



British Journal of Economics, Management & Trade
12(4): 1-11, 2016, Article no.BJEMT.24589
ISSN: 2278-098X



SCIENCEDOMAIN *international*
www.sciencedomain.org

Urban Tourism in Jordan: Challenges and Opportunities Case Study: Amman

Malek Bader^{1*}, Ramzi Alrousan¹, Ismaeil Abuamoud²
and Hussein Abu Alasal²

¹Department of Sustainable Tourism, Queen Rania's Faculty of Tourism and Heritage,
University of Hashemite, Al-Zarqa, Jordan.

²Department of Tourism Management, Faculty of Archaeology and Tourism, University of Jordan,
Amman, Jordan.

Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between all authors. Authors MB and RA designed the study, wrote the protocol and wrote the first draft of the manuscript. Authors IA and HAA managed the literature searches. Author MB managed the analyses of the study. All authors edited the manuscript, read and approved the final one.

Article Information

DOI: 10.9734/BJEMT/2016/24589

Editor(s):

(1) Chiang-Ming Chen, Department of Economics, National Chi Nan University, Taiwan.

Reviewers:

(1) Tugba Kiper, Namik Kemal University, Turkey.

(2) Musitha Elias Mavhungu, South Africa.

Complete Peer review History: <http://sciencedomain.org/review-history/13586>

Original Research Article

Received 26th January 2016
Accepted 17th February 2016
Published 7th March 2016

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the challenges and opportunities of urban tourism in Jordan with a case study from Amman the capital city of Jordan. Jordan has tourism of sites not tourism of cities and towns, but lately Jordan paid a good attention on this subject and began to rehabilitate many cities especially in the Jordanian capital Amman.

The definition of urban tourism has initially been discussed, particularly because the definitions of urban tourism range from the downright abstruse to the straightforward. From all the definitions it is concluded that urban areas are very important for this type of tourism because they are: Destinations in their own right, gateways for tourist entry, centres for accommodation, and ideal bases for excursions bringing the tourists along interesting cultural as well as natural itineraries. The discussion then evaluates the aspects of urban tourism through identifying trends, developments and challenges within the tourism sector in Jordan.

*Corresponding author: E-mail: malekbader@hotmail.com;

The paper discussed also the key elements that can enhance the visitor-friendliness in urban areas. It also considers new sector opportunities and acknowledges the difficulties and challenges associated with the development of the city of Amman as a centre for urban tourism. Bibliographic documentation and descriptive-analytic method were used as a methodology for this paper to improve and deepen the knowledge to understand thoroughly the concept of urban tourism. From the main results of this research is that the country has a number of attributes that will likely contribute to the continuing growth of its urban tourism sector, including an enormous array of cultural-heritage destinations, a well developed transportation infrastructure and a hospitality sector that can accommodate budget-minded tourists as well as the needs of the most discriminating affluent travelers. Finally, the paper indicates the suggestions that Amman require to become a true destination city in the region.

Keywords: Urban tourism; tourism destination; accommodation; destination marketing; tourism development; cultural-heritage sites.

1. INTRODUCTION

The main aim of this paper is to gain knowledge from other experiences of the developed cities in the world how urban tourism developed by analyzing some strategic plans to develop this type of tourism in the area of Amman. From the other objectives are to give a precise define for urban tourism and to show the challenges and opportunities that related to urban tourism. Suggestions for Amman to become a true urban destination in the region are from the important aims for the paper.

As the home of ancient Petra, Jordan is known over the world as a tourism destination of choice for those interested in the history and culture of this region of the Middle East. Although Petra is the country's most visited tourist attraction by far, its remote location suggests that additional opportunities are available to take advantage of current levels of tourism in urban settings as well, and Jordan features a number of such destinations that can help fuel growth in this sector in the future. A specialist Rami Daher [1] in 2010, in one of the conferences said *"It is only surprising that after all these years, and in 2010, still, the newly established Jordan Museum uses an emblem on its windows that depicts Petra and Jerash, one only wonders as to when will Amman and other cities in Jordan be the focus of such endeavors"*. It is concluded from Daher's quotation that in Jordan we have tourism of sites not tourism of cities, but lately Jordan paid a good attention on this subject and began to rehabilitate many cities in Jordan especially in the Jordanian capital Amman.

