interesting descriptions on the labels, but they need to have access to the museum’s objects, samples, related information, and sources. The museum provides these visitors access to its available collections, comparative objects, and research materials categorized in separate sections. These visitors are after exchanging knowledge and opinions with other experts and scholars. Most of the times, these visitors will be authors of papers and articles about the exhibitions that they have visited, and their knowledge and experience would be an effective help for the museum’s employees to better understand the objects that are exhibited in the museum. It is the result of such experts’ efforts that objects in museums are identified and labeled. It should be noted that gathering, preserving, and collecting such great collections that are useful to the experts is only feasible for very large museums, because studying and analyzing these collections requires a proper place, special equipments, and enough personnel.

**Status of Museums in Iran:**

Even an amateur study of the amount of people participating in archaeological discussions, or the people’s approach to visiting museums clearly shows the fact that museums were unable to establish a proper relation between themselves and the people, the main reason of which is that is museums have abandoned their research approaches. Another reason for this problem is the ambiguous nature of social status of the museums; their status has not been defined by scientific, research, and educational organizations. And also it is not clear as to why archaeological museums of the country are marginalized, and why people are reluctant to communicate more effectively with the museums, and why museums lack scientific approach? Does this have any relations to the construction of the museums, or to the ideas and opinions of the organizers? And many other questions.

Museums as a social phenomenon are faced with new challenges about human beings along the growth of the society and human civilization. Humans, who are the museums’ audiences, have become more and more complex as time has passed, and as such, it is now impossible to define and recognize the museums’ audience by a single definition. The complexity of the recognition of the audience has not caused the elimination or limiting of the museums, but has increased the problems museums have to face. As museums gain more popularity, attracting visitors becomes one of their main issues and even their first priority. Museums which at
first established their identity on the objects in their possession are now becoming more visitor-oriented. Museums which at first defined the visitors with specific definitions are now seeing them as human beings without limitations. Interactions between the nations have eliminated the geographic boundaries that would otherwise be present in recognizing the museums’ audiences. Nowadays, museums cannot be attributed anymore to a specific ethnicity or nation. Anyone with cultural, sexual, age, and geographical characteristics, and even with all their flaws and limitations could be a museum audience, and should be treated accordingly by the museums. Now, even time constraints cannot limit the audiences, and museums should also think about plans to serve the next generations. Every planning for museums should be based around the questions that how every visitor could benefit from the museum? And what are the needs and expectations of this visitor from the museum?

**Development:**

Development means “gradual growth with the aim of becoming more advanced, more powerful, or becoming bigger.”

Michael P. Todaro says about the development: “Development is a multi-dimensional movement that requires fundamental changes in the social structure, attitudes of the public and national organizations, acceleration in economic growth, reducing inequalities, and abolishing poverty.”

In fact, it could be said that development is less of an economical issue, but more of a cultural one. And its purpose is to improve the life of humans.

Development has a broad definition that includes multiple aspects of life such as economical, social, cultural, etc. The main purpose of development is improving the life of humans to a degree that they can live in safety and security, and enjoy their life, both in private and in public.

Development means to extend, to widen.

Development means transition from the current conditions to favorable conditions.

Although the concepts of growth, development, and progress have similarities together and are overlapping each other, if carefully considered and academically studied, profound differences can be found between each of their instances. The biggest difference between growth and development is that development is a multi-dimensional affair, but growth defines and guarantees progress in only one area. For instance when speaking of economic growth, it means that there was progress in only the economical aspect of an issue. Such is the case with political growth, societal growth, and cultural growth. But development, as mentioned earlier, means multi-dimensional and coordinated growth in multiple areas, especially in economics, politics, culture, and society. In other words, when there is a coordinated balance between economics, politics, culture, and society in moving towards progression, it is called development.

**Cultural Development:**

Cultural development is one of the most important aspects of development. This concept was popularized globally by the UNESCO in the 1960s. This organization held numerous meetings to discuss conditions for coordinated and conscious development by educational planning, cultural policies, and information policies.

It is a process in which by making certain changes in the areas of perception, cognition, values, tendencies, beliefs and capabilities, there would be specific behaviors and responses in humans that are suitable for development.

Nowadays, with the expanding of museums’ activities, more people from all parts of society become museum visitors. To make it easier for the visitors to understand the objects on display and communicate with them, the museum provides items such as audio guides, computer manuals, multi-layer labels, and even trained guide personnel.

