



Characteristics of Shia Educational Centers in the Era of Timurids and Safavids: A Historical Comparative View

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Received: 20 June 2021 Revised: 01 September 2021 Accepted: 20 September 2021 Online: 01 December 2022</p>	<p>Establishment of the Islamic Republic in Iran strengthened Shia studies in various scientific fields. One of the affected areas was the history of education. The purpose of research was to study the characteristics of Shia educational centers in the Timurid & Safavid periods. The research method was comparative with a historical approach and data collection and analysis methods were documentary and hidden content analysis respectively. To search for data, keywords were used in Iranian and international information databases. The most important finding indicates that there are differences in ten characteristics between the schools of these two historical periods. In every historical period, the most important source of financial and material needs of schools has been the endowment tradition. Another finding of the research shows that the Shiite schools in the Timurid period were less ideological-oriented than the schools of the Safavid period. Also, the variety of curricula and open academic space in Shiite schools of the Timurid period is more, but the methods of teaching and evaluation are similar in both periods. According to the findings, it is suggested to the policy makers and educational planners of Iran, first, to solve the economic bottlenecks of the educational system through a deeper look at the legacy of the Timurids and Safavid in providing teachers' salaries and equipping schools through the tradition of endowment. Secondly, considering the legacy of the Timurids, they should try to reduce the ideological role of the educational system.</p>
<p>KEY WORDS</p> <p>Educational system Endowment Historical View Safavids Shiism, Timurids</p>	

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1. Introduction

The expansion of Shiism in Iran has followed a gradual but upward trend. This continuous process caused one of the rarest historical, social and political events to happen in Iran in the 20th century. Three decades before the end of this century, the 1979 revolution in Iran led to the establishment of a political system in which the Shia religion reached the peak of its power in such a way that for the first time after the arrival of Islam in Iran and after the passage of 14 centuries, both religious and political powers were given to the Shia clerics (Olsen, 2019). Nevertheless, the establishment of the Islamic Republic in Iran did not only have social consequences, but also had a great impact on the intellectual, scientific and educational systems. One of the effects of the Islamic revolution was the orientation of scientific discussions in academic societies. According to Cowen (2002), under the influence of the political institution's reading of the Globe, the current readings in various scientific fields - especially in the fields of humanities - found a new direction. For example, until the victory of the Islamic Revolution, the ruling reading of scientific topics in the fields of humanities was generally focused on examining Western theories and ideologies. With the establishment of the new regime, the new intellectual reading was directed to examine the perspective of Islam - as an alternative ideology. In this way, many faculty members of universities - as well as various researchers - tried to investigate and analyze their favorite topics from the perspective of Islam - and especially Shiism. Thus, during the last four decades, hundreds of scientific conferences, meetings and lectures were held and dozens of books and articles were published in Iran, whose purpose was to investigate a scientific or social issue from the perspective of Shiism.

One of the interdisciplinary scientific - related to the two fields of history and educational sciences - which received the special attention of researchers-, was the study of the relationship between education and Shiism in Iran and the mutual relationship between the two during the past fourteen centuries. The mental premise of the researchers was that the knowledge of the causes of the victory of the Islamic revolution in Iran depends on awareness about history of Shiism and its relationship with social systems - such as the educational system - (Ayvazi, 2008). In fact, the understanding and recognition of the real causes of the role of Shiism in the Islamic Revolution of Iran - and the acquisition of political power by the clerics - depends on the knowledge of this religion in different historical periods. In this process, the Timurid and Safavid periods are very important. During the Timurid era, for the first time, political tolerance gave its followers a good opportunity to openly propagate Shiism (Ahmadkhani, 2015). The establishment of the Safavid dynasty gave Shiism a golden opportunity to grow by serving to stabilize the political system. In the

interaction between the two institutions of politics and religion, Shiite schools assumed a very important role in training human resources.