At the same time and unfortunately, Jordan is also faced with several problems and challenges in developing its urban tourism sector and these

issues also form the focus of this study. To determine the current state of tourism development in general and urban tourism development in particular in Jordan, this study provides a review of the relevant literature to operationalize the terms involved, deliver an overview of tourism development in Jordan including primary tourism destinations. A discussion concerning the primary problems and challenges facing the urban tourism sector in Jordan is followed by a converse discussion concerning the opportunities and advantages of urban tourism in Jordan. A summary of the research and important findings are presented in the study's conclusion.

2. METHODOLOGY

The choice of the methodology is perhaps the most important decision a researcher has to make in the research process because the methodology moulds the nature and direction of the research [2].

The research aimed to understand deeply urban tourism in the area of Amman and the challenges that face this type of tourism and the opportunities which will be an advantageous circumstance or a chance for progress or advancement to develop urban tourism in Jordan.

The methodology which was used in the paper is bibliographic documentation and descriptive-analytic method that has been taken from documents, literature review and by using the results of interviews, meetings and workshops related to the subject of urban tourism. Library research method was also used to gather data for this paper. In recent time many researchers began to use this method which begins with a

question and solve a problem. This research method needs skills whether it is specialized techniques or specialized resources but at the end the researcher can reach the results and leads to discovery.

3. REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Definition of Urban Tourism

Definitions of urban tourism range from the downright abstruse to the straightforward. A major difficulty that may account in part for the academic neglect of urban tourism has been the lack of a simple definition of a complex phenomenon and a clear demarcation of its diverse and vaguely formulated set of activities, as reviewed by [3]. Adding the adjective *urban* to the noun *tourism* locates an activity in a spatial context but does not in itself define or delimit that activity.

For instance, Hall and Page describe the “concept of a destination product life cycle as a significant concept for strategic destination marketing and planning and which underpins urban tourism” [4]. Similarly, [5] regards urban tourism as being “a leisure product” that consists of a number of fundamental components including a variety of specialized facilities as follows:

1. An activity place, thereby defining the overall supply features within the city, particularly the main tourist attractions; and,
2. A leisure setting, which includes both the physical elements in the built environment and the socio-cultural characteristics which give a city a distinct image and 'sense of place.'
3. Likewise, Alcaraz, Hume and Mort [6] refer to the “concept of the use of servicescape to create reflective spaces supporting the concept of urban tourism with consumers suggesting a preference for self-paced consumption and adequate process flow”. For others, the term “urban tourism” simply means “tourism in urban regions,” typically towns and cities [7]. According to Ruetsche, “The demand for travel to cities has greatly increased over the last few decades. While many travel for business or convention purposes, others are traveling on leisure time to learn about other cultures, to develop their specific interests, and to seek

entertainment” [7]. All of these definitions help illuminate the salient aspects of urban tourism, but the latter definition provides a useful framework in which to proceed and it is this definition that is applied to tourism development in Jordan as discussed further below. Therefore understanding urban tourism is dependent upon a prior understanding of the urban context in which it is embedded [8]. According to [9] “Dictionary of Travel, Tourism and Hospitality”, defined urban tourism as trips and visits with a focus on town or city destinations, and also known as city tourism. A fast growing form of tourism, stimulated by historical and cultural attractions, as well as shopping and event attractions and by business travel, it offers much scope for urban regeneration. From all the previous definitions it is concluded that Urban areas are important for tourism because they are:

- destinations in their own right,
- gateways for tourist entry,
- centres for accommodation, and
- ideal bases for excursions bringing the tourists along interesting cultural as well as natural itineraries.

At the same time towns and cities are places and spaces:

- Places for tourism activity
- Spaces within which leisure activity is structured and consumed

3.2 Tourism Development in Jordan

Although significant progress has been experienced in the construction and trade services sectors in recent years, the tourism sector in Jordan appears to have enjoyed the most improvement [10]. According to Sullivan, of the three, Jordan has the “most free” economy, followed by Egypt and then Syria as having the “least free” economy (2002). While Jordan remains highly reliant on volatile sources of income such as tourism, the country has also been diversifying its economic base in human capital-intensive and technology-intensive trade in recent years as well, with noteworthy successes in medicines and chemical products [10]. Furthermore, the Jordanian government has undertaken numerous initiatives in recent years that have contributed to tourism development, including forging

partnerships with the private sector in major industries and services to promote regional tourism [11].

