The Role of Paradigmatic Approach in Conceptualizing Interdisciplinary Studies on Spiritual Tourism

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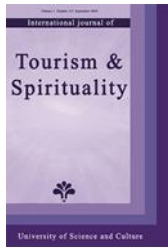
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Abstract

Comprehensive and reliable conceptual definition of concepts can be considered as the first step toward managing the phenomena based on those concepts. Spiritual tourism is a multidimensional phenomenon with different mixed concepts such as spiritual experience, spiritual tourist, achieving spirituality through tourism, deepening and institutionalizing spirituality perception (experience), training and learning spirituality (spiritual experiences), development planning, spiritual tourism economics, and spiritual tourism marketing. The mentioned concepts are formed in dialectical models that are influenced by disciplines such as geography, history, economics, management, religion, and mysticism. Regardless of the level and the type of combination of concepts, the definition of these concepts may be different in various paradigms due to the differences in assumptions, ontology, epistemology and methodology of different paradigms. Such a different even makes the spiritual tourism's definition process more difficult.

Spiritual tourism has already common definitions in literature that are not formally classified based on various paradigms' assumptions; and have not been specified by the tourists under which paradigm that they are formed. Therefore, in this paper, the concept of spiritual tourism is reviewed from the perspective of different paradigms such as positivism, critical romanticism, post-modernism, critical realism, and pragmatism and new definitions are extracted. Based on the results of this article, the passage from abstract concepts to operational concepts in the field of spiritual tourism has been smoother. Besides, a more

sustainable vision has been created about how to create and disseminate knowledge in the field of spiritual tourism.

Hence, the main aim and contribution of this article is to extract the different conceptual definitions of spiritual tourism in different paradigms, in order to provide a reliable paradigm conceptual definition of tourism spiritual. The present paper concluded that a reliable and comprehensive definition of spiritual tourism can be provided in Pragmatism Paradigm framework.

This pragmatic definition can be used as a base for future planning, management, marketing, and other operational and administrative applications.

Keywords: Spiritual Tourism, Pragmatic Conceptualization, Paradigms' Philosophical Principles, Pragmatism Paradigm

1- Introduction

Comprehensive and reliable conceptual definition of concepts can be considered as the first step in managing the phenomena based on these concepts.

Spiritual tourism is a multidimensional phenomenon with different mixed concepts. These concepts are formed in dialectical models that are influenced by mixed structures of the different disciplines such as geography, history, economics, management, religion, and mysticism. Regardless of the level and the type of combination of concepts, the definition of these concepts may be different in various paradigms due to the differences in assumptions, ontology, epistemology, and methodology of different paradigms. This may make the spiritual tourism's definition process more difficult.
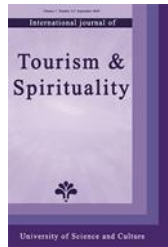
Therefore, in this paper, the concept of spiritual tourism is reviewed from the perspective of different paradigms. As it will be discussed in this paper, a reliable and comprehensive definition of spiritual tourism can be provided in Pragmatism Paradigm framework.

Thus, this article is prepared to provide a reliable paradigm conceptual definition of tourism spiritual. This pragmatic definition can be used as the base for future operational and administrative applications.

2- Literature review

2-1- The Impact of Different Paradigms' Philosophical Principles on Spiritual Tourism Definition

As mentioned before, spiritual tourism is a multidimensional phenomenon with different definitions in various paradigms. In other words, in every paradigm, a part of the reality of phenomena is highlighted while other elements being marginalized or totally ineffective (Rezvani et al, 2009). For example, as a result of the interpretation of spiritual tourism concept in the framework of feminist paradigm, gender would be interpreted as a social and cultural construction, concepts of spiritual tourism (such as purpose,

destination, and type of tourism) would have a political and ideological nature, and in its semantic structure the analysis of the aesthetic position would be marginal. However, as a result of interpretation of the concept of spiritual tourism in the framework of assumptions and perceptions of the critical paradigm of Frankfurt (school), aesthetic and contextual elements arise in addition to cultural and ideological assumptions (Saberian, 2015).

