

IS TOURISM A GENE SECTOR TO JORDAN'S GDP?

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ABSTRACT: *Tourism in Jordan is a service industry with multiple outcomes. However, at present, it has not been fully utilized and developed to generate the expected income for Jordan's GDP. Researchers have examined Jordan's tourism and identified its economical outcomes and methods of enhancement. This study is intended to investigate the contribution of tourism on Jordan's GDP. To approach the aim of the study, data used in the empirical analysis was collected from the Ministry of Tourism for the period 2006 -2014. Statistical techniques used were: means, variances, covariance, and standard deviations. Research results indicated positive and significant contribution of Jordanian Tourism Sectors on GDP.*

KEYWORDS: Tourism, GDP, Service Industry, Income, Outcome

INTRODUCTION

Tourism represents one of the most important economic sectors effecting the development of most world societies. Tourism is perceived as a very important mean of economic development both in developing and developed countries worldwide. In common thought tourism is usually perceived as an activity of leisure and fun, but the facts speak of billions of dollars in tourism business around the world. Having this in mind, tourism is seriously analyzed by scientists, researchers, policy makers, national and local governments etc (AZIRI, B and NEDELEA, A, 2013). Statistical figures reveal that tourism is one of the biggest and most important sectors of the world economy. The world tourism organization expects the number of tourists to grow to 935 million people in 2010. Statistics reveal that tourism accounts for 15% of global GDP, 7% of global investment, and almost 9.6% of total government expenditure. The sector has created 200 million jobs worldwide, representing 11% of the total global workforce (Jordan Tourism Board, 2010). Tourism development is increasingly viewed as an important tool in promoting economic growth, alleviating poverty, and advancing food security. Tourism has been growing all around the world forming a major source of income and employment to many world countries. Tourism businesses have many potential benefits for local development including: comparatively labor intensive, high opportunities for women, low barriers to entry, varied jobs, available in areas with low agricultural potential. In this regard, it is worth to note that tourism forms one of World's most important Income sectors. (Andrea Štefan, 2014).

This research is based on basic need to advance the tourism sector of Jordan; and that the lack of studies on the overall assessment of public policies in the tourism sector. From this perspective, the importance of this research is an attempt to investigate the importance of the tourism sector as a major Gene to Jordan's GDP.

LITERATURE

What is Tourism?

Tourism is mainly travel for recreation, leisure, religious, family or business purposes, it is usually for a limited duration. Tourism is commonly associated with international travel, but may also refer to travel to another place within the same country. The World Tourism Organization defines tourists as people "traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes (UNWTO technical manual, 2009). Tourism has become a popular global leisure activity. Tourism can be domestic or international; international tourism has both incoming and outgoing implications on a country's balance of payments. Today, tourism is a major source of income for many countries, and affects the economy of both the home and host countries, in some cases being of vital importance. Tourism touted as the future industry, which is one of the three most important industries constitute the driving force of the economics of services in the twenty first century, these three industries are: the telecommunications, and the information technology, and tourism. The tourism industry is being the most unique, the fastest growth, and the highest developed of these industries.

Tourism Economic Impact

GDP generated by tourism is the most comprehensive aggregate illustrating the economic relevance of tourism. There is an increasing consensus on the importance of tourism as a strategic sector in the national economy insofar as it provides an essential contribution to the economic well-being of the country's resident population. It contributes to the economic objectives of governments and shows its possible role as a basic relevant player in moving towards a more innovative economy. Tourism comprises the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and purposes other than being employed in the place visited. This activity of visitors refers both to non-residents, residents travelling in the country of residence and abroad for tourism purposes (leisure and others) and it is conceptualized as inbound, domestic and outbound tourism, respectively (Juan Falconi, (2003).