In fact, the education system has been influenced by Shiism and has influenced it. In Iran, Shiites were recognized as a religious minority for more than four centuries. Naturally, in this situation, Shia scholars tried to spread Shiism by influencing the political system and ordinary people. Also, they were not oblivious to the role of propaganda, education, and the construction and expansion of schools. In this way, on the one hand, the attraction of politicians to Shiism allowed Shiites to build many educational centers in different cities of Iran, and on the other hand, to increase their followers by teaching Shiite ideas in schools (Mirahmadi, 1984). Therefore, during the rule of the Timurid and Safavid dynasties educational centers were able to spread Shiism in the society and transform it from a "minority religion" to a "majority religion" of the Iranian people (Naseri Davoudi, 1999). In this way, there was an unbreakable relationship between Shiism and educational centers. Of course, this relationship was not hidden from the eyes of historians, although experts in educational sciences paid less attention to it. The victory of the Islamic Revolution made educational science departments interested in investigating the role of the educational system in the institutionalization of religious and political ideologies. Also, they were interested in finding out to what extent past historical experiences can help the positive interaction between the religious system and the educational system in today's Iranian society. Thus, during the last four decades, numerous researches have been conducted regarding this historical relationship, and here it is necessary to mention the findings of some of them:

The findings of Rajabi Mandi, Khosravi, Islami & Hassan Abadi (2020) show that all types of Timurid period schools, such as private endowment schools, royal endowment schools and non-endowment schools, had a direct impact on the performance of teachers according to the way of administration and endowment conditions. Alaghmand , Salehi, & Mozaffar (2017) showed that the structure of Iran's schools with the establishment of Dar al-Funun caused the removal of the residential part (school/room) and its change to the model (school/corridor/class). The cell around it was an educational-residence structure. Mousavi Kho & Mehman Nawaz (2018) mention disadvantages in the educational system of the Safavid era such as less attention to the specialization of sciences and prerequisite courses. Bakhshi Ostad (2016) believes that the Safavid era was the peak period of school building in Iran and the dominant religious thought in these schools was Shiism. Ahangari & Motdayn (2015) by examining the location of 12 schools in the Timurid, Safavid and Qajar periods found that there is an organic connection between the school space and urban space. Allahyari, Fayaz Anoush & Gudarzi (2015) believe that the main purpose of

building schools in the Timurid period was the development of science and literature. Razanahan & Rajabi (2013) emphasize the ideological aspect of the Safavid government and point out the fundamental role of schools in the institutionalization of Shiism in Iran. The findings of Adak & Asadi (2013) indicated that many Shia scholars from Lebanon, Syria and Bahrain entered Iran at the invitation of the Safavid kings to promote Shiism. Guderzi Boroujerdi (2011) provides useful information about the content of the educational system, financing of schools and some teachers of the Timurid period. Khazaei (2009) by examining the inscriptions of schools of the Timurid period in Khorasan - eastern Iran-, found that there was an evolutionary process in the course of the architectural transformation and decoration of schools, and the use of religious subjects in the inscriptions became more popular. The findings of Hosni (2006) show that during the Safavid era, in educational centers and public places, mullahs, jurists, male and female teachers, preachers, orators and poets were responsible for educating the people. Despite the fact that these studies have emphasized the growth of schools in the Timurid and Safavid periods and their similarities and differences, but not much comparative research has been done in this regard. Therefore, the main goal of research was to investigate the Shia educational centers in the Timurid and Safavid era with a historical comparative perspective. The sub-goals of the research are:

- a) Identifying and explaining the similarities of Shia educational centers in the Timurid and Safavid eras
- b) Identifying and explaining the differences between Shia educational centers in the Timurid and Safavid eras

2. Research Method

In historical research, time is the main concept. According to historians, time is not an independent, linear and simple existence. For this reason, there is a temporal connection between the events of yesterday, today and tomorrow. Also, the goal of historical research is to gain historical consciousness to face current events (Borries 1994; Rusen 1987). In fact, as Nóvoa, & Yariv-Mashal (2003) emphasized drawing a theoretical framework for comparative historical studies - as a process that takes place with regard to the background of local history - requires attention to places, times, connections and different forces. Based on these theoretical frameworks, the present researchers are looking for a comparison of two time periods in the history of Iran education. The research method was historical comparative and documentary and hidden content analysis were used for data collection and analysis respectively. This type of analysis follows the

interpretation of the content by focusing on discovering the meanings of the text (Hsieh, & Shannon 2005).