Therefore, researcher's philosophical paradigm and approach could affect ontology, epistemology, and methodology and even research problem, research design, data collection method, statistical population and samples and analytical tools. For this reason, the researcher must have a thorough understanding of these topics in advance (Mohammadpur, 2013). In discussing the philosophical approaches, it is first necessary to provide a definition of the nature of paradigms and then to address different paradigms. Paradigms are sets of human-made fundamental assumptions and beliefs. Each paradigm, has its own ontology, epistemology, and methodology and, in any period of time, a certain way of seeing the world is considered the norm. In addition, as Cohen stated, if these beliefs are not responsive to issues and problems, they will face a crisis leading to a scientific revolution. On the other hand, if these new beliefs are accepted by the majority of members of a scientific community in a period of time, a new paradigm would emerge (Mohammadpur, 2013).

It should be noted that each problem or research must be homogenous in term of a combination of ontology, epistemology, and methodology. These philosophical dimensions are presented for different paradigms in Table 1.

Table 1. Philosophical dimensions of different paradigms
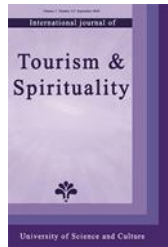(Reference: Mohammadpur, 2013: 30)

Paradigm	Ontology	Epistemology	Question	Method
Positivism	Hidden rules govern teaching and learning process	Focus on reliable and valid tools to undercover rules	What works?	Quantitative
Interpretive/con structivist	Reality is created by individuals in groups	Discover the underlying meaning of events and activities	Why do you act this way?	Qualitative
Critical	Society is rife with inequalities and injustice	Helping uncover injustice and empowering citizens	How can I change this situation?	Ideological review, Civil actions
Pragmatic	Truth is what is useful	The best method is one that solves problems	Will this intervention improve learning?	Mixed Methods, Design-Based

Thus, since the nature of defining and solving problems is different in the context of different philosophical paradigms, various definitions of spiritual tourism have been explained in different philosophical paradigms, as follows.

2-2- The Common Definitions of Spiritual Tourism

Spiritual tourism has already common definitions in literature which are not formally classified based on various paradigms' assumptions. A number of most common definitions of spiritual tourism in the present literature are as follows:

According to Sharpley and Sandaram (2005), spiritual tourism 'is a tourism that is motivated by faith or religious reasons have been in evidence for centuries. More recently, however, it has been suggested that modern tourism is the functional and symbolic equivalent of more traditional spiritual practices …' (Sharpley and Sandaram, 2005). Also, spiritual tourism can be considered as a specific type of tourism in

which tourists are motivated either partly or exclusively for reasons such as peace (Rinschede, 1992 p.53).

Tourism can be seen as a spiritual activity (Vukonic´, 1996). Smith (1992) defines spiritual tourism as the 'guest's mission' and states that it is a sacred pilgrimage at one extreme, which is a journey in order to seek faith, religion and spiritual fulfillment; and at the other extreme it is a journey in which the tourist is seeking to fulfill her/his personal or spiritual needs through tourism. He argues that there are different intensities and forms of spiritual tourism between these two extremes, which are based on religious or cultural or knowledge-based needs.

Brown (1998) argues that spirituality is 'a kind of buzz-word of the age […] an all-purpose word, but one that describes what is felt to be missing rather than specifying what is hoped to be found . .' (Brown,1998: 1).

Aggarwal et al. (2008) explain that spirituality means having a deep understanding of religious, feelings and beliefs, including a person's sense of peace, purpose, connection to others, and beliefs about the meaning of life. The main principle of spirituality is inner love feeling. Spirituality puts a human on the highest life's pedestal. Spirituality can be considered as living in a way that is desired or wanted a living. In fact, many people with a materialistic goal in life have a spiritual journey and will be successful in their lives. In other words, spirituality means that we need to compensate by giving something equivalent or more back to the community. Based on spirituality, we cannot get anything unless we promise to do something in response to the God system.

From Ali-Knight's point of view, spiritual tourism is considered as involving traveling to a destination in order to participate in yoga or similar activities that enhance physical, mental, or spiritual well-being. From a cultural perspective, spiritual tourism has a wider definition as a learning experience (cited in Mintel, 2009).

