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The Impact of Khayyam in Enhancing Travel Motivation to the City of Neyshabur (Case Study: Literary Tourists Visiting Neyshabur)

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Article Info	Abstract
<p>Received: 2025-01-25</p> <p>Accepted: 2025-03-22</p> <p>Keywords: Khayyam Literary Tourism Travel Motivation Neyshabur</p>	<p>This study aims to examine the literary impact of Khayyam on the literary tourists' motivation to travel to Neyshabur, focusing on cultural programs and tourism infrastructure. The applied research method is descriptive-analytical in nature. The study's statistical population comprised literary tourists from Neyshabur, and the convenient sampling employed to reach 384 individuals. The data was collected through a questionnaire and analyzed using Smart PLS. Results show that Khayyam's works have had a substantial influence on cultural programs and tourism infrastructure. Moreover, cultural programs and tourism infrastructure have a substantial influence on travel motivation. Khayyam's work also positively influences travel motivation. The findings also indicated that a focus on Khayyam's works and appropriate planning in cultural programs and tourism infrastructure can play a crucial role in increasing literary tourists' motivation to visit Neyshabur. It is suggested to implement and expand diverse cultural programs and improve tourism infrastructure in Neyshabur, with a focus on Khayyam's works.</p>
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Introduction

Tourism, as a significant industry, contributes to the economy by increasing foreign exchange income (Cook et al., 2017). Given the improvement of living standards, tourism has been regarded as one of the primary recreational activities with major economic impacts (Yang et al., 2023). According to the World Bank reports, the tourism industry generated approximately \$5.8 trillion in revenue in 2018. Nonetheless, the total revenue decreased to nearly \$2.6 trillion in 2019 and 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Jalalian & Beiki, 2023). Cultural tourism is one of the most popular forms of tourism (Đukić & Vukmirović, 2012), in which travelers visit museums and historical sites, as well as cultural landscapes, events, and festivals (Lopes & Hiray, 2024). It also entails other activities, such as visiting cultural heritage and tombs of famous figures and dignitaries (McKercher & Du Cros, 2002).

Cultural tourism embeds literary tourism. Skinner's study (2020) recognizes literary tourism as a component of cultural or heritage tourism. In literary tourism, the primary intention for visiting specific locations is associated with an interest in literature. Watson (2006) supports the evolution of literary tourism, which stems from a strong zest for the authors' birthplace and other biographical sites. Although literary tourism has captivated increasing academic attention, many aspects of this phenomenon have remained unknown (Mansfield & Potočnik Topler, 2021). Literary tourism should be considered a tool for spreading cultural tourism (Ferreira et al., 2020), and it plays a critical role in the development and competitiveness of tourism destinations. Moreover, literary tourism is considered a crucial factor in attracting individuals, particularly due to its connotation with destinations highlighted in famous books or movies (O'Connor & Kim, 2014). Tourism motivations are among the primary concepts in tourism studies, which include exploring new places, escaping the daily routine, learning, and gaining new experiences (Chi & Pham, 2024).

Motivational theories divide these desires into two categories: push and pull factors, which shape tourists' attraction to various places, such as literary destinations (Cook & Artino, 2016). Yousaf et al. (2018) asserted that the psychological aspects of tourists' behavior can shape their intention to visit a specific destination. Furthermore, participation in travel activities can motivate individuals to travel based on their needs and desires. Chi and Pham (2024) explained that travel motivation can influence the intention to visit; numerous studies have supported this idea as well (Luo & Ye, 2020; Zhang et al., 2021; Maghrifani et al., 2021). As a result, tourism motivation for a region can affect tourism demand by establishing the intention to visit that destination. Contrary to previous studies, Anggraini and Lupita (2021) found that travel motivation has an insignificant impact on the intention to visit. Aytas et al. (2021) emphasized that the motivation and intention to visit reflect an individual's desire to travel to a particular destination. Motivational theories, like Maslow's hierarchy of needs, explain the prerequisites of travel motivation in this regard. Cook et al. (2017) classified travel motivations into two categories:

push and pull factors. Push factors refer to tourists' internal needs that drive them to travel, whereas pull factors reflect the destination's external attractions. Accordingly, as part of the destination's attractive features, culture plays an essential role in pull factors (Pung & Del Chiappa, 2018). Cultural aspects, which are closely associated with the world of tourism, can play a crucial role in attracting tourists. According to Utama (2016), culture can indirectly influence tourists' decisions to choose specific destinations. Furthermore, numerous studies have shown the relationship between travel motivations and the intention to revisit (Lou & Ye, 2020; Zhang et al., 2021; Maghrifani et al., 2021; Chi & Pham, 2024). These studies confirm that cultural and literary aspects can influence travel motivations and the intention to visit tourism destinations.