There are other positive signs that tourism development is taking place with the establishment of an executive jet charter service in Jordan. In this regard, Wells reports that, "Air Charter Service, with offices in London, Moscow and New York, opened an office in 2006 in Dubai due to increased demand. Hunt and Palmer, a leading executive jet provider, now has an agent based in Jordan". Furthermore, capitalizing on the growing demand for so-called "desert tourism," KE Adventure Travel offers special trips to Jordan's Wadi Rum with special treks on desert trails on soft rock [12].

In addition, despite some rocky periods during the middle of the decade, Royal Jordanian, the national airline, experienced a 12% increase in passenger traffic during the closing months of 2006, and the new Kempinski Hotel Ishtar inaugurated its first development stage by opening 117 rooms; Intercontinental has undertaken the construction of three Holiday Inns (the projected cost of \$60 million is part of the group's five-year expansion into the Middle East), with 36 Holiday Inn Express currently planned [12]. According to Jordan's embassy in Washington, D.C., "There is currently an investment boom in hotels and land speculation. Major investments have been made in new hotel construction, especially near Petra. Several new hotels on the Dead Sea Coast and in Amman and Aqaba are being currently built or planned" [13].

Moreover, direct travel between Israel and Jordan is now allowed, and the number of tourists from Israel has been increased [13]. The latest tourism figures available from the Jordanian government indicate that in 1994, tourists from the Arab and other Middle Eastern countries reached about 553,000, while tourists from other regions accounted for another 289,000 representing nearly \$561 million in tourism revenues (an amount equal to 13% of total foreign exchange income and 12.7% of Jordan's GDP [13]. Beyond these initiatives, the Jordanian government's sophisticated but user-friendly Web site promotes a wide range of tourist destinations in Amman and throughout the country, and these destinations are discussed further below.

3.3 Primary Tourism Destinations in Jordan

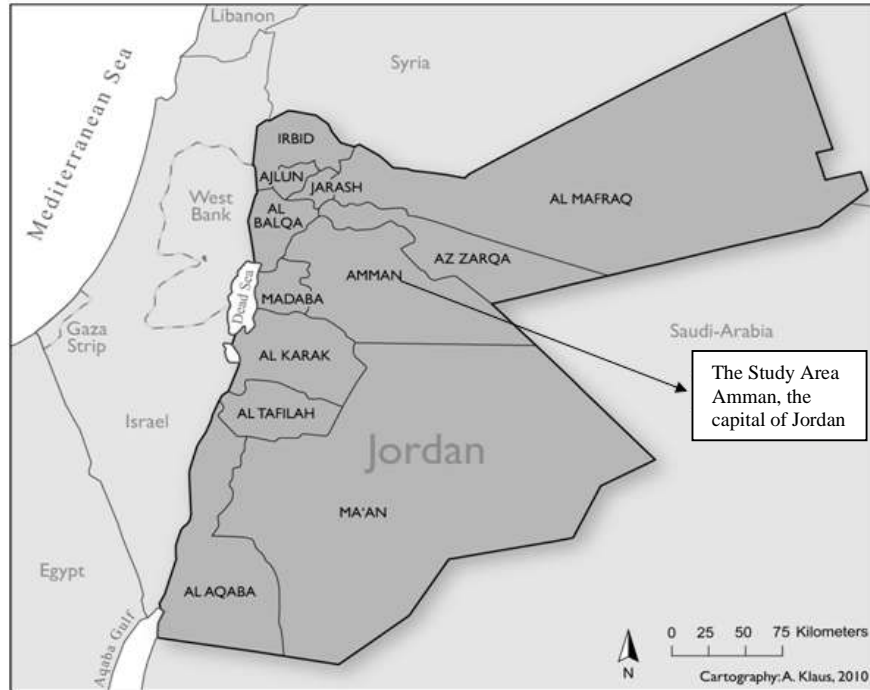
The overwhelming majority of current tourism destinations being promoted by the government's tourism department are cultural-heritage sites consisting of interesting historic ruins, with Amman being the single urban destination included. Amman (see Map1) is a modern Arab city rather than a great, ancient metropolis of the Orient: it has never rivalled Damascus, Baghdad or Cairo as a grand Islamic city of antiquity. It is the capital and largest city of Jordan. It is the area's political, cultural and commercial centre and one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world and the population at the beginning of the last century was only between 1500 and 2000 inhabitants.

