

The Role of Algerian Museums in Promoting Cultural Tourism: Opportunities and Challenges

Dr. Neghli Ibrahim ¹

¹: University of Hassiba Ben Bouali Chlef, Algeria, I.neghli@univ-chlef.dz

Abstract:

The tourism sector in many countries of the world represents great importance because of its effective role in the process of economic development and also in social and cultural advancement. Despite this paramount importance, this sector has not yet reached the required level in Algeria, which has many areas with tourist resources. Considerable natural, cultural, and archaeological museums, including museums that could attract a huge number of tourists in the future, whether local or foreign, because of their potential and capabilities in this field. However, the severe lack of infrastructure and superstructure prevents the development of this sector, and therefore requires a rational policy. And financial and human capabilities to encourage museum tourism.

Keywords:

Museums, tourism, importance.

Introduction

A museum is far more than just a place where artifacts and artworks are exhibited; it is a cultural and educational institution that safeguards humanity's history and its tangible and intangible heritage. Through its collections, visitors can immerse themselves in the depths of the past, reviving the stories, achievements, and civilizational shifts of those who lived before. As such, the museum plays a vital role in transmitting knowledge, shaping cultural identity, and fostering a strong sense of national belonging.

The idea of museums traces back to ancient times, when kings and rulers preserved rare and valuable possessions. Over time, however, the museum has evolved into an open space for all, blending exhibition, education, and entertainment. Today, museums go beyond merely safeguarding heritage; they aim to interpret it and present it in innovative ways that captivate diverse audiences across different ages and cultures. Furthermore, museums vary according to their purposes and collections, encompassing historical, archaeological, scientific, natural, and artistic museums, each with its own educational mission. Educational museums, in particular, offer interactive spaces that allow visitors, especially children, to acquire knowledge in a fun and engaging way.

This study aims to explore museums and their role in the tourism industry, as well as their impact as a tool for promoting tourism culture. Based on this, the following research question is posed: What is the role of museums in the tourism industry, and what are the key steps that should be taken to achieve this objective?

Corresponding Author e-mail: I.neghli@univ-chlef.dz

How to cite this article: Dr. Neghli Ibrahim 1. The Role of Algerian Museums in Promoting Cultural Tourism: Opportunities and Challenges. Pegem Journal of Education and Instruction, Vol. 15, No. 4, 2025, 482-491

Source of support: Nil **Conflicts**

of Interest: None. **DOI:**
10.47750/pegegog.15.04.37

Received: 23.02.2025

Accepted: 24.03.2025

Published: 10.05.2025

1. The Concept of the Museum

The word "museum" is derived from "mut-haf" (متحف), which comes from "tuhfa" (تحفة), meaning a rare or precious item, whether a type of fruit, a flower, or a gift of kindness and delicacy. "Tuhfa" with an open "h" (تحفة), pluralized as "tuhaf" (تحف), refers to something given as a precious offering. Al-Azhari stated, "The root of the word 'tuhfa' is 'hafa' (حفة)" (Ibn Manzur, M, 1999, p. 20)

In linguistic terms, a museum refers to a place where artistic and archaeological artifacts are housed. The verb "at-hafa" (أتحف) means "to gift" or "to present something valuable." It has also been said that the root meaning of "tuhfa" implies closeness and intimacy, and the plural of "museum" (متحف) is "matahif" (متاحف) (Al-Bustani, 1956, p. 171).

Moreover, the term "museum" in its linguistic origin traces back to the Greek word *Museion*, which referred to a place dedicated to the arts, sciences, and temples of the gods. Over time, it evolved to take on its modern meaning as an institution that preserves tangible and intangible heritage.

A museum is defined as a permanent, non-profit institution (Al-Awami, 1984). It serves the community and contributes to its development. It is open to the public and is dedicated to the collection, preservation, maintenance, and exhibition of artifacts with cultural, historical, scientific, or artistic significance (Al-Awami, 1984, p. 7). Today, museums are regarded as among the most vital cultural and educational institutions in modern societies, playing an essential role in safeguarding human heritage and passing it on to future generations.