Literary tourism, as one of the most acceptable forms of tourism given the specific conditions of Iran, faces fewer challenges compared to other types of tourism. Iran's literary heritage holds a prominent position in Eastern civilization and captivates the global community, particularly those who are passionate about literary tourism. It can contribute to the growth of the tourism sector and act as a tool of cultural diplomacy. Despite Iranian cities' potential to become international literary tourism places, they have failed to comprehensively establish themselves as literary destinations. Besides, some of their valuable literary sites are at risk of destruction. As a result, it is critical to plan and conduct a thorough analysis of the factors influencing the development of literary tourism in Iran. Moreover, disregarding these issues could lead to the loss of valuable economic opportunities. The city of Neyshabur holds significant importance among Iran's literary destinations. As the birthplace of Khayyam, one of Iran's most prominent poets and scientists, Neyshabur is recognized as a primary center of literary tourism in Iran. Khayyam is a figure for tourists seeking a deeper understanding of Iran's history and culture because of his highly appreciated poetry, as well as his prominent role in mathematics and astronomy. The aim of this study is to examine Khayyam's influence in increasing travel intentions to Neyshabur and its impact on attracting literary tourists. The present research implements field data and travel motivation theories to analyze and understand the dynamics of this type of tourism.

Literature Review

The existing literature on cultural tourism and sustainability demonstrates an analysis of the various aspects and impacts of literary tourism. For instance, Lopes et al. (2018) emphasized the crucial role of price, security, and hygiene in the sustainable development of cultural heritage. Moreover, Pirillo (2019) pointed out that cultural tourism can meet and enhance tourism demands by reestablishing and preserving cultural heritage along with other interpretive programs. Terkenli and Georgoula (2022) conducted an investigation into the Cyclades in Greece, demonstrating that culture is considered a tourist attraction with significant potential for further growth in cultural tourism and local development.

In recent years, numerous studies have examined various dimensions of literary and cultural tourism in Iran. Falahnezhad et al. (2021) conducted a research entitled "The Phenomenon of Destination Love: A systematic literature review and future research directions ." They concluded that researchers have mostly focused on particular antecedents, such as satisfaction with destination, destination experience, and destination image, as well as particular precedents, such as destination loyalty and motivations to revisit. In another study entitled "Community Desires and Demands in the Poems of Malek-o-Shoara Bahar and its Manifestation in Cultural Tourism," Rostamighadi et al. (2023) asserted that the most prominent community demands in Bahar's poems (e.g., freedom, justice, and women's rights) can also contribute to the development of cultural tourism. Naim Abadi and Javan (2021) investigated tourism policy barriers in urban areas of Gilan province. They highlighted the impact of the lack of employment of specialized forces, inadequate marketing, replicating models that are incompatible with urban environments, and issues in the tourism service delivery chain.

In addition, Jalalian and Beiki (2023) conducted a seminal study entitled "Analysis of Factors Influencing the Development of Cultural Tourism in the Metropolitan Area of Shiraz." They concluded that managerial-institutional factors, access and infrastructure, physical-environmental aspects, facilities, as well as cultural-literary resources and attractions, play a significant role in the expansion of cultural tourism. Shirmohammadi and Hashemi Baghi (2021) also found that several factors, including destination brand authenticity, brand love, attachment, nostalgia, and loyalty, positively influence the intention to revisit a destination through literary tourism. These studies highlight the prominence of various cultural, economic, and social factors in the growth of cultural and literary tourism. It is therefore required to perform a comprehensive evaluation of these factors to achieve a sustainable and efficient system in cultural tourism.

Finally, the review of local and international research demonstrates that most studies have focused on evaluating sustainable development, cultural tourism, literary destinations, and factors influencing loyalty in literary tourism. The present research seeks to identify and observe a set of factors affecting literary tourism development and determine the significance of each factor, which can be considered a distinguishing feature compared to other related studies.

