

Innovation of New Tourism Trails and its Effect on the Ajloun Touristic Process

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Abstract: Tourism is a recent trend and one of the most important factors in recreational, leisure and business purposes that has a positive effect on the development process of any destination through its economic contribution and provisional jobs opportunities. Thus, the tourism of cultural heritage, especially in Ajloun (one of Jordanian governorates), is considered as a well-defined term to describe and improve the touristic destination in order to gain the maximum benefits from tourism industry revenues. These objectives are gained by implementing proper tourism strategies which depends on rehabilitation, reuse and innovation of new touristic trails within Ajloun Governorate; with an accompanying sureness of proper integration of all significant physical features may they be of the natural, cultural or archeological segment. The creation and development of such routes are based on a theme of cultural heritage. With intensive support from the local community, these routes will experience the improvement of Ajloun urban context, living qualities, and an increase in the duration of a tourists' stay. These factors will sustain and improve the whole tourism process.

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Introduction

Tourism is defined by go2 tourism HR society 2014 [1] as "A dynamic and competitive industry that requires the ability to adapt constantly to customers' changing needs and desires, as the customer's satisfaction, safety and enjoyment are particularly the focus of tourism businesses".

In order to that, tourism is one of the fundamental economic sectors of the world which is constantly growing. Statistical reports shows that tourism had 9% share of global GDP and employees around 3% of the total employment share around the world during 2009 according to the world tourism organization (UNWTO).[2]

The significant role of tourism can be derived from the rich legacy of specific territory; whether a cultural, natural, or an archaeological environment. In accordance to UNWTO data, the international culture tourism share is about 40% of tourist destination target in 2004.

The statistical numbers behind tourism show that the main objectives of tourism that are derived from cultural heritage, leads to an increase in the countries national income, provides job opportunities and improves the expansion process that connected to other networked developmental parties.

Some inquiries have appeared to discuss the possibility of enrichment, enlargement and improvement the status of tourism based on the content of the cultural heritage of any touristic destination. Some ideas rose to create specific scenarios and new innovative tourism trails as will be demonstrated in

Ajloun governorate. The question unfolding the hypothesis here is: Will the innovation of these new trails support the development of the tourism process?

Culture and Heritage Contents

The availability of having a legacy of cultural heritage within an urban context gives a strategic importance for such a place on local and international level. Therefore; the seeking for new landscapes or places falling under the term of cultural heritage tourism, that's referred to many authors. As Burr, Zeitlin, 2011 [3] Tourism is defined as an act of culture that concentrates on visiting historical places even living its culture. Also, Tylor, 1871.pg. 491, [4] stated: "culture that complex whole which includes knowledge, believe, art, moral, law , costume and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society"

There are many reasons behind traveling, which support the growth of cultural heritage and the tourism sector; one reason being "Modernization". This is the action of leading people to become more nostalgic for past periods of their lives and for certain aspect and elements (Timothy. D, 2011) [5]. This action will "preserve the past for future generation", thus, heritage can be distinguished according to (Nurick . J, 2002), [6] As "having a significance and quality which makes it worth it to preserve and appreciate the current and future generations". Cultural heritage is another term that is defined by ICSMOS, 2002 [7] as "an expression of the ways of living developed by a community and passed on from generation to generation, including customs, practices, places, objects, artistic expressions

and values. Cultural Heritage is often expressed as either Intangible or Tangible Cultural Heritage”

Relation between Identities - Cultural Heritage

One of the main targets of cultural tourism is to preserve the authenticity of a society that embodies the original identity of a specific culture or subculture that encapsulate rich values, not to be forgotten.

Relation between Identities – Tourism

Tourism is attributed to assign identity by the benefits that can be earned from it, according to Akerlof, G, 2000 [8] “the importance of identity concern about economic decision that any person can make.”

As a result, the identity can be defined from the source of economical sectors. Therefore, the responsibility of concerned authorities should increase their effort about promoting and adjusting a proper position of the cultural heritage identity on the world tourism map in order to lay the best economic advantages and influences on societies.