Cultural development takes place by relying on cultural assets and heritage and existing structures.

Because human beings are cultural creatures, cultural development is the foundation for sustainable development. The importance of cultural development in the world has been taken into consideration, and the formation of organizations such as the UNESCO shows the concerns of human beings in this area.

This concept has been introduced in development discussions by the UNESCO in the beginnings of the 1980s, and is one of the concepts that is more valuable with regard to the other areas of development, and has more emphasis on non-material needs of society. Accordingly, this concept causes changes in the areas of perception, cognition, values and tendencies that create special capabilities, beliefs and personalities in human beings. The outcome of these capabilities, beliefs, behaviors and appropriate actions is called development.. Development and cultural development are two important concepts that have found a special place in the national planning during the recent decades. The concept of a developed country means that the facilities and opportunities are provided for the whole society to reach cultural development milestones.

Cultural development of a society is based on collective ideas and values, which in turn depends on a lot of hard work. By having a dynamic culture, these efforts cause innovation, creativity, and change. First, people should believe that the world today is based on action, knowledge, and finding ways and means to solutions.
Educating all of these requires procedures and instructions, and should first be taught in schools and universities, and then spread throughout the society. This is because cultural issues are present in nearly all places; from far-away villages to huge cities, and the society needs the presence of culture. Cultural growth improves humans’ propensity and lifestyle.

The universe’s available resources are not distributed equally between life forms, especially in human societies because of undesirable uses, or in fact due to the formation of unequal social structures. As a result, development too takes place differently in various societies. The most important issue in today’s world is unequal development and its side effects.

The UNESCO defines cultural development as: “Development and progression of life with the purpose of realizing cultural values, in coordination with the general level of economical and societal development.”

In cultural development planning, both cultural legislators and consumers of cultural products should be considered.

The British Museum, as a national museum and an international reference, says about cultural development and museums: “A place to increase the understanding of cultural relations and effects which links Britain and the world – A place for the manifestation of cultural perspectives – A place to visit and use not only by the educated and curious, but by everyone else too.”

**Cultural Literacy:**

One of the effective means on the development of cultural literacy is visiting cultural places like museums. The family has an incredible role on the literacy of children. Another important factor is the differences in languages and cultures. It is important to overcome the problems that are in the way of becoming literate. Providing proper means and foundations have a great role in solving these problems; for example parents can talk to their children about the books that they have read and the things that they saw. [20]

Cultural literacy is recognizing what Bourdieu calls different “cultural fields;” written and unwritten laws, types, discourses, various assets, current cultural values, backgrounds, and necessities that affect the functions of human beings. This recognition gives the people a special knowledge about a specific “field” and lets them know what is happening around them so they can decide on how to interact with those fields. It means that they would be able to recognize what are the proper behaviors, actions, and discourses in a specific time. Because defining meanings are all done with regard to the concept of “field,” each individual’s knowledge level of various semantic systems and their interactions, and also their ability to read and understand these systems, determines their level of cultural literacy.

Focusing on strengthening and exaggerating learning for all students and increasing literacy of teachers forms a learning environment and a supportive future based on the needs of students. [21]

There are two different interpretations of cultural literacy:

1. Static definition
2. Dynamic definition

**Static Definition:**

The static definition is to list all fundamental concepts that a person should know. So, by this definition, cultural literacy is a collection of information or cultural knowledge that efficient readers of a specific culture should have. For example, talking about football requires knowledge of its rules and regulations, famous teams, and famous players. Or if talking about political subjects, knowing about current issues and different opinions on those subjects is beneficial for making interaction with others. This interpretation of cultural literacy was first introduced in 1982 in the United States by E. D. Hirsch Jr. Then, in 2001, he published the Dictionary of Cultural Literacy.

**Dynamic Definition:**

The dynamic definition is based both on having a collection of principal and fundamental knowledge and the necessary efficiencies for increasing this knowledge and gathering and using new information. If we acknowledge that, like many other societies, the Iranian society is reaching toward a knowledge-based society, the citizens will then be required to have special efficiencies. So, communicational efficiencies are also part of the cultural literacy. Cultural literacy, like its complementary concepts such as media literacy, digital literacy, computer literacy, information literacy, and audio-visual literacy, is a fundamental part of a knowledge-based society.