Theoretical Framework and Hypothesis Development

Literary tourism entails visiting sites and attractions associated with authors, poets, and their literary works. Given the origin of a prominent figure like Khayyam, the City of Neyshabur has become a crucial destination for literary tourism. The theoretical framework of this research is based on theories of cultural tourism, tourism motivation, and the community-centered tourism model. This study examines literary tourism and motivation as two interrelated concepts. Literary tourism refers to the tours inspired

by literature, whose primary motivation is to experience places and landscapes associated with literary works. Authors' memories, fictional and non-fictional literary manuscripts, or artificial (unreal) literary products and experiences can establish this connection (Baleiro et al., 2023).. In literary tourism, motivations can be as diverse as the variety of literary products and experiences. Hence, it is crucial to identify the internal forces of individuals engaging in literary tourism to facilitate the development and marketing of the tourism industry (Pearce, 2011).

Research has revealed that, despite the recent evolution of literary tourism and its diverse range of motivations, certain motivations have remained relatively stable since the identification of the first examples of literary tourism around four hundred years ago. For instance, the desire to connect to others is considered one of these enduring internal forces, including meeting, studying, or observing the author's works. It has been acknowledged in the travel experiences of literary tourists in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as well as literary visitors in the twenty-first century (Herbert, 2001). Therefore, all remaining works, such as museums, tombs, transcripts, and other artifacts, remained among the most often visited literary tools. For example, literary visitors in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries would travel to Savoy and Lake Geneva to follow the life paths of literary characters, like Éloise. Published books regard the desire to visit literary sites as a primary source of motivation for literary visitors (Cai et al., 2021).

Studies have shown that literary works associated with prominent figures can have a direct impact on the design and implementation of cultural programs in a region. For instance, research on international literary festivals revealed that such events can have a significant influence on the local community and enhance tourism motivations (Asero & Tomaselli, 2021). Furthermore, cultural programs, such as art exhibitions and festivals related to the prominent authors' works, can prepare the ground for cultural exchange and a deeper understanding of these authors' lives and literal works. In return, it contributes to the cultural and social development in the region (GoHardcover, 2021). This evidence suggests that Khayyam's works can significantly influence the establishment and implementation of cultural programs in Neyshabur. Consequently, the first hypothesis is developed as follows:

Khayyam's works influence the formulation of cultural programs in Neyshabur.

Moreover, cultural programs can play a fundamental role in increasing tourists' motivation to visit literary destinations. These programs enrich the cultural experience of tourists by facilitating deeper acquaintance with the authors' lives and works. Ravar and Mahika (2013) contended that art exhibitions, festivals, and cultural events pertaining to prominent literary figures can help attract tourists and literature enthusiasts. The design and implementation of cultural events, such as festivals and exhibitions, can directly influence cultural sentiments and travel motivations, directing tourists' behavior

toward those particular destinations (Yen, 2022). Furthermore, research shows that cultural programs can enhance social interactions and cultural exchange, proposing a meaningful experience for tourists (Falk et al., 2012; Packer & Ballantyne, 2011). Consequently, the second hypothesis is developed as follows:

Cultural programs in Neyshabur have a substantial influence on tourists' travel motivations.

The presence of literary works related to prominent figures can also have a significant impact on the development and improvement of tourism infrastructure in a region. According to Nguyen (2021), investing in tourism infrastructure, including improving accommodation facilities and transportation systems, can enhance the appeal of tourist destinations and increase the number of visitors. Besides, research has shown that the development of tourism infrastructure (in countries like Vietnam) has attracted more international tourists and had a positive impact on economic growth (Nguyen, 2021). Moreover, proper tourism infrastructure can contribute to sustainable development and higher satisfaction among tourists (Pulido-Fernandez et al., 2014) and local residents (Alaska Tourism Industry Association, 2023). Consequently, the third hypothesis is developed as follows:

Khayyam's works influence the development of tourism infrastructure in Neyshabur.

Other studies have demonstrated that proper tourism infrastructure can significantly influence tourists' travel motivation. Improving tourism infrastructure, such as accommodation facilities and transportation systems, enhances the positive experience and satisfaction of tourists and promotes sustainable tourism development (Nguyen, 2021). Moreover, research indicates that efficient tourism infrastructure can have a positive influence on the quality of life of local residents (Mamirkulova et al., 2020). Consequently, the fourth hypothesis is developed as follows:

The tourism infrastructure has a substantial influence on tourists' travel motivations in Neyshabur (Figure 1).

