

Cultural Diplomacy through Museums: An Analysis of the Role of Sheikh Dr. Sultan Al Qasimi in Promoting Intercultural Dialogue through History, Culture, and Tourism

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the role of cultural diplomacy in the Emirate of Sharjah through museums. Particular emphasis is placed on the important contributions of His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan Al Qasimi in promoting intercultural communication and consolidating cultural identity through the support of history, archaeology, and tourism. The study uses a quantitative approach with a survey research design. The perspectives of 285 museum visitors have been analyzed based on arithmetic means and standard deviations to measure their level of awareness regarding the museum's historical, cultural, and tourism dimensions. The findings indicate a high level of awareness concerning the centrality of Islamic heritage within Sharjah's historical narrative. Participants expressed strong agreement regarding the close relationship between Islamic archaeological remains and the emirate's historical landscape. The results further highlight the pivotal role of His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan Al Qasimi in supporting archaeological documentation efforts and ensuring the continuity of research at Islamic sites. At the cultural level, the data reveal a general awareness of the importance of archaeological heritage in enhancing public culture. Additionally, the findings point to the influence of mass media and communication, consistent with Cultural Cultivation Theory, in increasing museum attendance. Regarding the tourism dimension, participants demonstrated a high level of appreciation for the emirate's efforts in developing tourism infrastructure associated with archaeological sites, as well as for Sharjah's growing international presence on the global map of historical tourism. These findings are consistent with previous literature emphasizing the value of heritage preservation and the role of museums in promoting intercultural dialogue and reinforcing national identity. Within this context, the continuous support provided by His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan Al Qasimi is clearly reflected in his sustained oversight of the emirate's museums and his ongoing encouragement of both the community and visitors to engage actively with civilizational heritage.

Keywords: Sharjah Museum, Islamic Civilization, Cultural Diplomacy, Tourism, Sheikh Sultan Al Qasimi

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Introduction

Human beings are naturally inclined to appreciate beauty and organize their fundamental needs. This inherent tendency is reflected in the material remains left behind by successive human civilizations, which demonstrate varying levels of cultural awareness and degrees of civilizational development across different historical periods.¹ These material manifestations, and particularly those found in archaeological remains and museums, are effective in transmitting values and knowledge among peoples. They are a fundamental pillar of cultural diplomacy, promoting intercultural dialogue and fostering human understanding.

Arab-Islamic civilization, particularly during the Abbasid era, experienced a remarkable flourishing as a result of its constructive engagement with diverse cultures, most notably Greek, Persian, and Indian civilizations. The impact of this interaction subsequently extended to Egypt, al-Andalus, and Europe. This dynamic exchange consolidated the role of Islamic civilization as a central mediator in the transmission and development of sciences and knowledge, forming one of the most prominent models of intercultural communication in human history.²

Photo 1: A large collection of Islamic coins from the Umayyad and Abbasid eras³



Islamic Coins

The museum's outstanding early Islamic coin collections are displayed in the atrium outside the Al Majarrah Gallery. Visitors can learn about the history and emergence of these coins through these outstanding displays.

Within this broader framework, Islamic civilization has contributed to the establishment of a value system grounded in integrity, excellence in creativity, and ethical conduct. These principles form the essential foundations of the Islamic intellectual and moral methodology. Islamic values have

¹ Kamāl Ismā'īl 'Anānī, *Al-Madkhal ilā Āthār al-Muslimīn wa-Ḥaḍāratihim fī Miṣr wa-al- 'Ālam al-Islāmī* (Dār al-Wafā' li-Dunyā al-Ṭibā'a wa-al-Nashr, 2020), 16–17 & Thohir, Ajid, and Muhammad Andi Septiadi. "The Development of Islamic Civilization in the World: Knowledge, Integration, and Innovation (750–1258 CE)." *Journal of Al-Tamaddun* 20, no. 2 (2025): 111–126. <https://doi.org/10.22452/JAT.vol20no2.8>.

² Muḥammad al-Khaṭīb, *Tārīkh al-Ḥaḍāra al-'Arabiyya* (Dār 'Alā' al-Dīn, 2007), 5–6 & Alotaibi, Hussah Hindi Shuja. "Cultural Impact of Scholars in the Andalusian Emirate (138–442 AH / 756–1031 AD)." *Journal of Al-Tamaddun* 18, no. 2 (2023): 13–21. <https://doi.org/10.22452/JAT.vol18no2.2>.

³ Sharjah Museums Authority: Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilization <https://www.sharjahmuseums.ae/en-us/museums/sharjah-museum-of-islamic-civilization#group=collection-photo=id-1>.

played a crucial role in strengthening communication among cultures and preserving the continuity of civilizational heritage across generations.⁴ Archaeological remains and museums are tangible and living testimonies to this legacy. Their function extends beyond the preservation of historical artifacts. They play a vital cultural and diplomatic role by reinterpreting the past, linking it to the present, and fostering mutual understanding among nations.

In recognition of this role, His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qasimi, Member of the Supreme Council and Ruler of Sharjah, has devoted considerable attention to employing museums and Islamic archaeology within the Emirate of Sharjah as instruments of cultural diplomacy. These institutions promote intercultural dialogue and constructive engagement with other cultures. This vision was brought to life through sustained institutional support for scientific research and higher education, particularly the establishment of the University of Sharjah in 1998 and the introduction of specialized academic programs in Islamic history and civilization at both the undergraduate and master's levels. These initiatives aim to highlight the civilizational contributions of Islam and to document the scientific, intellectual, and administrative achievements of Muslim scholars within the broader trajectory of human civilization.⁵

Photo 2: A page from the Holy Qur'an, Surah Al-An'am, written in Kufic script, dating to the 9th–10th century CE⁶



This commitment is further reflected in the support extended to museums, foremost among them the Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilization, which is an active cultural and tourism platform dedicated to presenting the civilizational image of Islam to visitors from diverse nationalities and cultural backgrounds. The museum reinforces the role of cultural tourism as a pathway of soft diplomacy. This strategic orientation has contributed to integrating urban planning, archaeological site management, and museum interpretation within their broader historical and civilizational contexts, thereby strengthening visitors' awareness of heritage and its significance in building bridges of communication among nations.