This number in Greater Amman Municipality (GAM) is now 1000 times the population it used to be in 1909 when the first municipal council in Amman was established. The city has now the population of 2,842,629. The population of Jordan is 6,508,271 (July 2011 est.). The population of the city is expected to jump from 2.8 million to almost 7 million by 2025 due to constant and rapid immigration. Like many countries, Jordan faces the challenge of rapid urbanisation. In fact, 70% of its urban population lives within 30 km of the capital, Amman (Fig. 1).

Even in the country's largest metropolitan area in Amman, though, there are plenty of archaeological sites available to tourists, as well as the key elements that have been shown to promote urban tourism development as described further in Table 1.

While Amman and its surrounding environs may not resemble the urban offerings that characterize other world-class urban tourism destinations, the country does have almost 10,000 years of history to its credit and there is much to see and do for everyone who is interested in the culture and history of this fascinating region of the world, even if they never make it to Petra. In fact, Jordan has network of modern international and national roads that provide access the interior and modest coastal region, and being a relatively small country, any destination is within a 4-hour drive from the capital [13]. There are some significant problems and challenges

involved in promoting these attributes in ways that will encourage increased tourism levels, though, and these issues are discussed further below.



Map 1. The 12 governorates of Jordan
 Source: Albert Klaus, 2010 Germany

Amman 2025: Population Projections

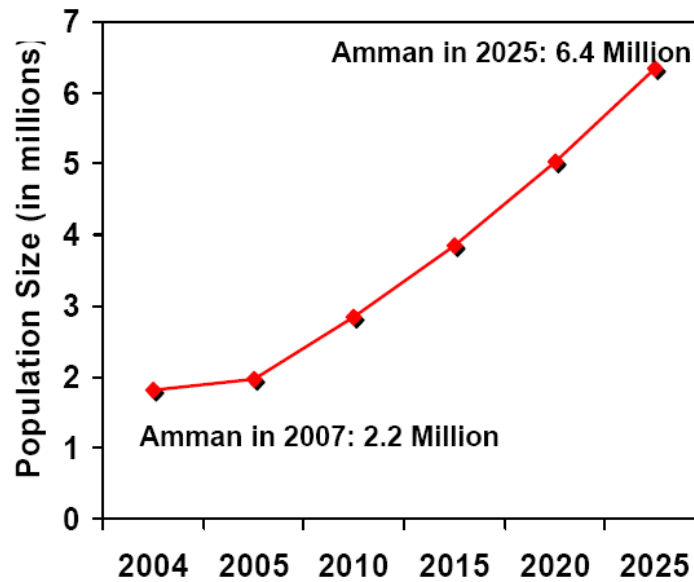


Fig. 1. Potential increase of population in Amman
 Source: Greater Amman Municipality

Table 1. Key elements that can enhance the visitor-friendliness in urban areas

Key element	Description	Jordanian offerings (Amman unless otherwise specified)
Historic districts	Historic attributes of buildings, streetscapes, neighborhoods, and special landmarks emphasize the local character of an area. Historic districts are generally very pedestrian friendly with a mix of attractions and amenities that are easily accessible. Beyond their educational component, they also generate a sense of place and provide the urban visitor with memorable experiences. Thus, cities blessed with heritage as a selling point are advantaged when looking to develop their tourism product.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Excellent hotels and accommodation, gourmet restaurants, coffee shops, shopping centres, offices and luxury villas have replaced older dwellings. However, there is still much of the old city to be admired. 2. In addition to its numerous archaeological sites, Amman has many museums, art galleries and cultural centres, as well as theatres and cinemas.
Waterfronts	Irrespective of purpose, urban waters have always attracted people out of necessity or pleasure. In some cities, up to forty percent of those staying overnight have come for this type of business tourism. Convention Centers and Exhibitions are perceived to be strong growth sectors in which the visitor spends an above average amount and which operate for most of the year. Employment, publicity, image improvement, and urban regeneration are benefits that generally justify the big financial investment for those centers. Besides these advantages, it is important to remember that the conference business cannot be separated from the rest of the tourism industry particularly because most participants are also seeking urban amenities in an exciting environment.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No waterfronts specifically; however, within Amman there is plenty of fun to be found including water parks with lots of thrilling rides to keep the children entertained. 2. There is a wide range of health clubs and fitness centres, as well as facilities for paint-balling and other action-packed sports. 3. Horse riding is a very popular activity and Amman's riding centres offer excellent facilities: 4. Amman has an excellent 9-hole 'brown' golf course, with par of 67; the Bisharat Golf Course is the first proper golf course to be found in Jordan. Near Amman's Queen Alia Airport, and located just 14km outside the city, the club provides caddie service, a pro-shop and professional coaching.
Festivals and events	Festivals and Events have become an increasingly popular means for cities to boost tourism. They range in size and scale from one time events like the World Exhibition or the Olympics to annual events like Folk Music Festivals or Gallery Nights. Spectacles like that are important, however, their impact upon the city's tourist industry depends on the attendance, and the type and number of outside visitors.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Royal Film Commission of Jordan aims to contribute to the development of an internationally competitive Jordanian audio-visual production industry, partly by developing and cultivating film culture, and by encouraging Jordanians to use film and audio-visual media to tell their stories, voice their opinions and express their ideas. 2. The Commission also provides opportunities for audiences to get together with filmmakers to watch independent and experimental films, open a dialogue with filmmakers, exchange ideas, and cultivate multimedia literacy.