The Significant Role of the Sustainable Concept

In spite of the availability of cultural heritage content, the process of preservation and promotion is considered as an important issue to discuss. The content legacy with its different forms as Timothy, 2011, [9] stated- “Whether built or living is one of the most salient elements of global tourism system” are very essential parts to support tourism sector. In response Nurich, 2008 [10] argues that the legacy components are “... Very important motivators for tourism”, tangible and intangible types can be distinguished by the following categories:

Built environment	Buildings, Townscapes, Archaeological Remains
Natural environment	Rural landscapes, Coasts and Shorelines, Agricultural heritage
Art crafts	Books & Documents, Objects, Pictures

Source: CID non-profit organization <http://www.cultureindevelopment.nl>

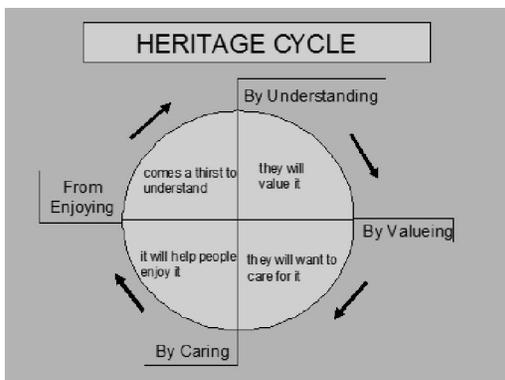


Figure 1: The heritage cycle
Source: Simon Thurley, 2005, Conservation Bulletin

The process of recognition, preservation, conservation and sustaining are necessary to gain all the beneficial revenue of tourism for current and future generation. All the previous processes can be achieved by the concept of sustainable tourism.

Sustainable as a Solution

Sustainable, considered as a part of heritage project constituent,, meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. According to London’s Oxford University Press, 1987 [11], it also can be defined as a rethink of the relationship between ecological systems as a way to determine and assess the relationship between humans, nature, and other forms of life, with the affect they have on each other. (Williams 2007; Schama 1995). [12]

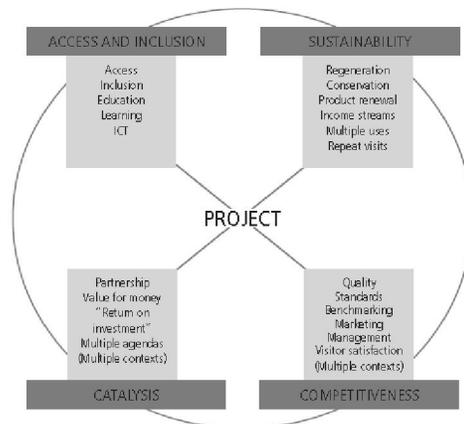


Figure 2: The four key issues facing heritage projects
Source: (Nurick . J, 2002)

Recognition of and understanding the system of relationships between human and nature are accompanied with the presence of five traditions as Neuman (2005, pg.17) stated. [13]

These five traditions of Neuman are capacity, fitness, resilience, diversity, and balance. Here, the main focus is on capacity and balance as they are important parties in our research. Due to restrict and decrease the negative intervention of the capacity, in order to enhance the living area of the local community beside achieving the balance factor which refers to promotes and balance the “natural” environment with “human” development.

Ecotourism: Model of Sustainable Tourism

The US Ecotourism society, has defined the ecotourism as responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the welfare of local people. (Western, 1993)[14].

Furthermore, ecotourism is considered as an essential part of tourism sustainability. They are conjoined openly as to incorporate the sustainable aspects such as environmental, socio-cultural,

experiential, and economical dimensions. These dimensions affect the whole community and environment with direct and indirect economical impacts.

Below is a chart showing the economic impact (FAO, 2010) [15].

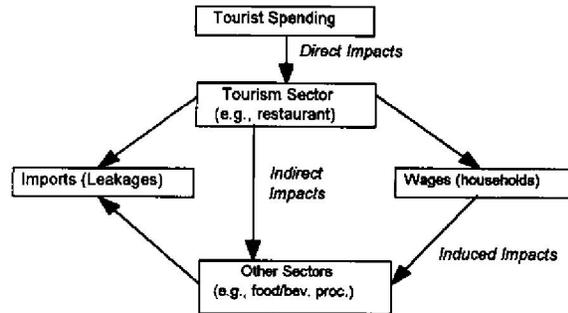


Figure 3: Tourism's Economic Impact
Source: F.A.O. 2010

Material and Methods

This research aims to evaluate the current status of the tourism process, in Ajloun's (one of Jordanian governorates) touristic trails. The evaluation will apply in terms of finding out the following; the advantages from Ajloun touristic potential, the number of tourism trails, whether they are adequate and efficient. Additionally, the study evaluates the development process of trails surrounding specific areas and the effectiveness of Ajloun local community.