⁴ Bashīr Ramaḍān al-Tilīsī and Jamāl Hāshim al-Dhuwayb, *Tārīkh al-Ḥaḍāra al-‘Arabiyya al-Islāmiyya* (Dār al-Madār al-Islāmī, 2002), 249–250.

⁵ Jum‘a al-Ṭalabī, *Āthār al-Khalīj* (Bayt al-Kitāb al-Sūmarī, 2023), 33–35 & Zatari, Fadi. “Rethinking Ethics in International Affairs: Reshaping Civilizational Discourse.” *Journal of Al-Tamaddun* 17, no. 2 (2022): 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.22452/JAT.vol17no2.1>.

⁶ ‘Īsā Yūsuf, *Al-‘Aṣr al-‘Abbāsī al-Mubakkir fī Imārāt al-Shāriqa* (Hay‘at al-Shāriqa lil-Āthār, 2022), 13–15. & Ahmed, Mahmoud Batal, and Reda Abdelgalil. “Models of Positive Historical Islamic-Western Cultural Interaction: The Challenges of Practice in the Contemporary Context.” *Journal of Al-Tamaddun* 21, no. 1 (2026): 267–282. <https://doi.org/10.22452/JAT.vol21no1.16>.

This study has been developed in response to a research problem centered on the need to analyze the role played by Islamic museums in the Emirate of Sharjah, and particularly the Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilization, in promoting cultural diplomacy and intercultural communication. This has become increasingly urgent in light of the challenges confronting Islamic heritage as a result of armed conflicts, systematic destruction, and deliberate attempts at erasure, which threaten the cultural, economic, and tourism value of these archaeological assets.⁷

Photo 3: The founder of the Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilization, His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qasimi⁸



The research problem also encompasses the ambiguity surrounding certain archaeological discoveries and the necessity of interpreting them scientifically by situating them within their proper historical and geographical contexts. Such interpretations will transform these discoveries from static displays into dynamic knowledge-based and diplomatic instruments capable of strengthening intercultural dialogue and enhancing the global civilizational image of Islam.⁹

This issue has been further intensified by ongoing attempts to obscure Islamic civilizational achievements, as well as by systematic looting and destruction, in addition to insufficient awareness among researchers and policymakers regarding the importance of museums as cultural, diplomatic, and tourism institution. These circumstances necessitate in-depth scholarly studies highlight the role of museums in protecting heritage, promoting cultural tourism, and safeguarding the civilizational legacy of the Muslim world¹⁰ In addition, Qatar has strengthened cultural diplomacy through museums, heritage initiatives, and cultural tourism, reinforcing culture as a tool of global engagement. These efforts highlight the importance of museums in preserving heritage, promoting cultural tourism, and safeguarding the civilizational legacy of the Muslim world.¹¹

Study Objectives

This study is based on three main objectives, namely: (1) to analyze the role of His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qasimi in employing the Sharjah Museum of Islamic

⁷ Jum‘a al-Ṭalabī, *Āthār al-Khalīj* (Bayt al-Kitāb al-Sūmarī, 2023), 33–35

⁸ Sharjah Museums Authority: Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilization <https://www.sharjahmuseums.ae/en-US/AboutUs>

⁹ ‘Isā Yūsuf, *Al-‘Aṣr al-‘Abbāsī al-Mubakkir fī Imārat al-Shāriqa* (Hay‘at al-Shāriqa lil-Āthār, 2022), 13–15.

¹⁰ Wī‘ām Rātib ‘Abd al-Ḥafīz, *Al-Ma‘ālim al-Athariyya wa-al-Siyāhiyya fī Duwal al-Khalīj al-‘Arabī* (‘Uṣūr lil-Nashr wa-al-Tawzī‘, 2022), 5–9 & Kāzīm al-Khuwaylidī, *Al-Ma‘ālim al-Athariyya fī Makka wa-al-Madīna* (London lil-Ṭibā‘a wa-al-Nashr, 2024), 9–14.

¹¹ Hassan, Sharoq Hussain NA. “QATAR AS A CULTURAL POLICY ENTREPRENEUR: DRIVING GLOBAL COLLABORATION THROUGH ART, CULTURE AND TOURISM.” PhD diss., Manara-Qatar Research Repository, 2026.

Civilization as an instrument of cultural diplomacy and a platform for enhancing intercultural communication; (2) to examine the impact of the museum's historical and cultural initiatives on shaping the awareness of visitors to museums in the Emirate of Sharjah, and to assess their contribution to promoting cultural tourism as a pathway of civilizational dialogue; and (3) to measure the impact of the tourism-related initiatives of the Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilization. As supported by the vision of His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qasimi, on visitors to the Emirate of Sharjah.

Previous Studies

Previous scholarship has examined the contributions of His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qasimi from multiple perspectives, including the protection of cultural heritage, the revival of Arabic calligraphy, the development of museums, the documentation of history, and the strengthening of Sharjah's cultural identity. Collectively, these studies reflect a strategic vision aimed at constructing an integrated civilizational project with both regional and international dimensions.

‘Alī ‘Afīfī ‘Alī Ghāzī¹² highlighted the pivotal role of His Highness in supporting international Arabic calligraphy exhibitions, which has contributed significantly to presenting Islamic culture and arts to a global audience. Similarly, al-‘Alī¹³ has emphasized Sharjah's position as a beacon of Arab and Islamic culture and as an active center of civilizational influence. Further, studies by ‘Alī ‘Afīfī¹⁴ and ‘Alī ‘Abd Allāh and ‘Imād al-Dīn¹⁵ have underscored the sustained efforts dedicated to heritage preservation and museum development in accordance with international quality standards, with particular attention to showcasing Sharjah's rich history and deeply-rooted civilization.

Within the same framework, several studies addressed the role of museums in promoting cultural knowledge and transmitting civilizational identity. Notably, the works of ‘Alī ‘Abd Allāh and ‘Imād al-Dīn,¹⁶ and Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad¹⁷ focused on the diversity of museum collections and their capacity to introduce visitors to Arab and Islamic civilization. These studies affirm the museum's function as an effective cultural instrument for conveying Islamic heritage and strengthening its presence on the global stage.