Many studies including United Nations World Travel Organization (UNWTO) have shown that tourism can play a significant role towards balanced and sustainable development, also it can be effectively harnessed to generate real benefits for the poor. The potential of the tourism sector as a development tool to positively contribute to economic growth and poverty reduction emanates from the following characteristics:

- (i) Tourism industry represents an opportunity for economic diversification,
- (ii) It is the only export sector where the consumers travel to the exporting country thus providing opportunities for the poor to become exporters through the sale of goods and services to foreign tourists,
- (iii) This sector is labor-intensive and supports a diverse and versatile labor market;
- (iv) It provides numerous indirect benefits for the poor.

World Travel and Tourist Council (WTTC) has investigated the economic impact of tourism and related travels for a 20 years period in order to assess and quantify the value the contribution of Tourism to both GDP and employment. Reports and forecasts of the tourism

impact was conducted on 184 countries and 24 geographic and economic regions in the world. 10-year forecasts have provided a fruitful understanding of the Tourism's future growth, economic impact and social influence. These study reports were vital tools in helping to equip public and private sectors with solid evidence of the huge value which Tourism brings to the economy, so that their policy-making and investment decisions support this sector. WTTC's and Oxford Economics latest annual research reports, showed that the Tourism's contribution to world GDP grew for the fourth consecutive year in 2013, rising to a total of 9.5% of world GDP (US\$7 trillion). Around 4.7 million new jobs were created worldwide as a result of Travel & Tourism activity in 2014, meaning that this sector supports nearly 266 million people in employment, or 1 out of 11 jobs on the planet. 2014 looks equally promising. Tourism GDP is set to grow by 4.3%. Much of this growth is being driven by high consumer spending as the recovery from the global recession gains momentum. It is expected that about 6.5 million new jobs are expected to be generated by this sector. Travel & Tourism forecasts over the next ten years also look extremely favorable with predicted growth rates of 4% annually. This rate is not only outpacing the wider economy but it will continue to be equally, or probably higher than the growth in other industry sectors such as financial services and manufacturing. It goes without saying that these facts and figures provide indisputable proof of the tourism sector's capacity to create economic prosperity (Travel & Tourism Economic Impact, 2014).

Tourism in Jordan

"Through tourism, we're able to open people's eyes to what a magnificent land and nation we have here, and the tremendous surprises and treasures that Jordan holds."(H.M. King Abdullah II).

Jordan is a developing country with huge, untapped potential as a tourist destination. It is a young country in terms of its tourism sector (Atlas Investment Group,2001), yet it is full of historical archaeological sites dating back to 1,500,000 BC, reflecting both Arab and Islamic architectural influences (Ulama, 2000).Tourism in Jordan is a service industry with enormous potential. It has become a prime component of Jordan's economy. Recently the tourism sector has shown a remarkable growth in terms of revenues, rising by 9% in the first quarter of 2010. The tourism sector in Jordan acts as the driver of sustainable economic development and is considered the second fastest growing economic sector in the kingdom and being the largest export sector and is forming a major employer. In the recent years, Jordan has witnessed several touristic development projects mainly in Aqaba and Dead Sea resorts, which have advocated in marketing Jordan as a tourist destination and has raised its competitiveness within the region and worldwide. In the recent Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report, produced by the World Economic Forum, Jordan was ranked in position 53 out of 130 countries on the Travel and Tourism Competitive Index (Jordan Tourism Board,2010). Jordan is a melting pot of ancient civilizations compiled and layered with multi historical civilizations and relics from the past. Jordan is located in a unique geographical area where three continents merge and the Great Rift Valley begins, producing diverse landscapes that change within a few hours' drive. Touristic resources in Jordan are so diverse of being located within a confined area were resources are classified into various categories:

- 1- Natural Resources: areas of significant land/sea scopes, these include: Aqaba, Wadi Rum and many other natural reserves spreading in many regions.
- 2- Cultural Resources: these include archaeological/historical sites.
- 3- Cultural products: these include shopping, galleries, events, and handcrafts.