3. Findings

In this section, according to the analysis of data taken from primary and secondary sources, first, a historical description of the situation of Shiites in the Timurid and Safavid periods is given separately. Then the Shia educational centers and education status will be introduced. In the end, we will compare and identify the similarities and differences of educational centers in the Timurid and Safavid periods.

First: Shiism in the Timurid era

The Timurid kings were of Turkish descent and at the same time heavily influenced by Iranian culture and tradition (Manz, 2007). The founder of this dynasty, Timur, introduced himself as a descendant of Genghis Khan, and following him, he tried to conquer many parts of Central Asia and India. Although with the death of Timur, a large part of the conquests fell into the hands of local rulers, but his successors were able to maintain their dominance over areas of Iran and India by establishing two dynasties, Timur and Gurkaniya (Gerasimov 1992). In any case, the Timurid era - in spite of the chaos and internal conflicts - was the period of prosperity of culture, literature, history, mathematics and astronomy in Iran. Due to loving arts of the Timurid rulers, the cities of Herat, Samarkand, Shiraz, Tabriz and Isfahan became places of gathering and movement of prominent artists and writers (Balafrej, 2019; Manz, 1997). From a religious point of view, the Timurids followed a policy of tolerance and therefore the Shiites were able to easily implement their religious customs (Lapidus, 2008). The intensification of missionary activities among the people also had a significant impact on the social life of Shias, the important consequence of which was the recognition of Shiism in Iran and the establishment of the foundation for emergence of Safavid Shia government.

Second: Shiism in the Safavid era

The establishment of the Safavid government in the early 15th century (1501 AD) is a turning point in the history of Iran. This government has been mentioned as the first independent national government of Iran since the arrival of Islam until that time. In fact, Shah Ismail and his successors quickly realized that the independence and stability of a political government needs various

components (Gudarzi 2008). These components included declaring allegiance to a religion that is against the religion of the majority of Muslims, converting people through force and establishing a strong educational system as an intellectual and human support. In the first step, Shiism was chosen as the formal religion. The religious idea of the Safavid kings consisted of three intelligent programs: First, his genetic attribution to the 7th Imam of the Shiites; Second, the idea of a "Perfect Mentor" and third, the slogan "The King is God's Shadow on the Earth" (Mousavi Kho & Mahmannavaz, 2018). In fact, the formalization of Shiism helped the Safavids to maintain their independence as much as possible against the powerful government of the Islamic world, the Ottoman Empire. This happened while the majority of Iranians were Sunnis and did not have sufficient knowledge of jurisprudence and new religious orders (Bakhshi Ostad & Rezaei, 2014; Turner, 2000). In the second step, Shah Ismail tried to change people's religion by force. Some of the Safavid wars were strongly religious. However, they found that power is not always an effective tool to achieve political goals. In the third step, they realized the necessity of cultivating manpower that are the messengers of the political and religious system. At the same time, the Shiites also had no experience of governance, except for the short-term and local government of *Sarbdaran* (Parhizgari, 2013). Therefore, both political and religious systems strongly felt the need to establish schools. Therefore, the establishment of the school - as the most important ideological support tool of the Safavid government - was always the focus of the Safavid sultans and Shiite scholars (Adak & Asadi, 2013). Based on this, many schools were built with the financial support of the king, the royal family, courtiers, officials and the rich. Also, in areas where the majority were Sunnis, the Safavids played an important role in promoting Shiism by building schools and sending teachers and students (Bakhshi Ostad & Rezaei, 2014; Mousavi Kho & Mehmannaawaz, 2018). Anyway, one of the common features of all schools was the teaching of Shia teachings and the prohibition of teaching other Islamic sects.