2. The Importance of Museums

Museums play a vital and multifaceted role in society, highlighted through the following points:

- They function as scientific and cultural institutions, serving as rich and diverse sources of knowledge.
- They effectively transmit information to visitors, both young and old, in a short time and through simple yet impactful methods.
- They cultivate important skills in younger generations, such as keen observation, logical reasoning, and an appreciation for beauty.
- They enhance visitors' understanding of their environment and heritage, while deepening their appreciation for their nation's artistic, historical, and civilizational achievements.
- They contribute significantly to the advancement of education, providing researchers and scholars with invaluable resources and information essential for academic inquiry.
- From both media and tourism perspectives, museums serve as prominent representations of a nation, offering visitors a clear and vivid portrayal of its cultural landmarks, thereby fostering tourism and supporting the national economy.
- Museums present their collections in ways that promote enjoyment, encourage study, and ensure preservation.

3. Types of Museums

Museums have diversified significantly in terms of the kind of exhibits they contain and the methods of exhibition employed for these collections. Certain museums may concentrate on exhibiting a singular category of artefact, whereas others may provide a diverse array. This primarily hinges on the museum's dimensions and its ability to house various collections.

3.1. Art Museum (Hamlaoui, 1990)

An art museum is a cultural institution committed to exhibiting artworks, such as paintings, sculptures, architectural designs, contemporary visual arts, and other creations that embody diverse artistic forms. The principal objective of an art museum is to conserve and catalogue art from all periods while presenting it to visitors in a manner that provides a profound experience and comprehensive comprehension of artistic creations.

An art museum functions as an educational and inspirational venue, allowing visitors to investigate the history of art together with the development of its techniques and styles. The displays in an art museum are markedly diverse, encompassing classical works such as oil paintings and contemporary forms including abstract and digital art. Moreover, they illustrate the evolution of significant artistic movements and exhibit the creations of notable artists. Furthermore, art at museums is generally organised by distinct historical periods or artistic movements to demonstrate the artistic evolutions that have impacted society and culture. Certain sections of art museums are allocated to specific artists, exhibiting a diverse array of their works in conjunction with the historical context of their lives.

3.2. Historical Museums

A historical museum is a museum that exhibits important historical artefacts and events to document and analyse the evolution of civilisations and nations across time. This museum type emphasises the exhibition of the history of a specific country, region, or significant historical event. The collections frequently comprise documents, vintage photographs, traditional attire, implements, weaponry, and various artefacts that illustrate the life of individuals during particular epochs. Additionally, historical museums provide visitors with the opportunity to comprehend the progression of societies and cultures and their influence on the world over history. Exhibits are generally arranged in chronological order, enabling viewers to progressively trace the course of events. Furthermore, historical museums are crucial in safeguarding the collective memory of nations and in educating newer generations about their ancestral history. Contemporary technologies, like interactive screens and audiovisual displays, are being utilised to convey information in an interesting and accessible manner.

3.3. Scientific Museums

A scientific museum is a museum designed to exhibit scientific information and breakthroughs in an instructive, interactive, and engaging manner. It functions as a venue where scientific discoveries, technological advancements, and natural occurrences are presented in an accessible manner for visitors' comprehension. These museums generally showcase interactive displays that elucidate intricate scientific principles in disciplines such as physics, chemistry, astronomy, biology, and medicine. Scientific museums frequently serve as educational resources for children and adolescents, presenting scientific subjects in engaging manners that captivate their interest and provoke their curiosity. They provide models and practical experiments to elucidate scientific processes, including chemical reactions. The principal objective of scientific museums is to foster innovation and creativity in visitors through active participation in practical activities and scientific experiments.

3.4. Natural Museums

A natural history museum is a museum dedicated to exhibiting collections pertaining to the natural world, encompassing living animals, fossils, geology, botany, and anthropology. The primary objective is to catalogue Earth's biodiversity and to deepen the comprehension of life's evolutionary processes by exhibiting specimens that exemplify diverse forms of

organisms and natural occurrences. Furthermore, natural history museums showcase a diverse array of exhibits, including dinosaur fossils, replicas of extinct species, specimens of rocks and minerals, along with flora (Qaddous, 2008, p. 55).