¹² ‘Alī ‘Afīfī ‘Alī Ghāzī, “Juhūd Sulṭān al-Qāsimī fī Ihṡā’ al-Khaṭṭ al-‘Arabī,” *Majallat Shu’ūn Ijtimā’iyya* 31, no. 123 (2014): 261–286.31(123): 261–286. <https://uaesoc.ae/magazine/%D8%A7%D9%81%D8%AA%D8%AA%D8%A7%D8%AD%D9%8A%D8%A9%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%AF%D8%AF-123/>.

¹³ ‘Imād Muḥammad al-‘Alī, “Al-Shāriqa ‘Āṣimat al-Thaqāfa al-Islāmiyya: Limādhā wa-ilā Ayna?” *Majallat Shu’ūn Ijtimā’iyya* 31, no. 121 (2014): 221–225. <https://uaesoc.ae/magazine/%D8%A7%D9%81%D8%AA%D8%AA%D8%A7%D8%AD%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%AF%D8%AF-121/>.

¹⁴ ‘Alī ‘Afīfī ‘Alī Ghāzī, “Ṣāhib al-Sumū al-Shaykh al-Duktūr Sulṭān al-Qāsimī fī al-Hifāz ‘alā al-Turāth,” *Majallat Shu’ūn Ijtimā’iyya* 32, no. 125 (2015): 161–186. <https://search.mandumah.com/Record/669903>.

¹⁵ ‘Alī ‘Abd Allāh Yūsuf al-Sa’īd al-Zuhūrī and ‘Imād al-Dīn Abū al-‘Aynayn, “Juhūd Imārat al-Shāriqa fī Taṭwīr wa-Taḥdīth al-Matāḥif,” *Majallat al-Ādāb*, no. 147 (2023): 195–218. <https://aladabj.uobaghdad.edu.iq/index.php/aladabjournal/article/view/4119>.

¹⁶ ‘Alī ‘Abd Allāh Yūsuf al-Sa’īd al-Zuhūrī and ‘Imād al-Dīn Abū al-‘Aynayn, “Juhūd Imārat al-Shāriqa fī Taṭwīr wa-Taḥdīth al-Matāḥif,” *Majallat al-Ādāb*, no. 147 (2023): 195–218.

¹⁷ Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad, “Dawr al-Matāḥif fī Ḥifẓ al-Turāth al-Islāmī,” *Majallat al-Wa’y al-Islāmī* 59, no. 687 (2022): 66–67. <https://search.mandumah.com/Record/1309466>.

Recent scholarship has also explored the integration of advanced technologies in museums to enhance visitor experiences, particularly among children. This trend is evident in the studies of al-Intiṣār Mu‘īn, and Asīl Ḥusayn¹⁸ as well as As‘ad Ḥammād and Ṣāliḥ Muḥammad.¹⁹ This research reflects the growing recognition of museums as interactive platforms capable of fostering intercultural dialogue and cultural openness among audiences of diverse nationalities and backgrounds.

From a legal and administrative perspective, studies by Shawqī Sha‘th,²⁰ Rāmī Sa‘d al-Dīn,²¹ Abū Bakr,²² and Anwār ‘Āyid²³ have addressed issues related to the preventive conservation of archaeological sites and heritage locations. These works shed light on the institutional and legislative frameworks that contribute to safeguarding civilizational heritage from deterioration and extinction.

Despite the richness of existing literature documenting the cultural and heritage-related initiatives of His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qasimi, a research gap remains. Specifically, there is limited scholarship examining these efforts from the perspective of museums as active instruments of cultural diplomacy and as mechanisms for promoting intercultural dialogue and cultural tourism at the global level. Accordingly, this study seeks to address this gap by analyzing the role of the Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilization in embodying His Highness’s cultural vision and strengthening intercultural communication through history, culture, and tourism.

Methodology

To achieve its objectives, this study adopted a quantitative approach, given its capacity to analyze statistical data and identify patterns and emerging trends.²⁴ A survey research design was employed to collect data through a structured questionnaire distributed to a sample of 285 participants drawn from visitors to the Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilization. The instrument aimed to assess the extent to which the leadership initiatives of His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qasimi have contributed to enhancing intercultural and cultural communication through museums.

¹⁸ Intiṣār Mu‘īn al-‘Ubaydlī, Mundhir Jumḥawī, and Asīl Ḥusayn, “Ta‘zīz Dawr al-Taḥqīqiyāt al-Ḥadītha fī al-‘Arḍ al-Mathafī lil-Atfal,” *Majallat al-Ādāb*, no. 145 (2023): 85–104.

¹⁹ As‘ad Ḥammād Mūsā Abū Rummān and Ṣāliḥ Muḥammad Zakī Maḥmūd al-Luhaybī, “Muḥaddidāt Jawdat al-Mataḥif al-Tārīkhiyya fī Imārat al-Shāriqa li-Mumārasāt al-Mataḥif al-Raqmiyya fī Zill Intiṣār COVID-19,” *Majallat al-Ādāb* 2, no. 142 (2022): 119–148.

²⁰ Shawqī Sha‘th, “Al-Ma‘ālim al-Tārīkhiyya fī al-Waṭan al-‘Arabī: Wasā’il Ḥimāyatihā wa-Ṣiyānatihā wa-Tarmīmihā,” *Majallat al-Turāth al-‘Arabī* 26, no. 104 (2006): 292–321.

²¹ Rāmī Sa‘d al-Dīn ‘Alyān, *Dawr Mashārī‘ al-Tarmīm fī al-Ḥifāz ‘alā al-Masājīd al-Athariyya fī Qiṭā‘ Ghazza* (Al-Jāmi‘a al-Islāmiyya, Ghazza, 2015), 10–44.