Third: Shiite educational centers in the Timurid era

The investigation of the political activity of Shias in Iran shows that the change in the religious orientation of the people from Sunnis to Shias has mainly occurred through the influence of factors such as politics, culture & literature, and Sufism. The arrival of the Mongols in Iran - although it was accompanied by looting and killing - and their religious tolerance created an open and free space for the display of power of different religions (Torabi Farsani & Bahadri 2011). Shia scholars took the way to enter the court (*Diwan*) and influence the government families. In the role of teacher and trainer of the crown prince, they influenced the future *emirs* and reduced their

strictness towards the Shiites. Also, they tried to spread Shiism in different regions through the construction of schools. In the meantime, the endowment as an Islamic tradition greatly contributed to the goals of the Shiites. Endowment of property to build mosques and schools has been popular in the Islamic world since the first century of *Hijri*. During the Timurid period, various social groups participated in the construction of endowment schools. For example, in addition to kings, generals, scholars and rich people, we can also mention rich women, such that in the construction of the Herat Royal School, court women offered all their ornaments and provided 100,000 dinars (Allahyari, Fayaz Anoush & Gudarzi, 2015). In this way, the Timurid period can be considered as the period of establishment of schools in which the propagation of Shiism became widespread for the first time. The characteristics of these schools in promoting Shiism can be examined from various angles. From a financial and economic point of view, Shia schools - like other schools - provided their resources through the income from the cultivation of agricultural land and also the rent of endowment shops (Rahmkhoda, 2016). From an educational point of view, mainly the devotees determined the conditions that teachers and students should have. In terms of the main goal, endowment schools were mainly interested in literary and cultural goals in addition to teaching Shia teachings. In fact, it can be said that the schools of the Timurid period, rather than being a place for the education of religious sects, were more concerned with scientific education - such as mathematics and astrology, and arts like painting and calligraphy - (Zarin Eil & Kargar Jahormi 2012).



Figure 1. Balaser School Hall
Source: O'Kane, 1982



Figure 2. Entrance of Doder School
Source: O'Kane, 1982



Figure 3. Prizad School
Source: O'Kane, 1982

Fourth: Shiite educational centers in the Safavid era

In the Safavid era, two mutually influencing factors deeply affected the educational system and caused its significant development after several centuries. The first factor goes back to the ideological political structure of the Safavid, which had firmly linked the political fate of the government to Shiite beliefs (Hafez Nia & Ghalizadeh 2007). The budgets of educational centers were provided through endowments, but the financing of Shiite schools by the Safavid government was a new and significant thing. In fact, the financing of these centers by the Safavid government

was influential in determining religious and political relations and it became a factor for the growth and expansion of Shiism. The second factor refers to the emergence of a new class of Shia scholars and jurists who enjoyed unprecedented political and social influence and independence (Sami Azar, 1997). One of the most important roles played by schools was providing manpower for governmental and especially religious institutions. School graduates - based on Shia religion - studied various sciences, which caused them to further promote Shiism (Mousavi Kho & Mehmannaawaz, 2018). In this context, Sultanzadeh (1985) believes that a large number of religious schools were built in different cities by scholars, local rulers and sultans. Therefore, in this era, the construction of a set of religious educational institutions for training of the young generation, training of teachers, and Shia preachers increased greatly (Sami Azar, 1997). There were different professors and students. Also, during the Safavid era, emphasis on the role of educational sanctuaries of schools was given more attention. For example, during the Timurid era, the construction of mausoleums and mosques in schools was very common, but during the Safavid era, the construction of mausoleums and mosques in school spaces was suddenly stopped (Javari, 2001).