As Vukonic (1996) states, spiritual tourism is an opportunity for a human to identify and meet their spiritual needs, but in the form of a spiritual journey.
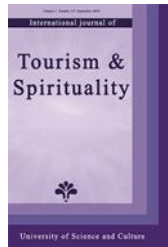
In Hanegraaff (1999) view, 'New age spirituality is now a religion in the formal and organizational sense. Instead, it represents a personal spiritual quest that typically eschews traditional monotheistic to concentrate on what is not associated closely with traditional theologies and churches' (Hanegraaff, 1999: 5).

As will be described below, in addition to above-mentioned common definitions in literature, different definitions of spiritual tourism have been extracted in the present article based on philosophical assumptions and principles of different paradigms.

2-3- Spiritual tourism definition in view of different paradigms
2-3-1- Spiritual tourism in view of materialism (objectivism, positivism or modernism)

As the word of 'materialism' implies, materialistic philosophy views the human and the world around him as materials. The roots of this approach lie in empiricism. Empiricism believes that human knowledge is entirely dependent on sensory experience. The leaders of this approach are John Locke and David Hume. Locke argued that the ability to hear, see, touch, taste, and smell creates mental forms in our mind. We also create complex images of the physical world by connecting these mental forms together. Based on Locke's view, sensory experience provides an amalgam of different individual impressions and there is no other underlying basis for creating knowledge about the world (Lincoln, 2005). David Hume added a wave of skepticism to Locke's empiricism. He believed that sensory experience only provides random experiences that we organize in the frameworks of social norms (Wolfe, 1997). Based on such a materialistic view, which reduces all the great things of human life such as beliefs, values, art, and religion to material things, spirituality will be limited to a number of material features. According to this view, there is nothing but the 'no sense material' world and issues such as a sense of freedom will be denied gradually. Excellent values do not remain in the world and spiritual values will be limited to practical and utilitarian concepts such as health, comfort, safety, and physical well-being (Wolf, 1997: 11).

On the other hand, since some authors identified tourism and spiritual as determined realities, they look for certain things in response to their questions using empirical methods of the natural sciences.

Therefore, according to the viewpoint of present article authors, spiritual tourism can be defined as 'to travel to outside the usual living environment in order to perform acts that can cause physical and mental positive feelings in tourists and can get their physical and mental stress away. The tourists may be religious or non-religious. The spiritual experience can be transferred to the others in form of words and can be learned by them'.

2-3-2- Spiritual tourism in the Romanticism' critical view

Romanticism flourished in the early nineteenth century and still has an important role in human culture. The school formed against libertine materialism and positivism. Romanticism school considers intuition and feeling as appropriate ways to achieve a knowledge. The school accepts consolidation pattern to truth. In this view, human science is related to the cohesion of ideas and experiences, not a link between the mind and the material world so that materialism believes. Scientific materialism insists on practical experiences, while romanticism insists on the cultural importance of literature, music, and creative arts. In romanticism opinion, the mere material harvesting of human only gets us away from understanding human that is necessary to be completed with deep insights from the arts (Naroui Nosrati, 2005: 8).

Romanticism, by accepting and honoring the individual differences, accepts people's exclusive and common experiences and thus approves the pluralistic culture (Wright, 2000). Therefore, according to the present article authors' view, spiritual tourism in this paradigm framework can be defined as 'to travel to outside the usual living environment or get a spiritual virtual journey in literature, music, and creative arts in order to the recreation of moral, art, and religious values. This spirituality experience may be different for various spiritual tourists and in various virtual journeys. However, some common fix spiritual human's values are unanimously accepted.