This descriptive, analytical research depends on:

- Studying regional case studies of Siwa's oases and Sayda trail.
- Capturing the current physical status of Ajloun's archeological, natural, and cultural sites.
- Drawing the current situation of Ajloun's trails and sites.
- Drawing a new suggestion plan of Ajloun's tourism trails.

Literature Review

In this part of the study, there will be a concentration on some regionally similar projects. Their concern is on the conservation of tangible and socio-cultural heritage by Adaptation Reuse and Architectural Rehabilitation for touristic sites. This depends on tourism trails which is the most important and effective part of the tourism process.

Conservation Ecosystems _ Exploring Sustainable Tourism Impact of Siwa- Egypt

By Ahmad Zaidan. 2013 [16]

This research focus on the Siwa Oasis in Egypt's Western Desert; a frontier region of Egypt that extends across the border into Libya all the way down south to the Sudanese border (U.S. Library of Congress). [17]

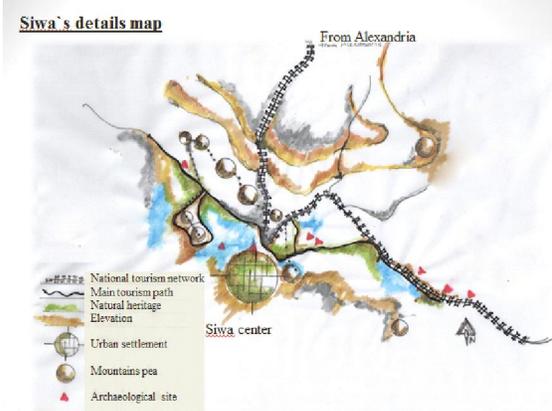


Figure 4: Siwa's map, source: researcher 2014

Siwa oasis is a case of successful tourism and its destination is the most popular due to its distance. It serves as an isolated settlement far from the cities hustle and bustle. Biological, cultural, therapeutic, and archaeological values are always present at Siwa.

The project's main idea is to explore the impact of sustainable tourism practices in Siwa Oasis. It also compares the impact of sustainability with Siwa's cultural traditional tourism in parallel with siwa's trails providing suggestions and recommendations which can improve the development of the sustainable tourism process.

The Projects Results:

- Provides employment opportunities.
- Exposes Siwa oasis to the world.
- Improving tourism activities for long stays.
- Teaches about the environmental and agricultural resources that Siwa provides.
- Develops awareness of the local community.
- Saves Siwa's nature from tourism effects.

Sustainable Urban Development in Historical Areas Using The Tourist Trail Approach: A Case Study of the Cultural Heritage and Urban Development (CHUD) Project in Saida, Lebanon.

By Khalid S. Al-hagla [18]

Sidon (Saida), lying on the coast 48 kilometers south of Beirut, is one of the Famous names in ancient history.

The project's main idea is to integrate the heritage trail with the concept of sustainability and urban development of **specific districts**. The heritage trail serves as a direct interaction between residents of Saida, the historic places, and foreigners (tourists).

The procedures of rehabilitation that are followed in order to improve the studied districts are:

- A practice of conservation and rehabilitation.

- Interventions in residential areas and monuments
- Interpretation in specific areas
- Economical development of the local community

The projects results:

- Invite people to explore their communities
- Provides employment opportunities and economic developments.
- The role of heritage trails to rearrange the surrounding areas.
- The heritage trail is an interactive zone with the developmental parties.
- Re-use, conservation and rehabilitation processes have been improved by the services of Saida city thus increasing the numbers of tourist.

Discussion

Ajloun between interventions and preserving its tourism trails

Ajloun is the capital town of Ajloun Governorate, settled in the north of Jordan, located 76 kilometers North West of Amman and occupying over 420 km² (accounting for 2.3 % of the total countries area). It has a population of over 146,000. (Statistics department of Jordan, 2012) [19]

Ajloun Governorate has the best summer tourism destination for domestic and foreign visitors in Jordan. There exists forests, woodlands, natural reserves, valleys, streams which scattered sporadically, and archaeological sites all supported by new street networks due to the process of tourism development.