3.5. Archaeological Museums

An archaeological museum specialises in the collection, preservation, and exhibition of artefacts from ancient civilisations. This museum specialises in artefacts uncovered during archaeological digs at historical locations. The collections generally comprise statues, ceramics, antique weaponry, domestic implements, inscriptions, coins, and jewellery. The primary objective of an archaeological museum is to chronicle human history via the physical artefacts preserved by ancient civilisations. Furthermore, it functions as a significant resource for researchers and scholars aiming to comprehend societal evolution over time. Artefacts in these museums are typically categorised by historical or geographical classifications to demonstrate the progression of civilisational development. The exhibited pieces may be whole or incomplete and are frequently meticulously refurbished prior to presentation (Rifaat, 2002, p. 25).

Archaeological museums frequently depend on partnerships with both foreign and local excavation teams to get archaeological artefacts (Fatmi, 2007, p. 15). Additionally, several archaeological museums present three-dimensional replicas of old edifices or excavation sites, providing visitors with a more immersive experience. Every artefact is supported by comprehensive descriptions that elucidate its location of discovery, date, and initial purpose. Furthermore, contemporary technologies are progressively utilised in certain museums to exhibit artefacts interactively, including augmented reality.

4. The Concept of Tourism

Tourism is regarded as an endeavour as ancient as humanity. Early humans engaged in it not alone for sustenance, hydration, and safety, but also for hunting, exploration, the acquisition of knowledge, and a passion for travel. As human civilisation progressed, the notion of tourism transformed, diversifying in forms and acquiring new dimensions and objectives. Individuals begin pursuing tourism for enjoyment, leisure, and advantage. As a result, numerous nations globally focused on fostering and investing in this essential human endeavour.

The tourist industry is increasingly significant, playing a crucial role in promoting comprehensive and sustainable development in economic, social, and cultural domains. Furthermore, tourism is universally acknowledged as a major source of national revenue for numerous countries, acting as a catalyst for economic, social, and cultural development. Contemporary society increasingly prioritises tourism, recognising it as a significant source of foreign cash and a driver for the growth and success of various directly or indirectly related industries and services.

Conversely, the notion of tourism emerged in the modern age, when it became a consistent human endeavour. The International Academy of Tourism characterises tourism as leisure travel and all associated activities that fulfil the requirements of the traveler (Ayachi, 2016, p. 35).

Meanwhile, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) characterises tourism as an industry predominantly dependent on the mobility of individuals rather than the transportation of commodities. In addition, Burkart and Medlik define it as the transient relocation of individuals to locations beyond their habitual abode, accompanied by activities conducted at those sites. Furthermore, according to the German scholar Fuller, tourism is seen as a phenomenon of the modern age that emerges from the growing need for rest, relaxation, a change of environment, and the appreciation of the beauty of nature. It also

reflects the desire to experience joy and pleasure by staying in areas characterized by distinctive natural features (Salem, 2009, p. 89).

In fact, the definitions and concepts of tourism have diversified depending on the organizations and individuals concerned with this field. Nevertheless, tourism can fundamentally be described as the temporary movement of individuals from their place of residence to another location, whether within their home country or abroad, for a specific purpose.

Such purposes may include religious, educational, economic, social, cultural, athletic, political, or recreational activities.

5. Types of Tourism

Like all other economic sectors, tourism has many sub-divisions according to certain criteria set by specialists. For example, we have references (Ayachi, 2016). Each of the subdivisions is shaped by the motivating needs of participants in the activities. In this regard, the most prominent forms include recreation, culture, medicine, religion, sports, conferences and seminars, economy, etc. Activities arising from the primary idea of tourism but which became specialized later. Various branches might arise from the aforementioned categories of tourism, including scientific tourism, archaeological and historical site tourism, festival tourism, and nature tourism, sometimes referred to as ecotourism.

- The Concept of Domestic (Local) Tourism

Domestic tourism consists of movements made by nationals within the boundaries of their country. The World Tourism Organization estimates that spending on domestic tourism ranges from 70% to 80% of the overall spending on tourism globally. Other statistics suggest that the figure for domestic tourism is nine times higher than for international tourism (Hijab, 2002, p. 22).