²² Abū Bakr Aḥmad ‘Uthmān al-Nu‘aymī, “Al-Ḥimāya al-Qānūniyya lil-Mawāqī‘ al-Athariyya fī al-Tashrī‘ al-Imārātī,” *Majallat al-Rāfīdīn lil-Huqūq*, no. 71 (2020): 101–129. <https://search.mandumah.com/Record/1062955>.

²³ Anwār ‘Āyid ‘Abd Allāh al-Shudayfāt, *Dawr Dā‘irat al-Āthār al-‘Āmma fī al-Ḥifāz ‘alā al-Irth al-Ḥadārī al-Urdunī fī al-Mamlaka al-Urduniyya al-Ḥāshimīyya khilāl al-Fatra (1923–1967)* (Jāmi‘at Āl al-Bayt, 2024), 153–154 & Sharif, Dziauddin, Nor Adina Abdul Kadir, Hamidah Jalani, Mohd Zaid Mustafar, and H. M. Rizal Akbar. “Historical Analysis of the Malacca Sultanate on Socio-Economic Prosperity during the Reign of Sultan Mahmud Shah, 15th–16th AD.” *Journal of Al-Tamaddun* 21, no. 1 (2026): 127–140. <https://doi.org/10.22452/JAT.vol21no1.8>.

²⁴ Abd Allāh ‘Abd Allāh Aḥmad al-Ṭabbāl, “Al-Ittijāhāt al-Ḥadītha fī Idārat al-Mawārid al-Bashariyya fī al-Munazzamāt al-‘Ālamiyya,” *Majallat Idārat al-‘Āmāl*, no. 58 (2011): 65–135. <https://search.mandumah.com/Record/115186>

Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), IBM Version 27. A T-test was applied to measure differences among the study variables. This methodological framework facilitated the identification of the relationships between museum development policies and the cultural initiatives of His Highness, as well as their impact on visitors across historical, cultural, and tourism dimensions. The findings underscore the museum's role as a fundamental component of cultural diplomacy and as a bridge for civilizational dialogue between the United Arab Emirates and the broader international community.

Table1: Description of the Mean, SD level

Rank	No.	Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation	Level
1	1	I perceive a strong relationship between the presence of historical and Islamic monuments in the Emirate of Sharjah.	3.90	1.10	High
2	4	It is evident to me that the Ruler of Sharjah has established plans to ensure the continuity of research on Islamic historical monuments in the Emirate of Sharjah.	3.88	1.17	High
3	2	It is evident to me that government institutions encourage the preservation of archaeological sites.	3.82	1.11	High
Overall Mean for Islamic History Dimension			3.82	0.98	High

Figure 1: Arithmetic means and standard deviations for the historical dimension, presented in descending order of mean values

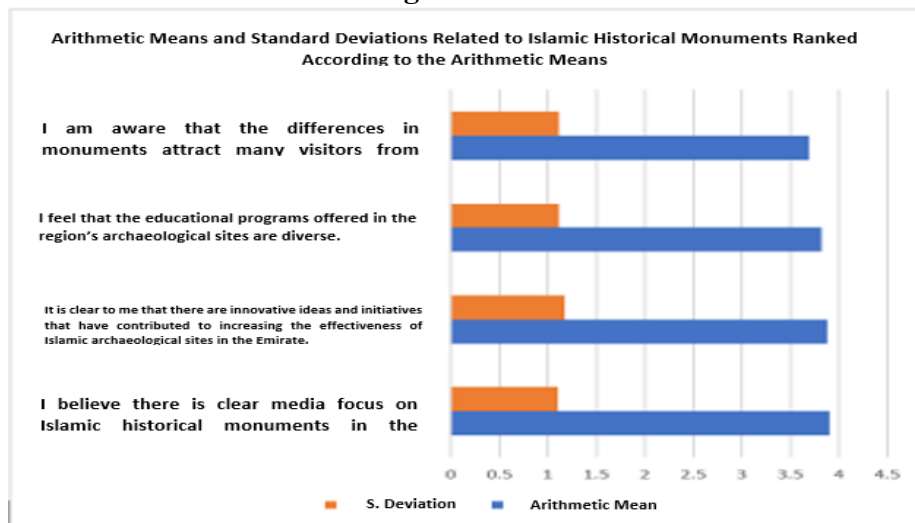


Table 1 that the study sample's estimates regarding the historical-Islamic domain were high, with a mean of 3.82 and a standard deviation of 0.98. Regarding individual items, the statement "I believe there is a connection between the presence of historical and Islamic artifacts in the Emirate of Sharjah" ranked first, with a mean of 3.90, a standard deviation of 1.10, and a high level of agreement. Conversely, the statement "It is evident to me that the historical periods of artifacts in the Emirate of Sharjah vary" ranked last, with a mean of 3.69, a standard deviation of 1.11, and a high level of agreement.

The Impact of the Museum's Cultural Efforts on Shaping the Awareness of Visitors of Sharjah Museums and Enhancing Cultural Tourism as a Pathway for Civilizational Communication

In this part of the study, we present the results of examining the impact of the museum's cultural initiatives on shaping the awareness of visitors to Sharjah museums and promoting cultural tourism as a channel for civilizational dialogue.

Table 2: Arithmetic means and standard deviations related to the cultural domain, ranked in descending order according to the means

Rank	No.	Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation	Level
1	8	I believe that the presence of historical artifacts has contributed to educating people and raising their awareness.	3.85	1.16	High
2	7	It is clear to me that the Ruler of Sharjah established foundations for the study of archaeology.	3.79	1.14	High
3	5	It seems to me that the presence of artifacts in the Emirate of Sharjah has helped increase research in neighboring Emirates.	3.77	1.10	High

Figure 2: The means and standard deviations for the cultural domain, arranged in descending order according to the mean values