Key element	Description	Jordanian offerings (Amman unless otherwise specified)
Retail and catering facilities	<p>Although shopping and restaurants are regarded as a secondary element of tourism, it is still an important part of the tourism economy since visitors spend a significant amount of time and money on shopping and eating. Shopping, for instance, has for some visitors become a leisure activity where they tour stores with no specific purpose in mind. For others, it is more like a sport where they go from store to store and see if there are different goods on sale at the destination compared to home. Cities that add retail stores or restaurants to their downtown or to special facilities like airports, train stations, or casinos, experience positive economic impacts that not only apply to one location, but spill over and trickle down to other areas of the city.</p>	<p>3. Amman hosts several world-class convention centers. 4. Jerash Festival is from the most well-known festival in Jordan and the region.</p> <p>1. Gourmet restaurants and world-class caterers are available in Amman. 2. A number of popular nightclubs are available that feature modern music and attract the young fashionable crowds while the more traditional establishments offer Arabic music and dance. 3. Many international restaurants also provide live entertainment. Amman has many cinemas which screen all the latest movie releases. There are also theatres and concert halls that have regular performances of stage shows, music concerts and ballets on their agenda. 4. Rainbow Street offers great shopping opportunities for those looking to score local and handmade goods, while Wakalat Street offers many brands name stores for the international shopper. Both streets are lined with cafes and restaurants ideal for a social night out.</p>

Source: Ruetsche 2006, pp. 1-2 (description); (Visit Jordan 2011) (Jordanian offerings, 2011)

3.4 Problems and Challenges of Urban Tourism in Jordan

Jordan has not been unaffected by the recent Arab Spring uprisings as the other Arab countries. Beginning in January 2011 following high-profile civil demonstrations in Tunisia and Egypt, thousands of Jordanians also engaged in demonstrations and marches; although these were confined primarily to Amman, the unrest was witnessed in other municipalities throughout Jordan as well in an effort to protest widespread corruption, inflation, poverty, and inordinately high unemployment levels [14]. In response, King Abdullah has taken steps to reshuffle his cabinet and has promised other reforms. Beyond the civil unrest taking place in the country, Jordan is also one of the smaller Middle Eastern countries and does not have adequate sources of water and other natural resources for its own domestic requirements [14]. Nevertheless, the aforementioned reforms and continuing foreign

assistance have provided Jordan with the framework it needs to overcome the significant barriers facing its economic development, but the country remains subject to external shocks such as the lingering global economic downturn [14]. In addition, the lingering effects of the ongoing wars in Afghanistan and Iraq has been felt in Jordan in recent years, and the rapid influx of refugees and returning migrant workers has strained the country's infrastructure even further, with a corresponding negative effect on tourism in Jordan [15].