There are five districts in the Greater Ajloun Municipality:

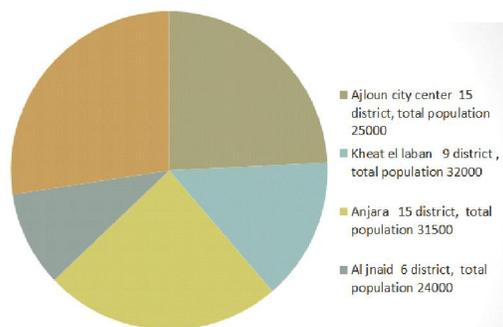


Figure 5: graphics shows the ratio of Ajloun district area.

Source: researcher 2014

The Prominence Periods of Ajloun's Timeline

The history of Jordan extends from the first traces of man's activities during the Paleolithic era (200.000 BC- 8000 BC) passing through Mesolithic, Neolithic,

Chalcolithic, Bronze age, and Iron age up till modern times. Ajloun with its significant role in the Jordanian history witnessed a succession of historical stages. The most deeply rooted stage in its timeline is the Nabatean era (312 BC-112 AD). Caves and tombs carved through the lands during this period. The Roman period (63 BC-330 AD) sprung ancient Roman cities, churches, reservoirs and aqueducts. The Byzantine period (330-640 AD) added some additional churches. The most important period is Ayyubid; being part of the Islamic conquest (1174-1263 AD), it is represented in the Al-Rabad castle. Finally we come to the modern age, dating from 1923- till now. Jordan Tourism Board, 2006 [20].

Understanding Ajloun Heritage

Tourism of Ajloun has taken an important role in the governorates agenda by supporting the process of touristic development due to its marvelous nature and history.

Consequently, the ministry of tourism has chosen Ajloun to be one of the five cities for the third tourism project – heritage, tourism and urban development – this project aims to preserve the identity of the historical and urban design of Ajloun by investing in the local communal capacities to improve various sectors. This research has included a specific part of Ajloun.

To achieve these projects, first of all, understanding Ajloun's heritage is a primary issue, in order to deal correctly with any space. Therefore I quote, "Heritage is a part of the cultural tradition of any society" (Nuryanti, 1996, p. 249). [21]

Also the community of Ajloun needs to reconsider the importance of heritage and activate its role among the local residents. As the Convention of France-UNESCO published, "People have always had the need to refer to their history in order to ensure the continuity of a common identity that evolves over time" (CFU, 2006, p.g.26). [22]

UNESCO defines heritage in terms of tangibility and intangibility as evidence indicative to human activity in a physical environment including archaeological sites and architectural projects which are considered to be non-renewable sources.

Many touristic parties are concerned with presenting Ajloun's potential and puts them on the world tourism map as an environmental cultural destination. [23] But the question raised here is 'how could this happen?'

Many factors are playing roles in Ajloun's strategies of touristic development such as:

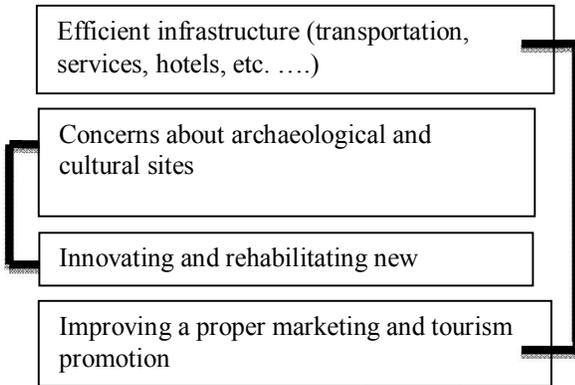


Figure 5: strategies of tourism development
Source: researcher 2014

Effects of Tourism on Ajloun City

Ajloun as a tourist destination suffers from a lack of fundamental services. Despite that, Ajloun attracted annually between 180,000-200,000 tourists during 2013 and eventually reached 207.450; dividing tourists into domestic (140,065) foreign (65,384) groups.