The educational centers of the Safavid era - like the previous periods - started with home school education. In the home school, children were usually taught to read the Quran, pray, religious rules, arithmetic, and the basics of the Arabic language (Chardin, 1971). However, home school curricula can be considered a combination of religious and scientific education. Religious education mainly taught students the practical rules of prayer, fasting, bathing and other rules with an emphasis on Shia jurisprudence. In schools, which can be considered equivalent to today's colleges and universities, more complex and specialized educations - mainly religious- were offered to students (Durrani, 1997). In the first stage, the curriculum included learning subjects such as Arabic grammar and syntax, vocabulary, meanings, and logic. After that, students learned sciences such as interpretation of the Qur'an, kalam, rijal, jurisprudence, and hadith (Bakhshi Ostad, 2016). At the same time, sometimes powerful people and influential scholars, as well as knowledgeable people, interfered in determining the curriculum (Hosseini Ashkavari, 2009). In fact, in determining the content of school courses, the adaptation of textbooks to the Shiite religion was the main criterion, although in compliance with this criterion, teachers were free in other cases. Of course, the developments of the times were not without their impact, in such a way that the more we move away from the early years of the establishment of the Safavid dynasty, the freedom of teachers decreases. For example, sometimes the teaching of some subjects (such as philosophy) or books was prohibited by the recommendation of the king, scholars or religious leaders. Regarding school

administration, it should be mentioned three levels of control and supervision: In the first level, there were founders and trustees who supervised the way of school administration in scientific, religious and economic dimensions. In the second level, there was the head of religious scholars, who had a role in selecting teachers, and in the third level, there were teachers who managed the schools (Bakhshi Ostad, 2013).

One of the merits of the educational centers of this period was the right to choose the professor by the students. According to Tavernier (2003), students were free to choose their teacher and could study in the same school or choose their teacher in another school. Another strong point of these schools was the education of women. One of the educated women in this era is the daughter of *Sheikh Ali Manshar*, who was a jurist and hadith. Among the other virtuous women of the Safavid era, *Hamida*, the daughter of *Maulana Muhammad Sharif Mohammad Ruvidashti*, was one of the virtuous, scholarly and mystical women of Esfahan, who was well versed in the "Science of Men" and gave her advice to women (Riahi, 1996). Another feature of Shia schools during the Safavid period was the invitation of Shia scholars to teach in Iran. In fact, the Safavid kings invited scholars from Arab-speaking countries such as Iraq, Bahrain, and Jabal Amel (Lebanon) to Iran in order to promote the Shia religion and implement Islamic law according to the Shia religion (Zulfiqari, Omrani, & Novdoost, 2020). With the prosperity of Shia religion in schools - especially after the period of Shah Abbas I - the writing and translation of religious texts expanded and strengthened the written heritage of Imami Shia. Another characteristic of the Safavid era was the emergence and spread of various intellectual and scientific schools and tendencies within the framework of Shiism. For example, the rule of *Akhbāri'* led to the gradual ban of some books and teaching materials - such as philosophy - in schools (Ahmadi, 2011). In any case, the Shiite educational system in the Safavid era also had some disadvantages. For example, innovation was not seen in the writing of books and textbooks, and teaching was mainly limited to the books of the past. Also, the teaching of some sciences - such as philosophy and mysticism - was opposed (Afrasiabpour, 2015). Non-specialization of sciences, non-observance of prerequisites and non-applicability of some subjects were other disadvantages of the Shia education system in the Safavid period.