- 4- **Therapeutic Resources:** these are composed of the Dead Sea and some locations where waterfall and hot springs are found, private hospitals and other medical centers (Jordan: Managing medical tourism, report, 2012).

Tourism in Jordan attracts tourists from around the world and is well known of its diverse tourist sites and activities. Jordan is a rich destination with a wide range of tourist attractions. Jordan has a developed tourism infrastructure with a plethora of luxury hotels and resorts, advanced transport infrastructure, a wide range of activities and cultural events, spas and numerous tour operators operating in the country. The capacity of Jordan's tourism sectors have significantly improved and expanded through working closely with a number of key tourism education centers to update facilities, upgrade programs, improve training and skills of trainers, and enhance marketing strategies to attract more tourists. The tourism and hospitality Vocational Training Centers around Jordan have been fully upgraded and have seen dramatic increases in student numbers as well as a change in the attitude and eagerness of youth towards entering careers in tourism (Jordan Inbound Tour Operators Association (JITOA), 2014).

Jordan's main types of tourisms

Culture Tourism: There are thousands of historical and archaeological sites in Jordan. The most important cities are Petra, Jerash, Karak Castle, Rabd, Umm Qais and the Roman amphitheater. Pop-culture tourism is also evident in Jordan because many western films have been filmed in Jordan.

Religious Tourism: Jordan is a modern country with an ancient culture, a land of which visitors can walk through the valleys, hills and plains whose names have become part of human history by virtue of the simple deeds and profound messages of prophets who walked the land and crossed its rivers during their lives. Pilgrimages are growing in Jordan. Mount Nebo and the Mosaic Map in Madaba are popular to Christian tourists. The Jordan River and the Dead Sea are also very popular. The numerous medieval mosques and churches are popular destinations for pilgrims.

The site of John the Baptist's settlement at Bethany beyond the Jordan River, where Jesus was baptized; it has long been known from the Bible (John 1:28 and 10:40) and from the Byzantine and medieval texts. The site has now been identified on the east bank the river of Jordan, and is being systematically surveyed, excavated, restored, and prepared to receive pilgrims and visitors. Bethany Beyond the Jordan River is located half an hour by car from the Jordanian capital Amman. The Bethany area sites formed part of the early Christian pilgrimage route between Jerusalem, the river of Jordan, and Mount Nebo. This area is also associated with the biblical account of how the Prophet Elijah (Mar Elias in Arabic) ascended to heaven in a whirlwind on a chariot of fire (Religious Attractions from Jordan, 2014).

Health tourism: it is becoming very popular in Jordan. Many of the recipients of Jordanian hospitals are Palestinian and Iraqi refugees. Syrians, Yemenis, and South East Asians working in Jordan are also common visitors. Leisure tourism in the Dead Sea area offer world-class spas to visitors. Therapeutic tourism is an increasingly important sector of the Jordanian tourism industry. Earning approximately \$1bn in revenues in 2010 and contributing 4% of GDP, the medical tourism sector is a vital contributor to Jordan's economy.

According to the World Bank ranked Jordan as the Middle East and North Africa's top health tourism destination. In 2010 it ranked the country as the fifth in the world as a medical tourism destination. In 2010 Jordan received about 200,000 health tourists, 90% of whom came from

the MENA region. However, due to the uncertainty generated by the so-called Arab Spring, in 2011 this number fell to roughly 180,000 (Jordan Tourism Development Project, U.S. Aid, 2008).

Education Tourism: Jordan is a leader among Arab countries in educational spending as a percentage of GDP. Jordan's ten public universities, 18 private universities including European and American universities, 52 community colleges, and 50 vocational training centers house more than 140,000 students from around the globe and the Arab world, with the numbers of foreign students growing at a rate of 9% per annum. Education tourism is becoming very popular in Jordan. Jordan's excellent education programs are in favorite for westerners studying Arabic in the Middle East. Government and private universities together are working with international IT initiatives, and are investing considerable resources in primary and secondary education programs, elevating the ICT know-how of Jordanian graduates (Wikipedia).