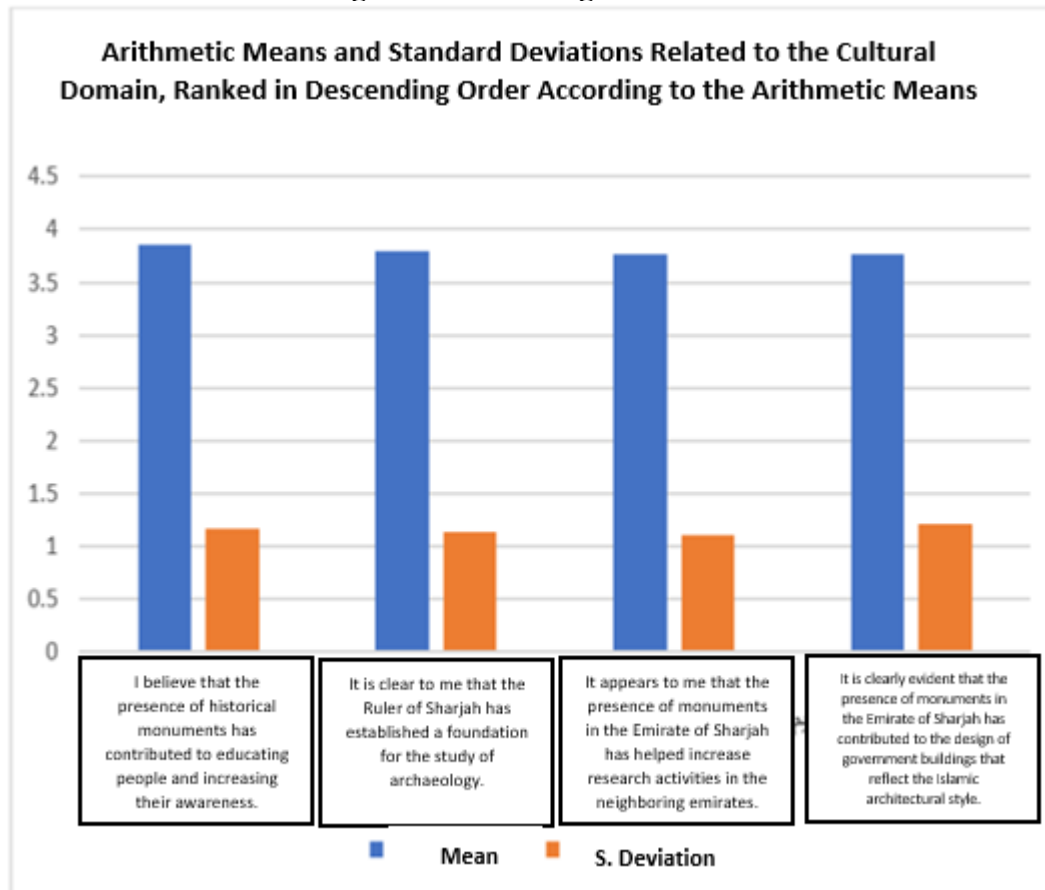


Table 2 shows that the study sample's assessments of the cultural domain were high, with a mean of 3.79 and a standard deviation of 1.01. Regarding the individual items, the statement "I believe that the presence of historical artifacts has contributed to educating people and raising their

awareness” ranked first, with a mean of 3.85, a standard deviation of 1.16, and a high evaluation level. In contrast, the statement “It is evident that the presence of artifacts in the Emirate of Sharjah has contributed to designing government buildings that reflect Islamic architectural style” ranked last, with a mean of 3.76, a standard deviation of 1.21, and a high evaluation level.

The Impact of the Tourism Efforts of the Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilization, Supported by the Vision of His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qasimi, on Visitors to the Emirate of Sharjah

In this section of the study, we present the results of measuring the impact of the tourism efforts of the Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilization, supported by the vision of His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qasimi, on visitors to the Emirate of Sharjah.

Table 3: The mean scores and standard deviations related to the tourism domain, arranged in descending order according to the mean values

Rank	No.	Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation	Level
1	11	It appears to me that the Ruler of Sharjah has prepared designated places for the preservation of artifacts in the Emirate of Sharjah	3.86	1.16	High
2	10	I realize that Sharjah has a clear presence on the global historical tourism map	3.82	1.08	High
3	9	It is clear to me that the results of the Ruler of Sharjah’s interest in antiquities have had an impact beyond the borders of the Emirate of Sharjah	3.81	1.13	High
3	12	It seems that media attention was clear for Islamic historical artifacts in the Emirate of Sharjah	3.81	1.10	High

It can be seen from Table 3 that the study sample’s estimates for the tourism domain were high, with a mean of 3.83 and a standard deviation of 0.98. Regarding the items, the statement “It is clear to me that the Ruler of Sharjah has prepared dedicated places for preserving the artifacts in the Emirate of Sharjah” ranked first, with a mean of 3.86 and a standard deviation of 1.16, reflecting a high rating. In contrast, the two items “It is clear to me that the results of the Ruler of Sharjah’s interest in artifacts resonate beyond the borders of the Emirate of Sharjah” and “It seems that the media focus on the Islamic historical artifacts in the Emirate of Sharjah was evident” ranked last, with means of 3.81 and standard deviations of 1.13 and 1.10, respectively, also reflecting high ratings.

Discussion of Results and Interpretations

The Impact of His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qasimi’s Efforts in the Historical Domain of the Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilization on Visitors to Sharjah Museums

Table 1 presents an analysis of the opinions of the study sample regarding the historical domain of the Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilization for visitors to Sharjah museums. This analysis was conducted using means and standard deviations, with items ranked in descending order according

to their mean values, allowing for a precise interpretation of response trends and participants' historical awareness.

All items scored high means, reflecting a strong societal awareness of the importance of Islamic history in the Emirate of Sharjah and the institutional and leadership role in preserving and promoting this heritage. The statement "I see a link between the presence of historical and Islamic artifacts in the Emirate of Sharjah" ranked first, with a mean of 3.90—the highest in this domain—indicating a strong consensus among participants regarding the close relationship between Islamic history and tangible heritage in the emirate. This perception highlights the centrality of Islamic identity in shaping Sharjah's historical and cultural narrative.