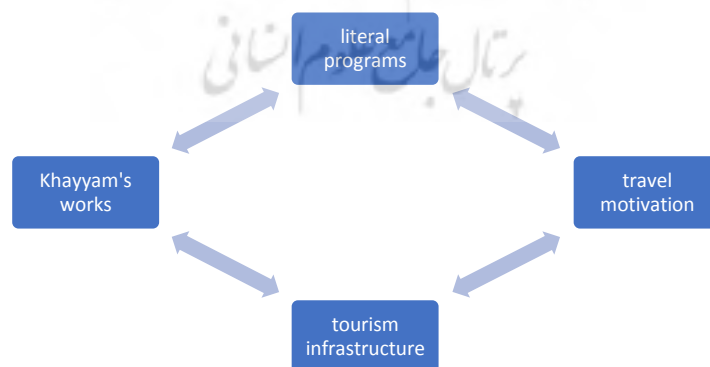


Figure 1. The conceptual model of the research (author-developed)

Research Method

The current applied research adopts a descriptive-analytic approach, utilizing structural equation modeling and the Smart PLS software. The statistical population of this research consists of literary tourists in the city of Neyshabur. Participants were surveyed during mid-2023 and mid-2024 in the City of Neyshabur in the Razavi Khorasan province, Iran (Figure 2).



Figure 2. Khayyam tomb

A sample size of 384 individuals has been determined according to the sample size calculation formula for infinite populations, which has been selected through a non-random convenient sampling. The data was collected using a 16-item questionnaire, which its validity was confirmed based on tourism experts' opinions, and reliability was confirmed given the obtained Cronbach's alpha test score of 0.945. The researcher-made questionnaire items were designed based on literature review and credible sources. Each question was developed so that it could cover various dimensions of the independent, intervening, and dependent variables. The questionnaires were distributed randomly among tourists, and the items were measured and scored based on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from very high to very low. Finally, SPSS and Smart PLS software were used for data analysis.

Findings

The data obtained from the questionnaire were analyzed using SPSS and Smart PLS software. At first, the factor loadings of all items were observed. The determining criterion for the acceptable factor loadings is 0.4. Hence, items with a factor loading of lower than 0.4 should be removed so that they cannot affect the evaluation of other criteria. Figure 2 displays the results of the factor loading analysis

under the standard condition. Accordingly, all the items are confirmed because the factor loadings of all items are greater than 0.4.

Table 1. Questionnaire validity

Construct	Item	Factor loading	t-statistics	AVE	Cronbach Alpha
Khayyam's works	Q1	0.788	11.921	0.692	0.936
	Q2	0.853	8.415		
	Q3	0.849	17.827		
	Q4	0.809	11.621		
Cultural programs	Q5	0.910	86.809	0.675	0.923
	Q6	0.882	99.321		
	Q7	0.719	6.961		
	Q8	0.820	19.587		
Tourism infrastructure	Q9	0.730	2.572	0.613	0.910
	Q10	0.727	3.629		
	Q11	0.720	14.075		
	Q12	0.902	38.738		
Travel motivation	Q13	0.808	23.800	0.667	0.949
	Q14	0.830	37.943		
	Q15	0.827	43.250		
	Q16	0.807	19.093		

The data analysis algorithm in the PLS method suggests that obtained Cronbach's alpha coefficients and composite reliability of constructs should be above 0.7 to be considered acceptable. The results are shown in Table (2).

The results of Table (2) indicate that the composite reliability coefficient and Cronbach's alpha coefficient for all research variables can confirm the reliability of the model.

Figure 3 demonstrates the analysis of t-value coefficients in the conceptual model of the research to examine the significance of the relationships between variables. The t-values indicate the significance of the relationship between two variables. If the t-value is over 1.96 or lower than -1.96, the relationship between the variables is considered significant at a 95% confidence level. Accordingly, the conceptual model of the research, along with the path coefficients and t-statistics, indicates a significant relationship between the variables (Table 3).