It is worth to show that Travel & Tourism forecasts over the next ten years look favorable, Predicted growth rates are expected to be over 4% annually which shows higher growth rates than other sectors. To capitalize on the opportunities for Travel & Tourism growth requires favorable business climates for investment in the infrastructure and human resource support necessary to facilitate a successful and sustainable tourism sector. The governments can also do much to implement more open visa regimes and employ intelligent rather taxation policies. If the right steps are taken, Travel & Tourism can be a true GDP contributor (Scowsill , D, 2014).

Jordan's National Tourism Strategies

These strategies aimed to help increase tourism receipts, extend the length of stay of tourists, and increase tourism-related financial activities to expand contribution resources to Jordan's treasury from tourism:

- The 2004-2010 National Tourism Strategy (NTS): It was the first comprehensive strategy developed in partnership between the public and private sector tourism stakeholders to coordinate and steer the development of tourism. The launch of this strategy enabled Jordan to strengthen its reputation as a touristic destination of choice for both visitors and investors. Objectives stated by Jordan's National Tourism Strategy 2004-2010, were outlined as:
 - To increase tourism income from JD570 million in 2003 to US\$ 1.84billion.
 - To increase tourism-supported jobs from 40,791 in 2003 to 91,719, thus creating over 51,000 new jobs.
 - To achieve a tax yield to the government of more than US\$637million.
- The National Tourism Strategy (NTS) 2011-2015: It is built upon the significant achievements made since the launch of the original strategy (2004-2010), during which Jordan firmly strengthened its reputation as a touristic destination of choice for both visitors and investors. Managing this success into the future now poses new challenges for all stakeholders in the industry in terms of sustaining momentum and progress, positioning Jordan as a high quality destination and raising industry competitiveness to the level required to underpin long-term sustainable growth.
- The 2011-2015 NTS retains the four-pillar framework on which NTS 2004-2010 was based:
 - Pillar 1 – Marketing and Promotion
 - Pillar 2 – Product Development

- Pillar 3 – Labor Market Development
- Pillar 4 – Enabling Environment (9).

Obstacles to investment in the Jordanian tourism sector

Tourism investment sector in Jordan is facing a number of obstacles and challenges on top is the lack of appropriate laws and regulations and investment legislations, the lack of clarity of procedures and regulations relating to land viable tourism, overlapping a large number of government institutions to issue tourist facilities licenses, and the scarcity of specialized in tourist facilities management on a global level companies , and the lack of tourism awareness among businessmen in Jordan, which intends to attract funds, which negatively affect the tourism investment, and not to activate the tourism investment systems properly reflected negatively on the national economy, and lack of enjoyment of investors in the tourism sector with some facilities obtained by investors in other sectors such as exemptions and reduced customs tariff for the consumption of electricity and water, and the lack of comprehensive information and studies of the economic feasibility of the sites viable tourism, and the length of the procedures for obtaining visas for businessmen in some Arab countries. It has not received the tourism sector in Jordan Balteseerat and support Kmthilath of other industrial and agricultural sectors, and there is no flexibility in the regulatory procedures in the travel outlets and return at airports, ports and border posts, which should be more flexible and easier, especially for investors and arrivals for the purpose of tourism, not to mention the lack of infrastructure provides a to establish a good investment, which could raise the construction and operation of these investments costs and thus higher overall costs and lower net profit compared with other countries (Samardali-Kakai ,L ,2013).

Previous Studies

Dritsakis and Athanasiadis tried to identify how the tourism sector revenues are used by any government to finance its obligations. Researchers have indicated that both developed as well as developing countries try to finance their current exchange flow and their needs from the tourism sector. Also it is worth to add that tourism provides employment opportunities to country citizens creates cultural interaction between tourists and locals (Dritsakis and Athanasiadis, 2000).