Finally, despite efforts by the World Bank to develop sustainable tourism initiatives in Jordan for the past 15 years, there are some significant sociocultural systems in place that hamper this development as well [16]. In this regard, Chatelard reports that, "In the case of Wadi Rum, the location of the various stakeholders at very unequal levels in the Jordanian power structure has impeded any possibility of effective co-

management" [16]. When it comes to tourism, then, sustainability clearly means one thing to the international community and yet another to the local stakeholders who are most directly affected. As Chatelard emphasizes, "In practice, the local Bedouin community was marginalized in the decision-making and implementation processes, and its dynamic of social change, its identity and even its collective self-esteem were all negatively affected" [16]. Taken together, Jordan has faced with a broad-based array of challenges and problems in its efforts to further develop its tourism industry in general and its urban tourism sector in particular. From the challenges and problems that face urban tourism in Jordan are the following:

- Traffic congestion and pollution: the rate of automobile ownership in Amman has been increasing faster than its population growth rate. Amman today probably has no less than one motor vehicle for every seven residents. This places considerable pressure on the city's streets. Some of these streets no longer are able to accommodate the volume of vehicles passing through them and those parking along them. The number of motor vehicles will continue to increase, but the capacity of the city's streets to accommodate motor vehicles will not.
- Water Shortage
- Competitor cities
- Lack of investment in tourism infrastructure, i.e. exhibition centre
- Air connectivity and frequency to source markets
- Safety in downtown walking areas
- Regional political volatility
- Poor visitor experience
- Lack of organisation
- Poor airport facilities
- Weak facilities for families
- No one-of-a-kind attractions

And from the weaknesses in the Jordanian capital are the following:

- Short visit centre
- Lack of pedestrian areas
- Presentation – cleanness, vacant sites, parks, etc.
- Maintenance of public and private domain
- Public transportation system
- Information and signage for tourists very weak
- Museums and site presentation
- Contact with the inhabitants

- Qualified city tour guides in languages
- Night life is limited
- Public toilets and facilities

3.5 Enjoying the City of Amman is not Easy for the Following Reasons

- There are few parks, public squares, pedestrian areas and few areas of special interest for visitors to congregate in.
- The existing attractions are low quality and need to be refreshed, upgraded, diversified and linked
- It is not easy for visitors to access Amman, know where to go or get around.
- The cultural and entertainment programme is uncoordinated and not spread throughout the year or publicized sufficiently.

Conversely, though, the country has a number of opportunities available that make such efforts advantageous, and these issues are discussed further below.

3.6 Opportunities and Advantages of Urban Tourism in Jordan

The current tourism development initiatives taking place in Jordan can benefit from the larger efforts being undertaken in the Middle East. For example, a study by [12] determined that Arab countries are making increasingly large investments in the global tourism industry and many Arab governments have made concerted attempts to increase their respective shares of foreign visitors. According to Wells, "Improved product development, enhanced funding for tourism and an increase in marketing and promotion have all facilitated the task and helped to secure a good return on investment" [12]. Across the board, the Middle East has experienced a 6% - 7% increase in average numbers of tourists, and the research to date indicates that the fallout from the Arab Spring and Gulf Wars is transitory in nature and the tourism industry tends to quickly recover [12].

At present, the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) estimates that international arrivals to the region may experience significant increases over their 2006 levels to grow by almost 5% in real terms by 2016 [12]. Moreover, the revenues generated by the increased projections in travel are expected to increase over their 2006 total of \$148 billion to \$58.9 billion by 2016 [12]. According to Wells,

“Mega projects are already underway in the region or are planned for the near future and focus mainly on developing the infrastructural basis of the tourism industry. Although diversification of Middle East oil-based economies through tourism is a relatively recent phenomenon, governments in the region have gone out to secure a slice of this lucrative market” [12].

More specifically, Jordan has enjoyed significant returns on its 1994 peace treaty with Israel, with growing numbers of tourists from this country flocking to see the exotic sights of interest [10]. This trend was given additional impetus following a two-day visit by the Jordanian armed forces’ chief of staff to Israel in 1996 to collaborate on cooperative military and cultural exchanges [10]. Despite this progress and Jordan’s efforts to diversify its economy, poverty levels continue to inch upwards and experts suggest the poverty level in Jordan is probably at least 15% of the country’s population [10]. As a result, growing numbers of Israeli business men and tourists have visited Jordan and current trends indicate this will continue in the future [17]. In fact, during the first 16 months following the chief of staff’s visit to Israel, more than a dozen bilateral agreements were agreed to by Israel and Jordan, including one that authorized private bus and vehicular traffic between the two countries which further swelled the numbers of tourists arriving from Israel [17].

According to this authority, “Even before the transportation agreement went into effect, tourism in Jordan in 1995 had increased by 25 percent over that in 1994. Both sides expected significant further increases” [17].