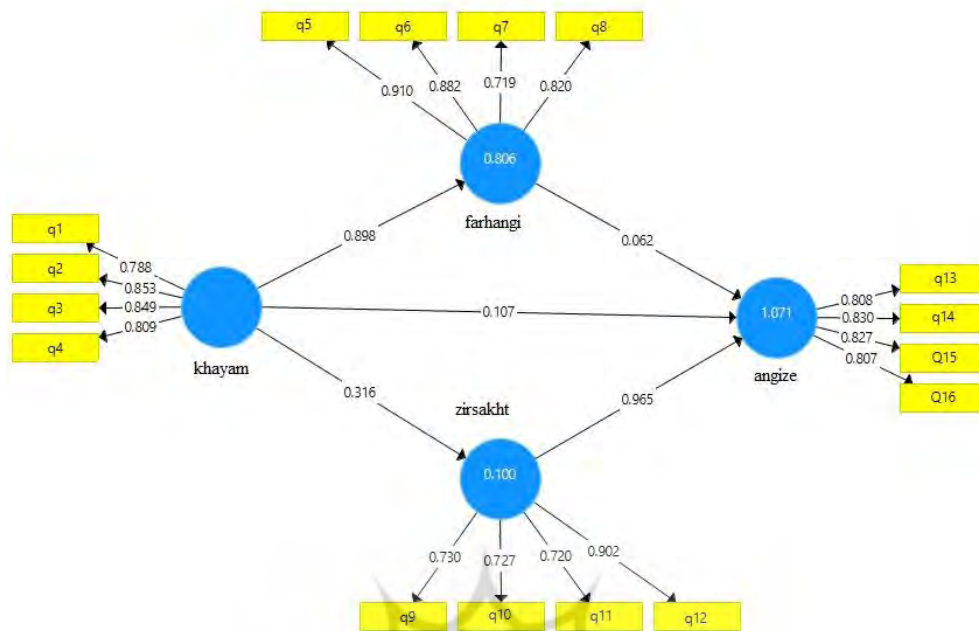


Figure 3. Factor loadings of questionnaire items

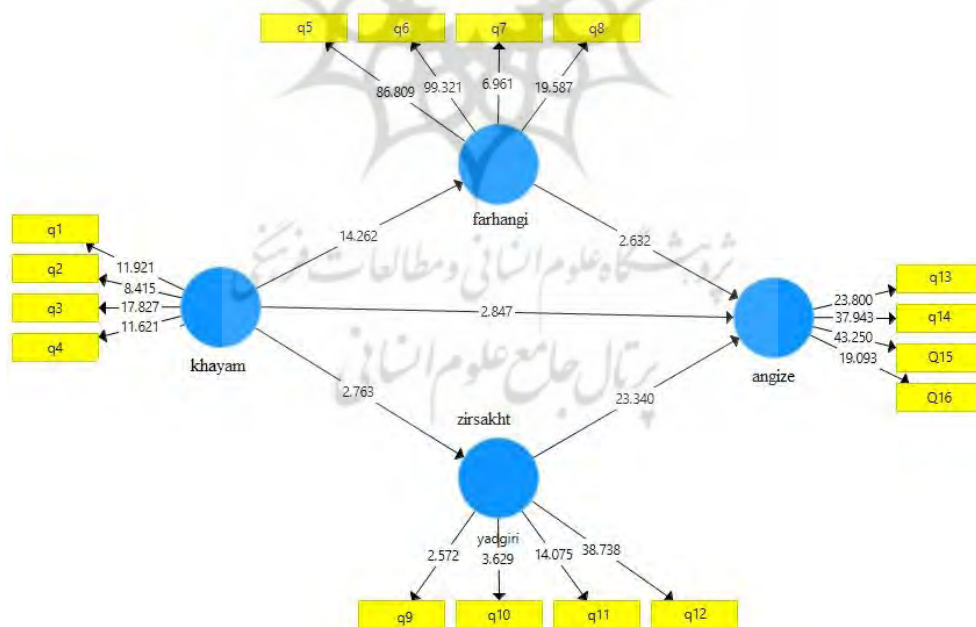


Figure 4. Obtained t-values

Table 2. Cronbach alpha and composite reliability

	Cronbach alpha	Composite reliability	AVE
Khayyam's works	0.762	0.839	0.936
Cultural programs	0.917	0.942	0.923
Infrastructure	0.912	0.935	0.910
Travel motivation	0.786	0.839	0.949