The item "It is clear to me that the Ruler of Sharjah has set plans to continue research on Islamic historical artifacts in the emirate" follows with a mean of 3.88, reflecting participants' recognition of Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qasimi's pivotal role in supporting archaeological research and historical documentation as a sustainable project based on a clear scientific vision. The statement "It is clear to me that governmental institutions encourage the preservation of archaeological sites" had a high mean of 3.82, suggesting that coordinated institutional efforts are aligned with the leadership's vision in protecting and maintaining heritage, emphasizing the integration between leadership and relevant cultural and historical institutions.

Although the item "It is clear to me that the historical periods of artifacts in the Emirate of Sharjah vary" ranked last with a mean of 3.69, this still reflects a high level of awareness of the diversity of historical eras covered by artifacts in the emirate, albeit slightly lower compared to the other items. Standard deviations ranged from 0.98 to 1.17, indicating a convergence of responses among participants, which strengthens the reliability and validity of the results.

These results align with previous studies on Islamic cultural heritage, which have confirmed that the growth of societal awareness regarding the history of Islamic cities is closely linked to government support policies, awareness initiatives, education, and leadership's role in reinforcing cultural identity.²⁵ The findings also affirm the pioneering role of the Ruler of Sharjah, Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qasimi, who combines the roles of ruler, academic, and historian, as reflected in the establishment of museums, Islamic historical documentation centers, direct supervision of archaeological projects, and support for conferences and research on Sharjah's Islamic history, as evidenced in his works such as "Houses of Sharjah City" and "Hadith al-Thakira."

These results also correspond with results from Shawqī Sha'ṭh²⁷ which highlight major efforts in the conservation and restoration of heritage buildings in Sharjah; Anwār 'Āyid,²⁸ which emphasize the role of official institutions in legislating the management of archaeological sites; and 'Īsā Yūsuf,²⁹ which documents the Islamic presence in Sharjah during the Abbasid era, supporting the continuity of archaeological research, preservation of sites, and public display.

²⁵ Sultān al-Qāsimī, *Buyūt Madīnat al-Shāriqa wa-al-Qurā al-Mujāwira Lahā wa-Sākinūhā* (Manṣūrāt al-Qāsimī, 2022), 5; Sultān al-Qāsimī, *Ḥadīth al-Dhākira*, vol. 3 (Manṣūrāt al-Qāsimī, 2013), 119–144.

²⁷ Shawqī Sha'ṭh, "Al-Ma'ālim al-Tārīkhiyya fī al-Waṭan al-'Arabī: Wasā'il Ḥimāyatihā wa-Ṣiyānatihā wa-Tarmīmihā," *Majallat al-Turāth al-'Arabī* 26, no. 104 (2006): 292–321.

²⁸ Anwār 'Āyid 'Abd Allāh al-Shudayfāt, *Dawr Dā'irat al-Āthār al-'Āmma fī al-Ḥifāẓ 'alā al-Irth al-Ḥaqārī al-Urdunī fī al-Mamlaka al-Urduniyya al-Hāshimiyya khilāl al-Fatra (1923–1967)* (Jāmi'at Āl al-Bayt, 2024), 153–154.

²⁹ 'Īsā Yūsuf, *Al-'Aṣr al-'Abbāsī al-Mubakkir fī Imārat al-Shāriqa* (Hay'at al-Shāriqa lil-Āthār, 2022), 13–15.

Based on the above, Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qasimi's efforts in the field of Islamic history were not merely administrative or political, but part of a systematic scientific project aimed at consolidating Sharjah's Islamic and historical identity. This is clearly reflected in the awareness of the study sample, as shown in Table (1).

The Impact of the Museum's Cultural Efforts in Shaping Visitors' Awareness and Promoting Cultural Tourism as a Pathway for Civilizational Communication

Table 2 analyzes the opinions of the study sample in terms of the cultural impact of the museum in shaping visitor awareness and promoting cultural tourism as a pathway for civilizational dialogue. This was achieved through computing means and standard deviations to measure participants' agreement with the statements representing this domain. The results indicate a clear positive trend in evaluating the cultural role of artifacts. Table 2 shows that all items scored high means, reflecting strong agreement among the study sample regarding the cultural importance of artifacts in the Emirate of Sharjah, as well as their role in enhancing cultural awareness and consolidating civilizational identity. The statement "I see that the presence of historical artifacts contributed to educating people and raising their awareness" ranked first, with the highest mean of 3.85. This demonstrates participants' recognition of the educational and awareness-raising role that artifacts and museums play in society, whether through direct visits to archaeological sites and museums or through affiliated digital platforms.

In contrast, the item "It is clear that the presence of artifacts in the Emirate of Sharjah contributed to the design of government buildings inspired by Islamic architecture" ranked last, with a mean of 3.76. Despite being slightly lower than the other items, it still falls within the high category, indicating strong agreement among participants on the influence of artifacts on architectural trends and urban planning inspired by Islamic design. The overall mean for the cultural domain was 3.79, which also reflects a high level of cultural awareness among participants regarding the significance of artifacts in Sharjah. Standard deviations ranged from 1.01 to 1.21. These relatively low values indicate convergence of opinions and enhance the reliability and scientific significance of the results.

The high level of agreement regarding the cultural role of artifacts can be interpreted in the context of George Gerbner's *Cultural Cultivation Theory*, which posits that continuous exposure to cultural content through mass media and social media contributes to shaping individual awareness and attitudes. This exposure encourages increased visitation to museums and archaeological sites, both physically and via digital platforms, thereby strengthening the cultural function of museums as educational and awareness-raising institutions.

The statement "It is clear to me that the Ruler of Sharjah has established foundations for the study of archaeology" ranked second, reflecting the direct impact of the cultural and educational policies implemented by His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qasimi. This includes the establishment of the Archaeology specialization at the University of Sharjah, recruitment of academic expertise, and support for local and international archaeological missions. These findings align with Al-'Alī,³⁰ who emphasized Sharjah's position as a prominent Arab and Islamic cultural

³⁰ Al-'Alī, 'Imād Muḥammad. "Al-Shāriqa 'Āṣimat al-Thaqāfa al-Islāmiyya: Limādhā wa-ilā Ayna?" *Majallat Shu'ūn Ijtīmā'iyya* 31, no. 121 (2014): 221–225. <https://uaesoc.ae/magazine/%D8%A7%D9%81%D8%AA%D8%AA%D8%A7%D8%AD%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%AF%D8%AF-121/>.

hub, and with 'Alī 'Afīfī,³¹ who highlighted Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qasimi's pivotal role in heritage preservation, having been crowned as the Heritage Personality of the Year in 2013.