Imam Khomeini, the Great Leader of the Islamic Revolution, says about cultural literacy:

1. “From the perspective of within the society, it is recognizing the main elements that form the national culture, and also knowing the global elements that can affect the national culture.”
2. “From the outside perspective of society, it means acquiring the cultural literacy of other nations. Those Iranian nationals that live and work within the geographical borders of the country will only need to have national cultural literacy. Other citizens, especially those who have professions that require business, industrial,
and information trading with foreign countries, need to have sufficient cultural literacy about their target nations. In the age of globalization, the cultural literacy of citizens is very important from the outside perspective of society.”

**Research Variables:**

**Independent Variable:**
Museum visiting for research is the independent variable of this study.

**Dependent Variables:**
Cultural development and cultural literacy are the dependent variables of the study.

**Research Hypotheses:**
- Museum visiting is related with the development of society.
- Museum visiting is related to the cultural literacy of society.

**Research Method:**
Data collection for this study has been done using the descriptive-analytical method of cause and effect correlation type, because the author researches the effects of visiting museums on cultural development and cultural literacy. This is a practical study, because its results can be useful for managers of cultural organizations such as the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance and the Tourism and Cultural Heritage Organization. The questionnaire used in this study is anonymous, with closed questions, and based on the semi-metric scale on the 0 to 100 interval. The scoring template is as follows:

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For each question, the participants are allowed to provide a score based on their opinions and mark the questionnaire accordingly.

**Correspondence between the Questions and the Study Variables:**

**Factor analysis of the latent variable (cultural development):**

![Factor analysis](image)

*Fig. 1 Factor estimation (weight factor)*: 
Figure 1 shows the weight factor value of the observable variables (heritage, cultural literacy, and cultural identity) for the latent variable (cultural development). In Figure 2, the calculated statistical value of $t$, confirms the meaningfulness of weight factors of the observable variables. This means that if the variable for heritage has a one-unit change, the latent variable changes 99 percent, and in total, a one-unit change in the observable variables results in a 2.65 unit change in the latent variable.

Table 1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural development</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Factor estimation</th>
<th>Value of $t$</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cultural literacy</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>6.49</td>
<td>Formation of cultural development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Heritage</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cultural identity</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Factor analysis of the latent variable (cultural literacy):

Fig. 2: Statistical value

Fig. 3: Factor estimation (weight factor)
Figure 3 shows the weight factor value of the observable variables (learning the art of sculpting, studying the history of art, etc) for the latent variable (cultural literacy). In Figure 4, the calculated statistical value of \( t \) confirms the meaningfulness of weight factors of the observable variables. This means that if the variable for learning the art of sculpting has a one-unit change, the latent variable changes 81 percent, and in total, a one-unit change in the observable variables results in a 5.41 unit change in the latent variable (cultural literacy).

**Sample questionnaire about cultural literacy:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Component</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Interest in learning the art of sculpting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Interest in studying Iran’s history of art</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Increment in learning general art information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Increment in learning cultural information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Interest in learning various art forms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Attention to Iran’s ancient history</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This survey research is done using the correlation method, and is a practical study, because its results can be useful for managers of cultural organizations.

The sample for this study consisted of the visitors of Vaziri Cave Museum. The number of participants was estimated to be 487 persons. To make sure that the required number of participants filled the forms, the author distributed 550 questionnaires among the visitors of the museum, and at the end of the research, data entered in 521 of the questionnaires was suitable for extraction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample size</th>
<th>Sample variance</th>
<th>Number of participants</th>
<th>Number of questionnaires distributed</th>
<th>Number of questionnaires suitable for data extraction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unlimited</td>
<td>0.317</td>
<td>487</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>521</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Test validity means accuracy in measurements, provability of the test, and its consistency. Accuracy in measurements means to what extent the score obtained by each variable represents its actual score. The
collected data are analyzed to show the amount of internal consistency in the questionnaires’ extracted data. For this purpose, the author used the questionnaires to measure the variables, and validated the results by applying Cronbach’s alpha test, which had the Cronbach’s coefficient of 0.905 for a total of 18 questions.

Conclusion:
Introduction:
One of the most important parts of a research is its conclusion. Most efforts that are put into the research process are done to gain access to the results and recommendations of the research, because the main purpose of conducting a research is to find solutions for problems that already exist or arise during the research process. Sometimes these problems could put a lot of stress on the society, waste a huge amount of money and energy, reduce performance and effectiveness, and prevent achieving the desired results.