- The Concept of International Tourism:

International tourism denotes the act of travelling and residing across country boundaries and several continents. International tourism refers to the travel of individuals to destinations beyond their country of residence. This activity encompasses both dispatching domestic tourists overseas and accommodating international visitors, with the objective of leisure, relaxation, enjoyment, or engagement in certain activities. International tourism is categorised into two types:

• Regional Tourism

In-depth analysis of regional tourism defines it as travelling undertaken by a person to neighbouring countries of their home country and which are tourist destinations. Examples include travel and stay in Arab countries, African countries, or countries along Mediterranean Basin.

• International Tourism

One key type of global travel is referred to as global tourism, which refers to the travel of people across countries, continents and regions with an intention to spend a holiday in a given place. The climate of the tourist areas (Tawfiq, 2008, p. 70) of a country determines the level of social development, economic development, political, and other factors which has an impact.

6. Importance of Tourism

For a number of nations, tourism is one of the primary sources of income. In some countries, its prominence in driving the growth of income and employment opportunities in diverse areas of the economy is unmatched. It aids in the attracting of investment in projects that are tied to tourism (Fawzi, 2007, p. 35). Furthermore, the preservation and development of

different types of tourism facilities is an important goal that must be achieved while the promotion of tourism facilitates the achievement of:

- Increasing the country's overall income by providing a source of foreign currency.
- Creating new job opportunities, thus helping to reduce the problem of unemployment that affects many regions.
- Developing and expanding tourist areas through the construction of new infrastructure, such as hotels and restaurants.
- Stimulating the local market and revitalizing traditional industries by encouraging tourists to purchase traditional and souvenir products.
- Promoting social development by breaking the isolation of certain areas through the exchange of ideas and cultures, learning about different customs and traditions across countries, and spreading cultural awareness.
- Reviving local arts, traditional crafts, and cultural activities, especially in tourist areas far from urban centers.
- Promoting the development of underprivileged and less-developed regions.
- Fostering an appreciation for the artistic and aesthetic values present in some areas, such as popular folklore, celebrations related to festivals, special occasions, and weddings, as well as reviving customs and traditions that have faded over time, thereby passing on heritage from previous generations to future ones.
- Serving as an effective tool for creating social and human integration among different regions, and even between nations.

7. The Relationship Between Museums and Tourism

The tourism sector is often regarded as a crucial industry for stimulating economic growth. The worldwide tourism market is perceived as a substantial and appealing sector, with all projections optimistic regarding its future growth. According to the World Tourism Organisation, international tourism is expanding at rates surpassing those of certain other economic sectors (Meraj, (2004, p. 29).

From this viewpoint, numerous governments globally have embraced cultural tourism, which depends on both tangible and intangible cultural assets, as a fundamental component of their tourism strategies. In recent years, the interplay between culture and tourism has transformed globally, mirroring travellers' increasing inclination towards this form of tourism to uncover and investigate the diverse cultural elements of other locations. The World Tourism Organisation believes that cultural tourism constitutes approximately 37% of the entire global tourism market, surpassing one-third of all tourism activities globally. Moreover, projections indicate that cultural tourism is expanding at a rate of roughly 15% (Kawach, 2017, p. 235) .

Natural sceneries, traditional crafts, and associated intangible cultural heritage are significant attractions for travellers; yet, museums are equally vital tourism resources. Museums are frequently considered a substantial source of income and, at times, the principal draw for visitors. This has prompted numerous countries to invest significantly in this essential resource, yielding billions in foreign currency revenues annually, as seen by nations like Germany and certain Arab countries, like Egypt, Jordan, and Tunisia.

Algeria, with historical roots dating back millennia, possesses a wealth of archaeological artefacts that encompass all historical epochs, from the prehistoric age through antiquity to the Islamic period. Algeria, endowed with diverse tourism assets and resources, has been

recognised among the ten most attractive countries globally, especially for its cultural richness. Consequently, this civilisational and cultural heritage, characterised by its notable diversity, necessitates cautious and optimal investment, guided by policies that honour the attributes of the local society (Al-Tijani, 2015).