Table 3. The analysis of research hypotheses

Path name	Factor loading	Estimation error	t-statistics	Finding
Khayyam's works – cultural programs	0.898	-	14.262	Significant and approved
Khayyam's works – tourism infrastructure	0.316	-	2.763	Significant and approved
Cultural programs – travel motivation	0.062	-	2.632	Significant and approved
Tourism infrastructure – travel motivation	0.965	-	23.340	Significant and approved
Khayyam's works – travel motivation	0.107	-	2.847	Significant and approved

Discussion and Conclusion

The present research aimed to examine the influence of Khayyam's literary character on the literary tourists' intention to travel to Neyshabur. Hence, various hypotheses were developed and tested to explore the relationships between the variables. The results indicated that Khayyam's works have a significant influence on cultural programs (path coefficient = 0.898, T-statistic = 14.262) and tourism infrastructure (path coefficient = 0.316, T-statistic = 2.763). Furthermore, cultural programs have a significant impact on travel motivation (path coefficient = 0.062, T-statistic = 2.632), and tourism infrastructure has substantial influence on travel motivation (path coefficient = 0.965, T-statistic = 23.340). Ultimately, Khayyam's works have a significant influence on travel motivation (path coefficient = 0.107, T-statistic = 2.847). The findings showed that Khayyam's works have a significant impact on cultural programs, which aligns with other studies such as Hoppen et al. (2014). These studies highlighted that literary tourism, especially associated with famous authors, can lead to a variety of cultural programs. Similarly, Khayyam's works enjoy outstanding diversity and appeal, attracting many enthusiasts.

Moreover, the findings revealed that Khayyam's works significantly influence tourism infrastructure, which is consistent with the research by Hoppen et al. (2014). These studies indicated that proper infrastructure can enhance the tourists' experience and lead to the sustainable development of tourism. Similarly, highlighting Khayyam's work has helped improve the tourism infrastructure in Neyshabur and attract more tourists. The study's findings also demonstrated that cultural programs have

a substantial influence on travel. Accordingly, cultural programs can strengthen tourists' motivations. The cultural programs related to Khayyam's works have also increased tourists' motivation by facilitating familiarization with his extraordinary literature and culture.

Besides, tourism infrastructure has a significant impact on travel motivation. This result aligns with the findings of other studies by O'Connor and Kim (2014), which emphasized the significance of proper infrastructure in attracting tourists. Similarly, suitable infrastructure in Neyshabur can improve tourists' travel experiences and influence their motivation to visit the city. The findings also revealed that Khayyam's works have a significant impact on travel motivation (path coefficient = 0.107, T-statistic = 2.847), which is consistent with the results of studies by O'Connor and Kim (2014). They emphasized that literary works serve as a potent incentive for visiting pertinent locations. Likewise, Khayyam's rich and renowned literary works in Persian literature serve as a strong motivation for literary tourists. On the other hand, appropriate cultural programs and tourism infrastructure in Neyshabur can also support the influence of these literary works on travel motivation and a positive experience for tourists.

In summary, the results of data analysis demonstrated that Khayyam's works have a significant impact on cultural programs and tourism infrastructure, which, in turn, have a substantial influence on tourists' travel motivation. Furthermore, Khayyam's works have a significantly positive impact on travel motivation. It is suggested to further design and hold literary programs related to Khayyam, such as literary festivals, art exhibitions, and cultural events, to improve the level of cultural programs and enhance their appeal. These programs could include educational activities, poetry reading workshops, and critiques of Khayyam's works to attract more enthusiasts. It is also recommended to focus on improving accommodation facilities, developing public transportation, and creating appropriate tourist sites to improve tourism infrastructure in Neyshabur. In addition, establishing museums and cultural centers related to Khayyam could attract more tourists. To enhance this motivation, it is recommended to organize high-quality and diverse cultural programs, as well as implementing effective advertising and social media to promote these programs. Similarly, developing efficient transportation systems, improving accommodations, and creating appropriate public spaces can enhance tourists' experience and increase the motivation to visit Neyshabur. Finally, Khayyam's literary works, as a prominent figure in Persian literature, have a significant influence on literary tourists' travel motivation. Therefore, it is suggested to support educational and cultural programs related to Khayyam's personality and works and hold regular exhibitions and events to brighten Khayyam's works and life. Since this study surveyed Neyshabur visitors, generalization of results is limited. To address this, future research can focus on Shiraz, the place of Hafez and Sadi birthplace to determine the impact these literary figures have on travel motivation to this destination.

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