It would appear to travel promoters and tourism developers in Jordan have three fundamental options available to them as follows:

1. Do nothing. Allow tourists to find their own way to whatever is available and trust market responses to satisfy need.
2. Promote existing resources and destinations as part of a larger urban tourism promotional initiative. This would include networks of towns and cities.

Actively build a new infrastructure of tourism-related enterprises that complements the existing resources and destinations.

The first option is unacceptable because it does tourists a disservice and fails to generate as much revenue as might otherwise be possible. The second option is likely the approach that will be taken in the short term by consortia of urban tourism-related enterprises. It is becoming increasingly clear, though, that attracting ever-growing numbers of tourist to a country requires a modern infrastructure that contains certain elements that are intended to facilitate tourism and enhance its value in the eyes of the tourists as well [18]. An increasing number of cities have recognized the substantive returns on investment that are possible through urban tourism as well as the multiplier effect on the larger society in which the tourism takes place. For instance, according to [19] urban tourism “has become a key instrument in many urban revitalisation projects, in urban waterfront development plans, in the upgrading of cultural activities (such as festivals and events), in the conservation of historical heritage and even an incentive to redesign urban shopping areas” [19]. Although the researcher [19] also emphasizes that the urban tourism market is becoming fiercely competitive as increasing numbers of major cities jump on the urban tourism bandwagon seeking to get their piece of the action. There is also a danger that developers could destroy or damage the very cultural or architectural aspects of an urban setting that made it attractive for urban tourism in the first place, making development a particularly challenging endeavor [19].

The proliferation of other urban tourism destinations in the region may diminish the effectiveness of future media campaigns for Jordan’s offerings as well [19]. The nine primary factors that have been shown to be most effective in promoting urban tourism are as follows:

1. Ambiance-Liveliness;
2. Historic-Cultural heritage;
3. Museums;
4. Tourist attractions;
5. Cultural activities;
6. Price;
7. Security;
8. Restaurants; and
9. Public transport [20].

Of these foregoing nine factors, Jordan can reasonably be said to have at least six and perhaps seven of them (i.e., historic-cultural heritage; museums; tourist attractions; cultural activities; price; restaurants and, to a certain

extent, public transport); however, deal-breakers such as security concerns and the ambience-liveliness of Jordan's limited urban destination offering may appear lacking in comparison to other high-profile destinations in the Middle East, Europe and Northern Africa. By focusing on its significant cultural and heritage resources, though, Jordan is in a good position to take advantage of this type of urban tourism in the future [10].

Another finding that emerges from the research to date is that "urban tourism cannot be regarded as an 'isolated attraction' of the city but is by definition strongly anchored in the urban morphology and the functional urban system" [20]. This means that current opportunities for urban tourism in development should focus on its cultural-heritage destinations, including those situated in nearby areas where day-trips could provide visitors with an exotic adventure during the day while returns them to Amman (or other destination) for a comfortable regrouping overnight. A major constraint to this type of tourism development remains the potential perceptions of security problems and lack of integration in international networks. In this regard, Sullivan cites Jordan's "fragile economic connections internationally because of the structures of its domestic economy, its human and natural resource bases, and its relative non-diversification of their international trade" as being particularly challenging obstacles to tourism development, but quickly adds that, "Once these frailties have been shored up these countries will be more likely to reap the benefits from the globalization whirlwind" [20]. From the opportunities and advantages for the success of urban tourism in Jordan are the following:

- Enhancement of archeological sites – particularly Roman
- Restoring and caring for the historic environment
- Islamic and Christian history together
- Expand visit portfolio and product range to extend visitor stay
- Cultural activities programme
- Mark historical pathways through the cities
- Use of water fountains
- Creation of city squares and performance spaces
- Image enhancement and brand
- Use of creative and innovative solutions
- Web marketing to selected niches

- Better use of the old name – Philadelphia Royal pageantry
- Medical tourism
- Educational tourism