Almost all of these trips are of maybe a few hours to one-day duration at most. Thus, the local community does not get the proper benefits of touristic revenue; therefore the concept of sustainable tourism in Ajloun is deficient. Most of the foreign tourism is from Spain and Italy. The second largest figure after domestic tourism is the regional one. (MOTA.2013). [24]

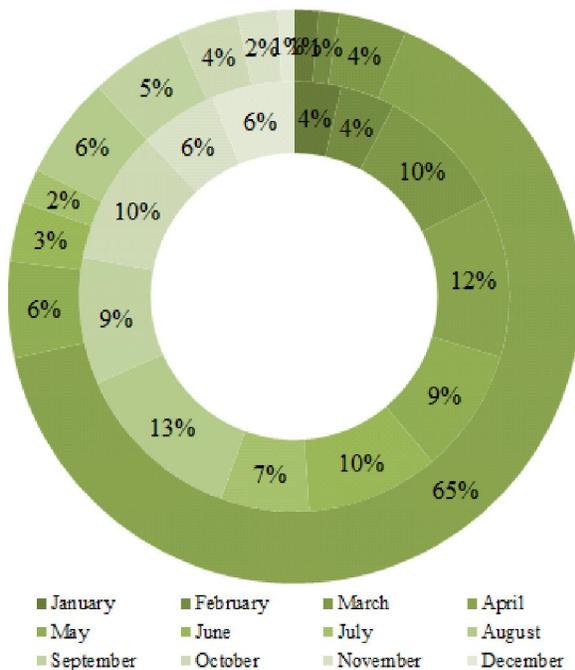


Figure 6: chart shows the ratio of tourism according to the temperatures
Source: MOTA.2013

Ajloun annually temperature chart



Figure 7: chart shows temperatures distributed
Source: MOTA.2013

The trips are distributed according to the months of the year and their responsive temperatures. January, February, March, April, September and October, have a peak of touristic group trips. This all refers to the good weather and temperature, tourist retreat openings, and seasonal opportunities which launch in these months. Schools trips are more frequent in the spring time and of course we have certain holidays and occasions.

Recently the number of Arab tourists has increased as a result of Jordan being the only summering destination due to the current political circumstances of other Arab regions.

The Value of Ajloun’s Transportation System

The accessibility to Ajloun is very effortless. Services are available and major entrances appear from other neighboring mega cities as the chart below indicates:

Direction	From
Northern	Irbid city
Southern	Amman city
Eastern	Az-Zarqa city

The transportation roads are as important as Ajloun’s cultural and archaeological sites. The absence of one aspect will illuminate another, as Culpan, (1987) [25] stated in his book about the importance of transportation to support the tourism sector, and Dioxides (1976, pg. 26) [26] Argued: “Networks cannot be judged without relating them to the other four elements (Nature, Anthropol, Society, and Shells) and assessing the influence the other elements exert”. Therefore the tourism process will not be successful and accomplished without a suitable connective network that covers all significant places.

Ajloun tourism trails

Tourism planning is an essential demand to improve the development process in Ajloun. One of the most forecasted issues is “tourism trails” along with other aspects such as cultural, natural, and archaeological advancements.

Only we humans have a use for these street networks. From a time that began with hunting paths that moved us from one place to another in search of food or water or to the bounds of our settlements, street network have been a part of our nature. They present many characteristics such as the transportation of humans, goods, or touristic aims which may be presented in said tourism trails.

Tourism trails are an effective element in the tourism process. They provide the ability to connect all significant sites in Ajloun and can organize the tour within specific trails. Of course, these tourism trails come with some conditions and specifications.

Beaver, 2005 [27] stated, trails are a touristic product, and can provide the needed services for its surrounding area.

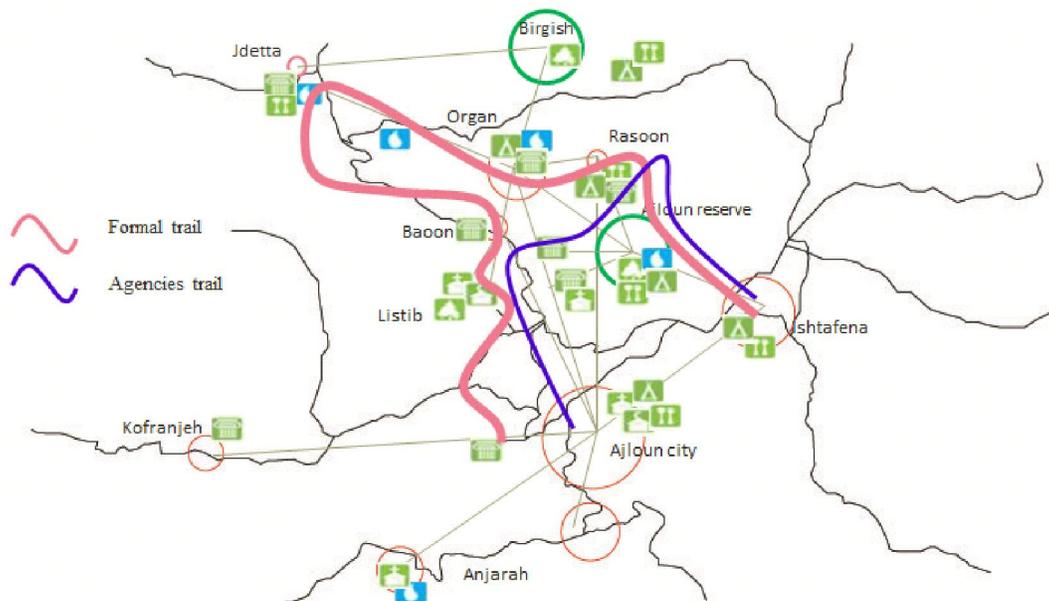
The significant trail is “the touristic trail of Ajloun” with a length of 40 km, it starts from Ishtafena- Rasoon- Orjan- Wadi al Rayan- Mar Ellyas- Listeb- and ends with Ajloun Castle. The current tourism trips start from Ajloun reserve- Rasoon- Mar ellas- Listeb- Ajloun castle, therefore this tour isn’t set to visit the all the natural and archaeological sites within Ajloun, and it will take a few hours to get back to Amman.