Therefore, the concept of spiritual tourism and spiritual experience has a value-based nature. It can be trained and learned by using of arts and words'.
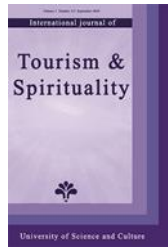
2-3-3- Spiritual tourism in postmodern perspective

Postmodernism has introduced serious challenges to spirituality by considering metanarratives as the main threats to human freedom. Lyotard coined this term in philosophy for the first time. He defines metanarratives as a set of beliefs that claim to explain all the truth. He says religious, materialism, and romanticism are all based on the metanarratives. In the postmodern world, neither God nor the material world is the ultimate answer to the human condition since identifying the nature of human and its truth is possible. The final program of postmodern spirituality introduces the following areas (Naroui Nosrati, 2005: 9):

1. To get away all of the metanarratives that throw us into the trap of illusion.

2. To accept human freedom to take part in all aspects of postmodern culture and to enter everything which is allowed.

3. To create and renew spiritual beliefs, constantly.

4. To undetermined compliance (imaginary) of personal tastes, inclinations, and aspirations.

Postmodernism does not seek to prove a new reality but aims to increase human freedom to the fullest extent possible. It wants to reject all the counterfeit facts in metanarratives and to criticize materialism and romanticism. From the perspective of postmodern philosophy, modernism not only is not the pinnacle of human achievement but is a fleeting layer and the realm of science which is raised from that need that human wants to develop his moral codes logically.

Derrida, one of the well-known authors in the postmodernism school, denies the following issues that are discussed in the other schools (Shojaee et al, 2015):

1. terms capacity to offer the meaning of God as it is obvious from Islam perspective;

2. materialism claims that 'language determines the objects in the physical world'; and

3. romanticism claim that 'words are symbols of mental experience'.

According to Derrida, words cannot show any sacred, physical or psychological things, but are linked together to form endless language networks (ibid.). So, we cannot ride the wave of language, and we are not looking for reference and a particular interpretation of them. We must learn to read a text and respond with imagination and sensitivity to it. According to Richard Rorty's postmodern point of view, freedom requires that we grasp the principles and do not impose our opinions on others assumptions. He defines freed people as 'those who think that cruelty is the worst thing in the world and they are people that have desire to metanarratives in the world' (Layon, 2001).

Postmodernists provide a very basic spiritual program for a human. All efforts must be organized to build and rebuild the spiritual affairs as a humorous based on ourselves feelings, instincts, and desires (Richard, 1982). Therefore, in a postmodern perspective, the concept of spiritual tourism, nature of spiritual experiences and how to achieve this in the form of travel experiences are defined based on characteristics of each of the tourists and spiritual experience and their instincts and desires, which can be very different. Hence, according to the present article authors' view, spiritual tourism can be defined as 'to travel outside the usual living environment or get a spiritual virtual journey to reject all the counterfeit facts in usual metanarratives and achieve the sense of values freedom. This travel or virtual journey will result in building and rebuilding the spiritual affairs based on each spiritual tourist's feelings, instincts, and desires. Therefore, the concept of spiritual tourism and spiritual experience has not a value basis and fix nature and it cannot be trained and learned'.

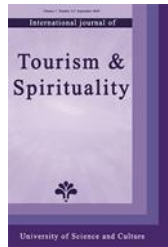**2-3-4- Spiritual tourism in critical realism approach**

Critical realism compared with postmodernism, which conflicts with itself, does not deny presence of the truth.

Although postmodernism claims that there is no truth (a sentence that denies even this claim), critical realism accepts that there is an objective reality beyond human experience that is built, differentiated, and changed. Although this ontological reality cannot be created by the imagination, there is a reality waiting to be discovered [...] that is unique and provides criteria for diagnosing errors (Mohammad Khani, 2009).

According to this researcher, scientific and humanistic investigations have shown there is a deep true underlying structures; though not perceived through the direct sensory experience: 'We cannot understand hydrogen and oxygen in the water, but their existence in combination is certain' (Mohammad Khani, 2009: 6).

From the perspective of critical realism, human cognition of reality emerges in a hierarchical approach. This process starts from the material stages (objectives) and gradually reaches literature, art, music and religion (abstractions). The different levels of interpretation also complement each other and cannot be reduced to a single one. The objectives and values do not differ in the enjoyment of reality. What artists and philosophers say are not only human structures but also represents external real objects. On the other hand, critical realist aims to remove the dichotomy between reason and sense, logic, and emotion, and wisdom and sensitivity (McAuley et al., 2010). Critical realism holds deep spiritual requirements; because it assumes that human cannot create their values based on their own taste and desire, but they must do in a way that spiritual realities can be in a dynamic relationship with objective realities (Mall, 2000).