The findings and results of this study titled “Effects of Visiting Museums on Cultural Development and Literacy in Iran (Case Study: Vaziri Cave Museum)” are provided below. And in the succeeding section, the recommendations of the research that are obtained from the results are provided.

Research Method:
In the first stage of the research, previous studies and researches done on the subjects of museums, cultural literacy, and cultural development were acquired and studied. Then, based on theoretical foundation, a questionnaire form was written using input and help from the Supervisors, advisors, and opinions of artists and cultural figures. The questions are then answered using a semi-metric scale, and with a score between 0 and 100. After collecting the questionnaires, the extracted data were analyzed and filtered using SPSS and LISREL computer programs.

Conclusion of the Second Sub-Hypothesis:
Visiting museums has a meaningful effect on cultural literacy. With regard to the factor estimation (correlation coefficient) shown in Table 1, and the statistical values of $t=12.11$ and $r=0.92$, with a certainty of 95 percent the initial hypothesis that visiting museums does not have any effect on cultural literacy is rejected, and the research hypothesis that visiting museums has an effect on cultural literacy is confirmed.

Conclusion of the Research Hypothesis:
Visiting museums has a meaningful effect on cultural development. With regard to the factor estimation (correlation coefficient) shown in Table 1, and the statistical values of $t=5.43$ and $r=0.87$, with a certainty of 95 percent the initial hypothesis that visiting museums does not have any effect on cultural development is rejected, and the research hypothesis that visiting museums has an effect on cultural development is confirmed.

The Results of the Research Literature:
Museums convey their messages using a “special language.” They communicate with the “language of the real objects.” They have the power of extensive influence, and therefore, using them as cultural means has strong effects on increasing cultural development and improving cultural literacy in any society.

Using this special language, all visitors, including literate people or those that are illiterate, can establish a connection with the museum and can grasp some of its messages. Museums act as open windows to the outside world.

One of the ways for the expansion of a museum is recognizing the society, or in other words, defining the type of audiences of the museum. Addressing the audiences’ cultural needs should be the first priority, and various types of audiences should be defined and thoroughly analyzed. Then the managers of the museum should design plans and programs to satisfy the audiences’ needs, so visiting the museum becomes more effective. Such a plan increases the motivation to visit the museum by various age groups, including elementary school students, high school students, and university students.

Recommendations:
Recommendations Based on the Results of the Research:
Considering the studies carried out in the research process and the results obtained from statistical analysis of the research data, the following suggestions can be made:

1. Since the correlation coefficient or factor estimation of visiting museums has a strong effect on cultural development, the following recommendations can be made:
   - It is recommended to build new museums with various subjects, for example literature museums, theater museums, sports museums, etc. and also existing museums expand their activities and become more active and dynamic so that more people would visit them.
Because facilities and resources of the government alone cannot address the cultural needs of the entire society, the private sector businesses should also become involved in building and improving museums.

Museum managers should invite the creators of art works and expert scholars to their museum, so the visitors who meet them would feel a sense of creativity and entrepreneurship.

The managers could set up exhibitions in various parts of the world so that Iran’s rich artistic and cultural aspects would be introduced to the people of other countries. They could even accomplish this by setting up websites and virtual tours of their museum on the Internet.

2. Since the correlation coefficient or factor estimation of visiting museums has a strong effect on cultural literacy, the following recommendations can be made:
   - Officials should organize tours for the people, especially for the youth, to visit various museums and increase their knowledge.
   - Museum managers could include new technologies and technological findings, and various aspects of art works to attract even more visitors.
   - They could also set up education workshops inside the museums for visitors to learn more about the activities of the museums.

Recommendations:
- Officials should introduce and inform the people to visit museums extensively, by printing maps, providing public transportation means like tourist buses, etc.
- Holding the ceremony for the International Museum Day on 18 May in all museums across the country and publicizing it.
- Making museums more active to attract more visitors.
- Museums’ policy should be aligned with the annual theme specified by the International Council of Museums (ICOM); the managers could also plan attractive programs in line with the annual theme to motivate the young people to visit the museums.
- Organizing educational tours for students with various educational levels.
- Including new technologies and technological findings, and various aspects of art works to attract even more visitors.

REFERENCES