The results also correspond with the findings of 'Imād Muḥammad,³² which point to national museums as multifunctional cultural and educational institutions, a description which certainly applies to the Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilization. They are further supported by Al-Munawwar and Najīb Khayra,³³ who emphasized the focus on Islamic civilization and history in graduate programs at the University of Sharjah, as well as studies by Al-'Alī, 'Imād³⁴ showing the effectiveness of modern exhibition technologies for children, and ³⁵ which concluded that attention to museums and heritage areas contributes to economic growth through the stimulation of cultural tourism.

These results indicate a generally high level of cultural awareness among the study sample regarding the importance of artifacts in Sharjah, whether in promoting cultural identity; influencing architectural planning inspired by Islamic design; or contributing to the dissemination of knowledge. The convergence of responses also reflects a consensus on the central role of artifacts and museums as effective tools for building cultural awareness and enhancing civilizational dialogue.

The Impact of Tourism Efforts of the Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilization, Supported by the Vision of His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qasimi, on Visitors to Sharjah

Table 3 analyzes the opinions of the study sample regarding the tourism dimension related to artifacts and museums in the Emirate of Sharjah, using means and standard deviations to rank the items in descending order according to their mean values. This approach aids in interpreting participants' perceptions of the role of artifacts in stimulating cultural and historical tourism. The results show that all items in the tourism domain scored within the high category, reflecting a clear awareness among participants of the importance of artifacts and museums in supporting Sharjah's tourism sector and enhancing its presence on both local and global tourism maps.

The item "It is evident to me that the Ruler of Sharjah has prepared dedicated spaces for the preservation of artifacts in the Emirate of Sharjah" ranked first, with the highest mean of 3.86. This indicates that participants have recognized the clear vision and systematic plans led by His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qasimi to prepare archaeological sites and museums according to high standards, ensuring the preservation and sustainability of artifacts while enhancing their touristic appeal. The statement "I realize that Sharjah has a prominent presence on the global historical tourism map" ranked second, with a mean of 3.82, reflecting institutional efforts aligned with the leadership's vision to position Sharjah as an international cultural and historical tourism destination.

³¹ 'Alī 'Afīfī 'Alī Ghāzī, "Juhūd Sulṭān al-Qāsimī fī Ihya' al-Khaṭṭ al-'Arabī," *Majallat Shu'ūn Ijtīmā'iyya* 31, no. 123 (2014): 261–286.. <https://search.mandumah.com/Record/669903>.

³² 'Imād Muḥammad al-'Alī, "Al-Shāriqa 'Āṣimat al-Thaqāfa al-Islāmiyya: Limādhā wa-ilā Ayna?" *Majallat Shu'ūn Ijtīmā'iyya* 31, no. 121 (2014): 221–225.

³³ Al-Munawwar 'Awwād and Najīb Khayra, "Rihlat al-Baḥṭh fī al-Tārīkh wa-al-Ḥadāra al-Islāmiyya bi-Jāmi'at al-Shāriqa," *Majallat Jāmi'at al-Shāriqa lil-'Ulūm al-Insāniyya wa-al-Ijtīmā'iyya* 18, no. 1 (2021): 61–87. <https://spu.sharjah.ac.ae/index.php/HSS/article/view/105>.

³⁴ Al-'Alī, 'Imād Muḥammad. "Al-Shāriqa 'Āṣimat al-Thaqāfa al-Islāmiyya: Limādhā wa-ilā Ayna?" *Majallat Shu'ūn Ijtīmā'iyya* 31, no. 121 (2014): 221–225. <https://aladabj.uobaghdad.edu.iq/index.php/aladabjournal/article/view/3961>.

³⁵ Maryam Muḥammad al-Rāshidī, "Dawr al-Matāḥif wa-al-Manāṭiq al-Athariyya fī Ta'zīz al-Siyāha al-Thaqāfiyya fī al-Mintaqa al-Wustā li-Imārat al-Shāriqa," *Majallat al-Ittiḥād al-'Amm lil-'Athāriyyīn al-'Arab* 24, no. 2 (2023): 412–435. https://jguuaa.journals.ekb.eg/article_296985.html

The item “It seems that media coverage for Islamic historical artifacts in Sharjah was evident” ranked last with a mean of 3.81. Despite being slightly lower than the other items, it still falls within the high category. This indicates general awareness of the media’s role in promoting Islamic artifacts for tourism, albeit to a slightly lesser degree than the other indicators.

Standard deviations ranged from 1.08 to 1.16. These are statistically acceptable values and indicate convergence in participants’ opinions, enhancing the reliability and validity of the results.

The findings on the tourism impact of the Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilization, supported by His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qasimi’s vision, align with previous studies, such as ‘Alī ‘Afīfī,³⁶ Intiṣār Mu‘īn and Asīl Ḥusayn,³⁷ and Al-Rāshidī, Maryam,³⁸ each of which highlighted growing tourism awareness among leadership and decision-makers, particularly regarding the presentation of Islamic historical artifacts. This awareness continues to contribute to cultural tourism promotion and emphasizes the civilizational identity of Islamic cities globally.

Furthermore, the results confirm the pioneering role of His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qasimi, who has combined leadership, academic expertise, and historical knowledge. This role has manifested in the establishment of museums, centers for documenting Islamic history, direct supervision of archaeological projects, and support for conferences and specialized research on Sharjah’s Islamic heritage, as reflected in his publications, including *Old Houses of Sharjah* and *Memory Conversations*.

These results are also consistent with Sha‘th, Shawqī,³⁹ who highlighted the extensive efforts invested in preserving and restoring heritage buildings in Sharjah. This study further confirms the leadership’s strategic vision in linking heritage preservation with tourism development.