Figure 4. Interior view of the Olya School in Ferdous City, East of Iran



Figure 5. Chahar Bagh School of Isfahan



Figure 6. Khan School, Shiraz

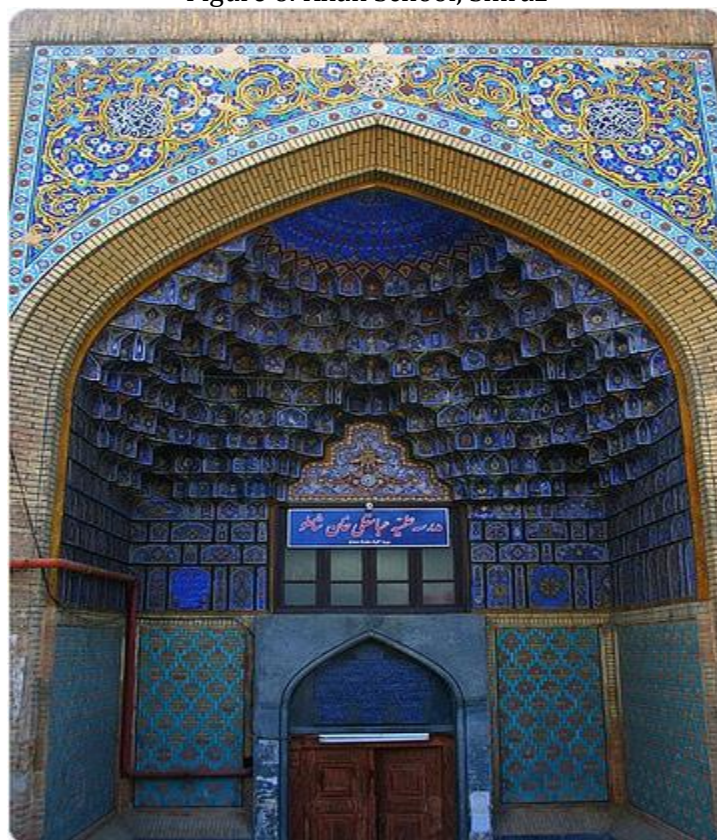


Figure 6. Entrance of Abbasqoli Khan School, Mashhad

Fifth: Comparison between the Timurid and Safavid periods

In order to compare the Timurid period with the Safavid period, several cases can be mentioned. Politically, the kings and governors of both dynasties showed great interest in the establishment and expansion of schools, although their goals were not the same. The Timurids tried to show their interest in various scientific topics and education of artists, scientists, craftsmen, mathematicians and astronomers by building various schools. On the contrary, the Safavid kings had an instrumental view of schools from the very beginning and founded them solely for the promotion and expansion of Shia beliefs and the training of fanatical religious people (Edak & Asadi, 2013). For this reason, in all the endowments of schools of the Safavid period, the teaching of Shiite principles has been emphasized. From the religious aspect, the Timurid kings were not interested in creating religious unity in the lands under their territory, and the religious policy was such that no sect dominates the other (Bayat, 2013). For this reason, the Timurid court was the place of visiting scholars, Sufis, artists and poets. Of course, sometimes there were differences between the Timurid sultans. For example, the significant difference between *Timur* and *Shahrukh* was in the type of support for scholars and religious institutions. While Timur had strong relations with prominent religious scholars, Shahrukh kept his distance from them and the members of various sects generally had close relations with each other (Mohaghegh & Larijani, 2011). Therefore, the schools of the Timurid period had an open religious space and teachers and students of different sects could teach and study there. On the contrary, the Safavid kings tried hard to close Sunni schools and only gave permission to establish schools that teach Shia principles (Jafarian, 2000). Also, hiring Shia teachers and students was a priority. In this way, religiously, the atmosphere of the Safavid era schools was mostly closed, one-sided and full of prejudice.

Economically (financially and materially), the most similarity can be seen between the two historical periods. In both dynasties, the builders of schools were mainly kings, local rulers, royal families, merchants and rich people. Also, to support the continuation of school activities, the income of agricultural land and endowment shops was allocated to schools. In addition, there was a mostly similar administrative and financial organization in both periods for running schools. This organizational-administrative structure was generally included in the endowment letter of each school. For example, all schools had founders and trustees, and the management of the school was determined for future generations. In terms of appearance, school buildings - regardless of size - followed a relatively similar pattern. Schools were generally built near the *bazaar* and often one of

its doors opened towards them (Soltanzadeh 2017). Endowment shops belonging to the school were located next to it, and the school building included places for teaching, cells, a courtyard, a tomb and a mosque. Of course, during the Safavid era, in order to create more peace for teachers and students, they tried to make the space of schools separate from tombs and mosques.