Dritsakis argued that the development of the tourism sector is a major factor of economic growth in almost all countries. By using tourism sources effectively, this achievements turns the tourism sector to be a major source of the county's GDP. Hence, once the potentials of the country tourism increases, Thus governments should increase their investments in this industry.because tourism has roles both on economic growth and on social welfare improvement. (Dritsakis ,2004).

Kim et al argued how tourist spending contributes to the country's balance of payments. They proposed that tourist spending is an alternative of exports which contributes to the balance of payments via foreign exchange cash inflows and proceeds. Tourism expansion can create a significant growth in the national economy (.Kim et al, 2006).

Lee and Chang argued that there is a positive effect of improved tourism on overall economic growth. They proposed that improvement of tourism ensures overall economic growth. Developed tourism industry raises movement among countries (Lee and Chang 2008).

Linda Samardali-Kakai examined the current Jordan's tourism environment to identify obstacles that hinder its enhancement. Her study investigated both domestic and international tourism in Jordan and aimed to explore the significance of the obstacles to tourism development in Jordan and to give appropriate recommendations to resolve these obstacles identified (Linda Samardali-Kakai).

Saleh et al aimed to investigate the long-term and short-term relationships between the actual number of tourists coming versus the demand for tourism in Malaysia; and between each of the tourist price by the cost of living in Malaysia to the cost of living in a sample of tourist countries. The study found an inverse relationship between the demand for tourism in Malaysia and the tourist price in most of the sample countries, and the existence of an inverse relationship between and among travel to Malaysia costs of tourism demand in most of the sample countries, while I found a positive relationship between the demand for tourism in Malaysia and the alternative price in Most of the study sample countries, and the existence of a positive relationship between income and the demand for tourism in the countries of tourist arrivals to Malaysia. As for the impact of the exchange rate, the study did not find any effect on his demand for tourism in Malaysia and that in the long-term period (Salleh, N, Siong-Hook,L , Ramachandran S, and Shuib,A. 2008).

Bzazaw,I addressed the economic and social importance of Jordan's tourism sector and the review of the pivotal role of the tourism sector in Jordan's economy, and to identify the most important missed opportunities in the tourism sector during the first decade of this century , with a clear reference to a number of international reports issued by the interested international tourism organizations. This has led to the development of a general perception of the reality of Jordan tourism, that contributed to address the most important problems facing them. The study was based on several grounds which highlight the need for such research to advocate the advancement of the tourism sector of Jordan. The lack of studies on the overall assessment of public policies in the tourism sector, with a clear reference to the executive programs for sustainable development to create a progressive Jordanian tourist product. From this perspective, the importance of this research is simply an attempt to invest all the natural and human tourism potentials that have been endowed by God to Jordan to catch the developed countries, and take their share of the evolution of the global tourism market (Ibrahim Bzazaw, 2012).

In her study Zainab aimed to present and analyze, then assess the impact of tourist activity in economic growth in Egypt in light of the growing importance of the contribution of the tourism sector to GDP as an indicator of economic growth. The time period of the study extends from 1983 to 2009. Researcher has used the descriptive and analytical approach based on quantitative measurement, to study the impact of tourism activity in some economic variables such as: GDP, trade balance, and the size of employment. Researcher intended to assess the impact of tourism activity through tourism revenue represented by the GDP growth, and that in the existence of some macro economic variables to formulate the hypothesis which proposes the existence of a positive impact of tourist activity on the economic growth(Zainab Tawfiq Aliyu, 2013).

Al Darweesh,H and Malawi,A study aimed to test the factors affecting the tourism income in Jordan during the period (1975-2005).Researchers studied five variables (tourism income, the number of tourists, tourism expenditure, the real exchange rate of the Jordanian dinar against the US dollar, the rate of inflation, to find out whether these variables are stable over time. Test

results showed that all the variables were at stable levels, showing that the findings were consistent with the hypotheses of the study (Al Darweesh, H and Malawi, A, 2010).