Furthermore, these results are consistent with the efforts documented in Sha‘th, Sh.⁴⁰ regarding the maintenance and restoration of heritage buildings in the city of Sharjah, and Shawqī Sha‘th,⁴¹ which emphasized that the Islamic Museum is a distinguished civilizational landmark. Similarly, ‘Alī Ibrāhīm⁴² stressed that artifacts are public property of high value that require protection, while Anwār ‘Āyid⁴³ highlighted the role of legal frameworks in regulating work at archaeological sites.

³⁶ ‘Alī ‘Afīfī ‘Alī Ghāzī, “Juhūd Sulṭān al-Qāsimī fī lḥyā’ al-Khaṭṭ al-‘Arabī,” *Majallat Shu‘ūn Ijtimā‘iyya* 31, no. 123 (2014): 261–286. <https://uaesoc.ae/magazine/%D8%A7%D9%81%D8%AA%D8%AA%D8%A7%D8%AD%D9%8A%D8%A9%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%AF%D8%AF-123/>.

³⁷ Intiṣār Mu‘īn al-‘Ubaydlī, Mundhir Jumḥāwī, and Asīl Ḥusayn, “Ta‘zīz Dawr al-Taḥqīq al-Ḥadīth fī al-‘Arḍ al-Maḥafī lil-‘Atfāl,” *Majallat al-Ādāb*, no. 145 (2023): 85–104. <https://aladabj.uobaghdad.edu.iq/index.php/aladabjournal/article/view/3961>.

³⁸ Al-Rāshidī, Maryam Muḥammad. “Dawr al-Matāḥif wa-al-Manāṭiq al-Athariyya fī Ta‘zīz al-Siyāḥa al-Thaqāfiyya fī al-Mintaqa al-Wusṭā li-Imārat al-Shāriqa.” *Majallat al-Ittiḥād al-‘Amm lil-Āthāriyyīn al-‘Arab* 24, no. 2 (2023): 412–435.

³⁹ Sha‘th, Shawqī. “Al-Ma‘ālim al-Tārīkhīyya fī al-Waṭan al-‘Arabī: Wasā’il Ḥimāyatihā wa-Ṣiyānatihā wa-Tarmīmihā.” *Majallat al-Turāth al-‘Arabī* 26, no. 104 (2006): 292–321.

⁴⁰ Sha‘th, Sh. 2006. “Al-Ma‘ālim al-Tārīkhīyah fī al-Waṭan al-‘Arabī: Wasā’il Ḥimāyatihā wa-Ṣiyānatihā wa-Tarmīmihā.” *Majallat al-Turāth al-‘Arabī* 26(104): 292–321.

⁴¹ Shawqī Sha‘th, “Al-Ma‘ālim al-Tārīkhīyya fī al-Waṭan al-‘Arabī: Wasā’il Ḥimāyatihā wa-Ṣiyānatihā wa-Tarmīmihā,” *Majallat al-Turāth al-‘Arabī* 26, no. 104 (2006): 292–321.

⁴² ‘Alī Ibrāhīm Ibrāhīm Sha‘bān, “Dawr al-Dawla fī Ḥimāyat al-Āthār,” *Majallat Kullīyyat al-Dirāsāt al-Islāmiyya wa-al-‘Arabiyya lil-Banāt bi-Damanhūr* 4, no. 1 (2019): 1243–1284. <https://jcia.journals.ekb.eg/article/57288.html>.

⁴³ Anwār ‘Āyid ‘Abd Allāh al-Shudayfāt, *Dawr Dā’irat al-Āthār al-‘Āmma fī al-Ḥifāẓ ‘alā al-Irth al-Ḥadārī al-Urdunī fī al-Mamlaka al-Urduniyya al-Hāshimiyya khilāl al-Fatra (1923–1967)* (Jāmi‘at Āl al-Bayt, 2024), 153–154. <https://search.mandumah.com/Record/1252750>.

Additionally, Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad⁴⁴ underscored the role of museums in introducing visitors to Islamic civilization and Arab cultural heritage, thereby increasing global demand for Islamic heritage.

In this context, it is worth noting the frequent visits of His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qasimi to the Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilization reflect his direct interest in monitoring the museum's institutional performance. These visits further encourage both the local and international community to visit. This contributes to consolidating Sharjah's position as a leading cultural tourism destination.

Overall, the results of measuring the tourism impact of the Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilization, supported by the vision of His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qasimi, indicate that the leadership-driven efforts in Sharjah, as reinforced by institutional and legislative frameworks, have contributed to enhancing the tourism role of artifacts and museums, and consolidating the Emirate's presence on the global historical tourism map. This is further reflected by the integration of the tourism dimension with both the historical and cultural dimensions within a comprehensive civilizational vision.

Conclusion

Islamic history in the Emirate of Sharjah remains a foundational pillar of the cultural diplomacy efforts pursued by His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qasimi. The study results indicate a high level of societal awareness of the link between Islamic artifacts and the historical heritage of the Emirate, reflecting the success of museums and archaeological sites in serving as civilizational intermediaries that convey Sharjah's historical and cultural message both locally and globally.

The high averages related to the role of the ruler and government institutions confirm that policies concerning the care of Islamic artifacts have gone beyond preservation and documentation. They have strategically employed Islamic history as an effective tool to enhance civilizational dialogue and cultural exchange with other nations. The academic and scholarly dimension of His Highness Sheikh Sultan, who, through his supervision of excavation projects, the establishment of museums, and support for historical research, has transformed Islamic heritage into a global cultural discourse addressing humanity through the language of knowledge and science.

Islamic history in Sharjah serves a dual function, by both affirming the Islamic identity of the Emirate and deepening societal awareness locally, while also acting as a crucial resource for cultural diplomacy through museums. These serve to enhance Sharjah's image as a civilizational bridge linking past and present, and connecting Islamic culture with other cultures worldwide—a comprehensive model of sustainable civilizational dialogue.

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⁴⁴ Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad, “Dawr al-Matāḥif fī Ḥifẓ al-Turāth al-Islāmī,” *Majallat al-Waʿy al-Islāmī* 59, no. 687 (2022): 66–67. <https://search.mandumah.com/Record/1309466>.

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