4. CONCLUSION

The research showed that Jordan's strategic geographic location in the Middle East makes it especially attractive for urban tourists seeking a destination that is exotic but geographically nearby. The research also showed that the foundation for a modern travel and tourism industry has been established in Jordan and the country has been enjoying increasing numbers of visitors in recent years. The country has a number of attributes that will likely contribute to the continuing growth of its urban tourism sector, including an enormous array of cultural-heritage destinations, a well developed transportation infrastructure and a hospitality sector that can accommodate budget-minded tourists as well as the needs of the most discriminating affluent travelers. The current efforts to reform the country's bureaucracy will ultimately have an effect on the country's desirability as a tourism destination in the short term, but assuming less than an entire sea-change in political direction, it is reasonable to conclude that Jordan is on the right path to further urban tourism success in the future. At last the following are some suggestions if Amman is to become a true destination city it will require:

- A programme spread over many years that are designed to improve its capabilities in urban tourism and to differentiate itself from competitor destinations.
- Competitive air access frequency to a greater diversity of source markets.
- The planning of urbanisation in Amman to be in conjunction with the protection of the precious fertile lands around the city
- Amman needs a hub area to assist its organisation and access for visitors. This area would provide information, facilities, services, interpretation and would be the hub for coach tours and FIT visitors.
- Shifting the focus from the site to the cities and its citizens. The site should support the community.
- We need to involve local communities and cities, in order to support sites, so sites don't feel isolated
- Tourism is working with sites only (monuments) there is a real separation between the living cities and the sites.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

REFERENCES

1. Rami, Farouk, Daher. Urban rehabilitation in the midst of agencies, actors and activists. Regional Conference Civil Society and Cultural Heritage in the Mediterranean, Palermo; 2010.
2. Tallen AR, Bromley RDF, Thomas CJ. City profile: Swansea, Cities. 2005;22(1):65-76.
3. Hayllar B, Griffin T, Edwards D. City spaces - tourist places: Urban tourism precincts. New York: Butterworth-Heinemann; 2008.
4. Hall CM, Page SJ. The geography of tourism and recreation: Environment, place and space. London: Routledge; 2002.
5. Jansen-Verbeke M. Inner-city tourism: Resources, tourists and promoters. Annals of Tourism Research. 1986;2002:13(1): 79-100.
6. Alcaraz C, Hume M, Mort GA. Creating sustainable practice in a museum context: Adopting service-centricity in non-profit museums. Australasian Marketing Journal. 2009;17(4):219-222.
7. Ruetsche J. Urban tourism: What attracts visitors to cities? Let's Talk Business. 2006;117:1-2.
8. Gregory Ashworth, Stephen J. Page. Urban tourism research: Recent progress and current paradoxes. Journal of Tourism Management. 2011;32(2011):1-15.
9. Medlik S. Dictionary of travel, tourism and hospitality. Routledge; 3rd edition; 2003.
10. Sullivan P. Globalization: Trade and investment in Egypt. Jordan and Syria since 1980. Arab Studies Quarterly. 1999; 21(3):35.
11. Al-Akra M, Eddie IA, Ali MJ. The association between privatisation and voluntary disclosure: Evidence from Jordan. Accounting and Business Research. 2010;40(1):55-57.
12. Wells R. The Arabian dream becomes reality: As Dubai gears up to welcome delegates to the 13th Arab travel market, one of the major events in the travel and tourism industry calendar, Rhona wells looks at some of the latest regional developments-the futuristic projects, the multibillion dollar investments and the prospects for the region's continued success as an international tourist destination. The Middle East. 2007;378: 42-44.
13. Media and communications. Embassy of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan; 2011. Available:<http://www.jordanembassyus.org/new/jib/factsheets/traveltourism.shtml>
14. Jordan. 2011 CIA World Factbook. Available:<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/jo.html>
15. Tian GG, Zeitun R. Capital structure and corporate performance: Evidence from Jordan. Australasian Accounting Business & Finance Journal. 2007;1(4):16-17.
16. Chatelard G. Conflicts of interest over the Wadi rum reserve: Were they avoidable? A socio-political critique. Nomadic Peoples. 2003;7(1):138-139.
17. Freedman RO. The Middle East and the peace process: The impact of the Oslo Accords. Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida; 1998.
18. Law CM. Urban tourism: Attracting visitors to large cities (Tourism, Leisure, and Recreation). London: Mansell; 1994.
19. Jafari J. Encyclopedia of tourism. London: Routledge; 2000.
20. Pearce DG, Butler RW. Contemporary issues in tourism development. London: Routledge; 1999.

© 2016 Bader et al.; This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

Peer-review history:
The peer review history for this paper can be accessed here:
<http://sciencedomain.org/review-history/13586>