METHODOLOGY AND TESTS

Test data was collected from the Ministry of Tourism for the period 2006 -2013. Statistical techniques used were: statistical means, variances, covariance, and standard deviation.

Table (1): Jordan's GDP , Tourism Revenues For The Period : 2006-2014

Year	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Tourism R	1.64	1.638	2.089	2.067	2.55	2.432	2.884	2.212	2.408
%change	---	-0.12%	27.50%	-1%	23.37%	-4.67%	18.60%	-23.3%	8.90%
GDP	12.6	15.06	17.11	21.97	23.82	26.43	28.84	31.02	33.68
%change	---	19.60%	13.60%	28.40%	8.40%	11%	9.10%	7.60%	8.60%
%Tour./GDP	13.1%.2	10.9	12.20%	9.40%	10.7	9.2	10	7.1	7.1
%change	---	-2.20%	1%	-2.80%	1%	-1.50%	0.80%	-2.90%	0.00%

Table (1) shows the annual GDPs as well as the Tourism Revenues. It is worth to indicate that both GDP has a steady annual growth , while Tourism Income is fluctuating and does not have a steady growth; and according to the researchers opinion that tourism income concentrates on foreign tourism and it will be subject to regional and international effects.

Table 2

Results:	Tourism	GDP	TOU./GDP	Tou/GDP
Average	2.213333	23.39222	6.902	
St.Dev.	0.410098	7.335681	4.434973	
Covar.	X	X	X	0.429525

Also it clear from table (2) data that the standard deviation of GDP is lower than that of tourism which indicates that GDP income is growing steadily while tourism income is not that steady. Jordan's GDP depends mainly on donations from Arab Gulf countries as well as American and International Monetary Fund loans.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

This research is directed towards improving, monitoring, sustaining and increasing the quality and quantity of tourism resources, especially the environmental and historical , also encouraging more medical and educational tourism in a bid to modify a better distribution of economic sources of Jordan's GDP. The effectiveness of direct foreign investment tourism as a driving force for tourism development in Jordan depends on two factors, namely:

1. The effect of direct tourism investments versus tourism development that rely on internal tourism resources in Jordan.
2. Political and commercial feasibility of integrating sustainability criteria in the decision relating to direct tourist investments process.

Recommendations

The actions to be taken to increase the contribution of the tourism sector to Jordan's GDP :

1. Preparation of new policies and strategies to adopt global standards for the global competitiveness index and enhance the legal and regulatory environment to support the tourism sector.
2. Modernization and development of the current tourism law to be in harmony with global developments in modern tourism industry.
3. Develop and improve the tourist transport sector by loosening the regulations applicable to allow the tourism transportation system to work within the tourist sites and to be equipped with the latest technological equipment in the sector as well as to meet the needs of tourists from target markets.
4. Develop a competitive tourist tax system and visa fees as compared with other world competitive tourist agencies.
5. Modernize and develop the licensing and regulations of the tourism sector, including the requirements of emerging companies standards, and obstacles to the establishment and implementation of the business and the costs imposed on the tourism business.
6. Granting an excellence award in tourism business based on international standards to promote best practices and management methods in the tourist organizations.
7. Consultation with representatives of the tourism sector in order to determine the work that occupies priority to support the tourism needs.
8. Having an organization or institution to follow up issues and problems of tourism investment and remove all obstacles and complexities faced by investors in this vital sector.
9. Involvement of local communities in the tourism development process and consider them as strategic and active partners through highlighting their activities , cultures , heritage, and creative ideas.
10. Establish Jordanian joint tourism development companies, and encourage their coordination with financial institutions to finance tourism projects. Also should set up a data base of tourism viable sites and tourism investment companies.
11. Drawing an investment map and clear sites and areas of tourism investment and prepare economic feasibility of investment opportunities available to establish joint tourism projects, and focus on the establishment of an international conference to present tourism investment opportunities in Jordan.

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