Museums function as significant catalysts for tourism growth, particularly given Algeria's wealth of diversified history, encompassing cultural, ecological, and archaeological aspects, which positions it to compete with renowned tourist destinations. Furthermore, museum heritage constitutes an alternative to the hydrocarbons sector and is regarded as a crucial pillar for safeguarding and maintaining national identity amid globalisation. Consequently, it should be employed in accordance with concepts and foundations that facilitate the expansion of museum tourism, recognised as a primary catalyst for development, contingent upon effective management and preservation. Moreover, the significance of museums in the tourism industry is exemplified by the subsequent points:

- Historical sites, cities, and landmarks constitute the largest part of tourist attractions.
- Promoting museum heritage through foreign tourists.
- Focusing on museum heritage and reviving it by preserving, maintaining, or restoring it, in order to safeguard its essential value as a civilizational legacy, particularly through on-site museums.
- Working towards the sustainability of museums by transmitting skills and arts between generations, thus creating a link between the past and the present.

Tourism significantly impacts host towns, especially by aiding in the preservation of museum history. This entails the protection of historically significant buildings, particular structures, distinctive urban landscapes, unique architectural and planning elements, archaeological remnants, and historical artefacts. Furthermore, preservation initiatives may encompass social, economic, and cultural dimensions.

8. Steps to Follow in Developing Museum Tourism

Algerian museums are dynamic historical and cultural venues that draw both domestic and foreign tourists. These cultural institutions are distributed around the nation, conveying significant narratives about Algeria's extensive legacy and the cultural diversity that constitutes an essential aspect of its national character. Furthermore, museums significantly contribute to the national economic and social advancement, as evidenced by the subsequent points:

1. Preserving Heritage and Culture

Algerian museums function as essential institutions for the conservation of national heritage and culture. These institutions have vast collections of artefacts, artworks, and traditional items that illustrate the progression of civilisations that have inhabited Algeria throughout history. These rare and outstanding artefacts let visitors to observe the impact of art, science, and technology on both ancient and modern communities in Algeria.

2. Promoting Cultural and Educational Awareness

Museums enhance cultural and educational awareness among local inhabitants and visitors through their educational and cultural programs. These institutions provide visitors with chances to engage with and comprehend Algerian history interactively and informatively, so enhancing the understanding of both historical and contemporary contexts and promoting cultural discourse across generations.

3. Supporting the Tourism Industry:

Tourists are among the main audiences who visit museums, representing an important segment of Algeria's tourism industry. By attracting tourists, museums contribute to boosting the local economy through hotel stays, shopping, and the use of other tourism-related services.

4. Promoting National Heritage

Museums play a significant role in promoting Algeria's national heritage at the international level. Through their promotional activities, museums showcase the country's rich history and culture, thereby attracting more tourists and seekers of unique cultural experiences.

To effectively manage modernization in museums and achieve a positive impact on tourism, the following steps can be followed:

- **Awareness and Training:** Museum staff should be trained on cultural diversity and cultural sensitivity. They should have a deep understanding of issues related to museum modernization and how to address them positively.
- **Inclusive Representation:** Museums must ensure inclusive representation of different cultures in their exhibitions and displays. This can be achieved through collaboration with diverse local communities and by exploring their interests and histories.
- **Responsiveness to the Local Community:** Museums should be sensitive to the needs and concerns of the local community, accurately and positively reflecting their experiences and histories.
- **Comprehensive Interaction:** Enhancing interaction between museums and visitors from diverse cultural backgrounds, and providing platforms for dialogue and cultural exchange, fosters mutual understanding and helps reduce discrimination.
- **Modern Technologies:** Using modern technologies such as digital and virtual media can enhance representation and offer visitors an engaging and interactive experience.
- **Partnerships and Collaboration:** Cooperating with cultural institutions and international museums contributes to the exchange of experiences and best practices in the fields of cultural representation and the fight against discrimination.
- **Continuous Evaluation and Improvement:** Museums should regularly evaluate their efforts and work toward improving practices to ensure fair and inclusive representation for all.
- By following these steps, museums can play an active role in promoting cultural understanding and peaceful coexistence among different cultures, thereby achieving a positive impact on tourism and tourism promotion.