From a scientific point of view, there are similarities and differences between the Timurid and Safavid schools. During the Timurid period, mostly the builders and founders of schools did not interfere much in determining the curriculum, books, and the method of selecting teachers and students. On the contrary, during the Safavid era, school founders determined things in advance, mainly through endowment letters, and assigned tasks for the next generations as well. For example, the head of the *Maryam Begum School* in Isfahan had banned the teaching of philosophy (Adak & Asadi 2013). Also, the influence of the kings and scholars in the selection of teachers was very high, so that they easily expelled from the school a scientist who spoke against the dominant of current thought. Also, although the founders of the Shia schools of the Timurid period mainly insisted on the teachings of this religion, at the same time, they accepted the education of other scientific and religious subjects with tolerance. On the contrary, during the Safavid period, firstly due to the lack of teachers, Shiite scholars from other countries were invited to Iran. Secondly, the main goal of the schools was to strengthen and spread the Shia religion in Iran, and thirdly, the schools had the duty to train and send Shia graduates to different regions of the country instead of training scientists in various sciences. The last difference that can be observed between Timurid and Safavid period schools is the reduction of attention to intellectual sciences, increase of prejudice and the closing of the space for free thinking in Safavid schools (Table 1).

Table 1: Characteristics of Shiite schools in the Timurid and Safavid periods according to different components

Component	Timurians	Safavian
Main purpose of school construction	Mix	Religious
Role of religious orientations in school construction	Less with more variety	Many and limit
Role of sultans in building the school and determining the curriculum	Moderate	Intemperate
Role of endowment in school affairs	High	High
Administrative and financial structure	A lot and according to the endowment	A lot and according to the endowment
Religious diversity of teachers and students	Many and wide	Few and with selection
Curriculum diversity	A lot with emphasis on teaching all sciences	Few and limited to teaching religious subjects
Teaching methods	Lecture & Discussion	Lecture & Discussion
Educational evaluation method	Open and based on teachers' opinion	Open and based on teachers' opinion
Academic climate of schools	Open with tolerance	Complete with prejudice and rejection of the opposite views
Physical space of the school	Class, cell, mausoleum, mosque	Class, cell
Spread of intellectual branches	Many & emergence of various sects	Less & emergence of Shia sects
Attract scientists	Few & limited to Timurid territory	Many and wide from different regions of the Middle East
Output of the educational system	Scientists in science, literature and mysticism	Mainly religious missionary

According to the results of hidden content analysis, common and different components can be specified more precisely (Table 2):

Table 2: Similarities and differences of Shiite schools in the Timurid and Safavid periods

Component	Timurians	Safavian
Main purpose of school construction	*	✓
Role of religious orientations in school construction	*	✓
Role of sultans in building the school and determining the curriculum	*	✓
Role of endowment in school affairs	*	*
Administrative and financial structure	*	*
Religious diversity of teachers and students	*	✓
Curriculum diversity	*	✓
Teaching methods	*	*
Educational evaluation method	*	*
Academic climate of schools	*	✓
Physical space of the school	*	✓
Spread of intellectual branches	*	✓
Attract scientists	*	✓
Output of the educational system	*	✓

Among the fourteen components that indicate the characteristics of Shiite schools in two historical periods, only four components show similarities. Shiite schools in both the Timurid and Safavid periods are similar in dimensions such as the effective role of the endowment phenomenon in the construction and management of schools, administrative and financial structure, and teaching and evaluation methods. The change of the political system from the Timurids to the Safavids caused drastic changes in the structure of the educational system. While the Shiite schools in the Timurid period had more of a religious function by maintaining a distance from political power, in the Safavid period both religious and educational systems served to stabilize the political system .