Thus, in authors' view, from the critical realism perspective, spiritual tourism can be defined as a way to achieve spiritual experience through travel or virtual journey which requires specific tools and requirements. The requirements in the spiritual virtual journey are fixed for different tourists and are considered as the main axis of spiritual tourism. Creation of spiritual experience in tourism framework is a hierarchical process that starts from the sensory understanding of the

world and gradually reaches a subjective interpretation of the travel or virtual journey senses.

2-3-5- The pragmatism paradigm frameworks for spiritual tourism

Although advocates of mixed-methods research have proposed pragmatism as a paradigm for social research, the all emphasized the practical rather than the philosophical aspects of pragmatism. As a new paradigm, pragmatism disrupts the assumptions of older approaches based on the philosophy of knowledge, while providing promising new directions for understanding the nature of social research. From this perspective, both scholars and ordinary people test their beliefs and their opinions through experience and act in a way that will work, solve their problems, answer their questions, and will contribute to their survival (Mohammadpour, 2013).

Pragmatism approach focuses on pluralism epistemology and believes depth syncretism of different concepts, approaches, methods, and even contradictory, which can be effective. All observations, experiments, tests, and data are considered effective to the extent that they are important ways of understanding the world. Also, this approach focuses on value-oriented research and appreciates common human values such as democracy, freedom, justice, and progress. Pragmatism paradigm offers a 'pragmatic approach' that aims to solve the traditional philosophical dichotomy and also to offer the mixed methodological options. Accordingly, this paradigm suggests 'practice-oriented theory' (ibid.). The purpose of methodological pluralism is allowing all approach to flourish; but it has to be noted that we should avoid the eclectic pragmatism, wherein everything is accepted any assumption is distinguished regardless of its methodological compatibility (Nabavian, 2016).

According to what mentioned in explaining the pragmatism approach, in authors' view, spiritual tourism can be defined as:

'Travel or virtual journey in order to facilitate achieving the spirituality experiment based on the spiritual tourist's subjective, emotional, and behavioral perceptions. This spirituality experiment

means understanding the meaning of the attributes of God in the form of immediate and acquisitions knowledge, which will result in changing spiritual tourists' physical (habits and behaviors) and mental (moral norms) states. As the result of these changes, spiritual tourist becomes a self-realized person unaware of himself and faded in Devine light. He/she will have a practical focus on achieving absolute perfection on the road to the Lord satisfaction. Tourists can facilitate this process through compliance with certain requirements before, during, and after the travel or virtual journey'
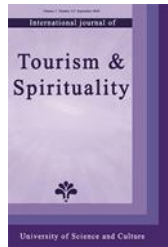
3- Conclusion

The focus of the present paper was on conceptualizing spiritual tourism in pragmatism paradigm framework. Although comprehensive and reliable conceptual definition of spiritual tourism is the first step in planning for management the phenomena based on that definition, spiritual tourism is a multidimensional phenomenon with different mixed concepts. Considering the difference in definition of these concepts in various paradigms due to the differences in philosophical principles and assumptions, the spiritual tourism's definition process may be even more difficult.

As discussed in this article, spiritual tourism has already common definitions in literature which are not formally classified based on various paradigms' assumptions. Besides, the theorists have not specified the fundamental paradigm of that these definitions.

Hence, this article was conducted to review these definitions and the concept of spiritual tourism from the perspective of different paradigms such as positivism, critical romanticism, post-modernism, critical realism, and pragmatism.
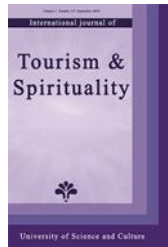
Finally, the present paper concluded that a reliable and comprehensive definition of spiritual tourism can be provided in Pragmatism Paradigm framework. This pragmatic definition can be used as the base for future planning, management, marketing and other operational and administrative use.

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