9. Suggestions

Although Algeria possesses significant tourism assets, particularly its museums in addition to its natural resources, the tourism sector remains underdeveloped. Therefore, in order to promote this sector, the following suggestions are proposed:

- The necessity of formulating a sound tourism policy aimed at advancing this sector in Algeria.
- The need to provide modern hotel infrastructure, contemporary restaurants, and tourism and entertainment facilities, since tourism resources alone are not sufficient to attract tourists.
- Utilizing various tourism promotion programs to market museums and encouraging university students and schoolchildren to visit them regularly.

- Adopting a policy of training and developing the human resources working in both the tourism and museum sectors, pushing them towards professionalism and fostering a spirit of creativity.
- The necessity of encouraging traditional industries, given their important role in supporting and promoting the tourism sector, as well as their significance as a major source of income.
- Paying close attention to the maintenance of museums, especially natural museums, and preserving archaeological sites (site museums) by fencing them, securing them, cleaning them, restoring them, and rehabilitating their important architectural landmarks.
- Installing signs at the entrances of archaeological sites (site museums) that display the site's name and a map outlining its landmarks, along with signs on architectural structures such as mosques and palaces containing the name of the landmark, its layout, and a historical overview.
- Changing the traditional perception of museums from being mere storage spaces for artifacts to recognizing them as important sources for tourism development.
- Adopting administrative policies that contribute to improving the performance of museums by providing financial resources and investing in technology to promote museums.
- Strengthening cooperation between the Ministry of Tourism, the Ministry of Information, and the Ministry of Culture to allocate programs for promoting museums internationally, which would contribute to boosting tourism in Algeria.

10. Conclusion

Through this study, we have attempted to highlight the importance of museums and their role in tourism in Algeria, considering that tourism is one of the strategic sectors on which Algeria is relying after hydrocarbons. This was done by showcasing the country's tourism assets, particularly its museum-related resources. However, tourism in Algeria remains traditional despite all the efforts made, mainly because it has not yet embraced electronic tourism services targeting tourists, such as enabling online booking. Moreover, in the absence of adequate accommodation facilities, tourism alone cannot be relied upon to generate sufficient demand. Therefore, encouraging private lodging remains, for now, the only viable means to enhance the image of tourism.

11. List of References

- Al-Awami, A. M. (1984). *Introduction to museum studies*. General Establishment for Publishing and Distribution.
- Al-Bustani, B. (1956). *Al-Qutr Al-Muheet*. [Lebanon].
- Al-Tijani, M. (2015). The archaeological heritage between scientific research foundations and means of preservation. *Journal of Archaeology*, (12).
- Ayachi, A. (2016). *Strategies for developing eco-tourism in Algeria from a sustainability perspective: The Tassili Park in Illizi Province as a model* (Master's thesis, Kasdi Merbah University).
- Fatmi, A. (2007). *The conservation environment at Ahmed Zabana Museum* (Master's thesis, University of Tlemcen).
- Fawzi, M. A. (2007). *Introduction to tourism science*. Dar Al-Fikr Al-Jamii.

The Role of Algerian Museums in Promoting Cultural Tourism:
Opportunities and Challenges

- Hamlaoui, A. (1990). *Museum studies: Series of archaeology lectures*. Institute of Archaeology.
- Hijab, M. M. (2002). *Tourism media*. Dar Al-Fajr for Publishing and Distribution.
- Ibn Manzur. (1999). *Lisan al-Arab* (Corrected by Amin Muhammad Abdul Wahhab and Muhammad Al-Sadiq Al-Obaidi). Dar Ihya' Al-Turath Al-Arabi.
- Kawach, K. (2017). The elements and indicators of civilized tourism: The potentials and tourism components in Algeria. *Journal of Studies and Research*.
- Meraj, H., & Jardat, M. S. (2004). Tourism and its impact on global economic development. *Al-Bahith Journal*, (1).
- Qaddous, E. Z. H. (2008). *Archaeology and museum studies*. [Egypt].
- Rifaat, M. M. (2002). *Introduction to the art of museums*. Egyptian-Lebanese House.
- Salem, H. T. S. (2009). Interactive originality between tourism and sustainable environment. *Iraqi Journal for Market Research and Consumer Protection*, 1(2).
- Tawfiq, M. A. (2008). *The tourism industry*. Dar Zahran.