4. Conclusion

After the Mongols, Shiites in Iran actively participated in the political scene. They made the weight of political and religious power heavier in the direction of Shiism in the path of reconciliation between Sunni and Shia religions. There was a tendency towards Shiism, not only among the ordinary people, but also among the royal families. During the Timurid era, the number of power institutions was in favor of the Shiites, although none of these institutions put pressure on the people to change their religion. Timurid Turkic sultans did not seek to consolidate their power through religious legitimacy. Also, they tried to establish a balance between different sects of Islam

by paying relatively equal attention to religious leaders, mystics, and scholars. Based on this, the Shias were able to build the first cores of the Shia-oriented educational system in the Timurid period. The findings of this research showed that the first similarity between Shiite schools in the Timurid and Safavid periods is the positive role of political leaders in the construction and equipping of schools, although the number of schools in the Safavid period was much more than that of the Timurid period. These findings are aligned with the research results of Bakhshi Ostad 2016; Bakhshi Ostad & Ahmadi, 2013; Bakhshi Ostad & Rezaei, 2014; Manz, 1997; Lapidus, 2008; Jafarian, 2000 and Hafez Nia & Qolizadeh, 2007. Another finding of the research shows similarity of the Timurid and Safavid Shia schools in the full exploitation of the *Waqf* tradition. Of course, the Safavid period can be considered the height of the construction of waqf schools throughout the history of Iran. This finding has been confirmed in previous researches (Hosseini Ashkavari, 2009; Durrani, 1997; Sami Azar, 1997; Gudarzi Boroujerdi, 2011; Ahangari and Matdin, 1395; Rajabi Mandi et al., 2020; Razanhan & Rajabi, 2014; Sultanzadeh, 2008; Adak & Asadi, 2013). The findings of research indicated that in the Timurid period, the establishment of endowment schools provided the first step for the formation of a Shia-oriented educational system. The organizational/administrative and educational structure of these schools, as a model in the Safavid period, attracted the attention of politicians and religious leaders. Research of Sultanzadeh 2008, Durrani 1997; Mousavi Kho & Mohmannawaz, 2018; Allahyari, Fayaz Anoush & Gudarzi, 2015; Javari 2001; Ahmadi 2011; Hosni 2006; Tajbakhsh 1999 and Melekzadeh & Shirin Zaban Azar 2012 confirm the validity of this finding. Another important finding of the current research is that the differences between Timurid Shiite schools and Safavid schools are more than their similarities. This finding can be very important because the current political system of Iran is to a large extent an evolved form of the Safavid political system, with the difference that the both political and educational systems are more at the service of the religious system. Based on this, the current educational system of Iran, like the education system of Safavid schools, is very ideologically oriented. Naturally, in this process, knowing the effectiveness of Iran's current education system from the Safavid legacy can help educational policymakers and educational sciences researchers in analyzing and interpreting its current situation. This finding also supported Turner, 2000; Alaghmand , Salehi, & Mozaffar, 2017; Jafarian, 2000; Zulfiqari, Omrani & Novdoost, 2020; Bayat, 2013; Afrasiabpour, 2006, Gudarzi, 2008; Ayvazi 2008 and Mir Ahmadi 1984 who showed that Shiite schools in the Safavid period were mainly based on transcriptional education, uniform teaching methods and rewriting previous sources without innovation and creativity. According to these historical-comparative findings and considering the current state of Iran's educational

system, it is suggested to policy makers and educational planners of this country, firstly, to solve the economic bottlenecks of the educational system, a deeper look at the legacy of the Timurids and Safavid in providing teachers' salaries and equip schools through tradition of *Waqf*. Secondly, considering the legacy of the Timurids, try to reduce the instrumental and ideological role of the educational system - to fit more with the necessities of life in the new millennium.

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