Tourist agencies do not follow the trail that the ministry has established; they reduce the distance and concentrate on the most visited places such as the castle and Ajloun reserve.

The map below shows the formal trail and agencies trail with difference in distance:

Ministry of Tourism Planned Trail

Source: Researcher 2014 (Map 1)



This research aims to rehabilitate, develop and create new tourism trails in order to cover all important sites and increase the length of a tourist(s) stay in Ajloun due to its positive impact on the development of local community

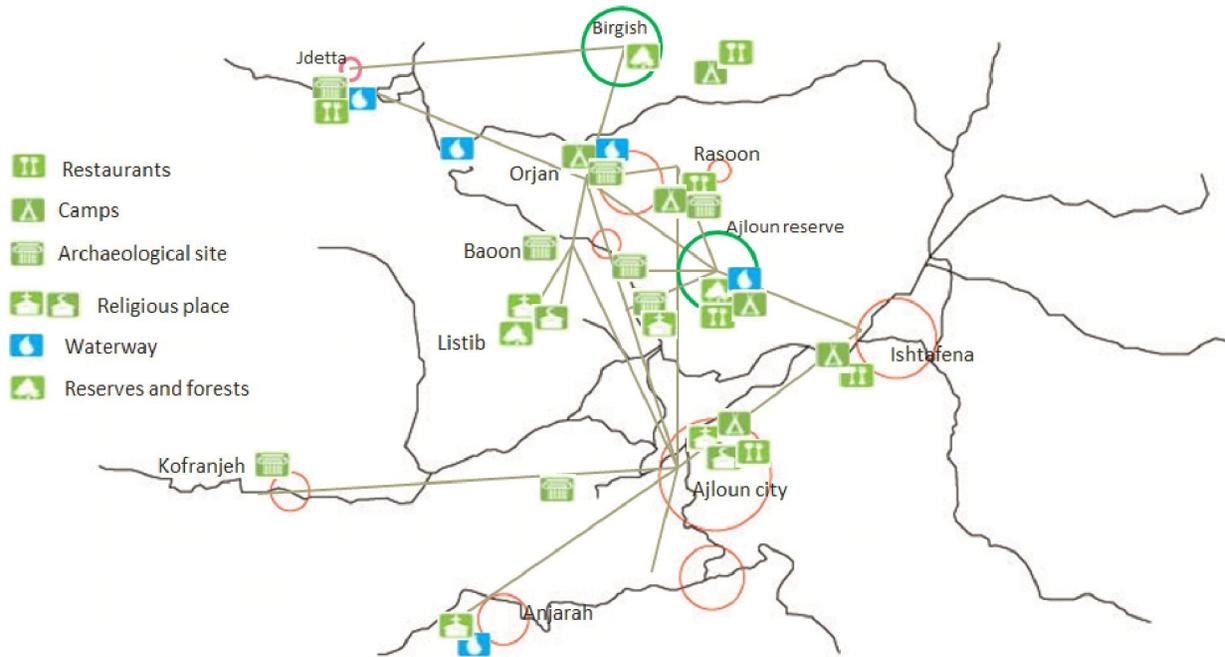
The process of rehabilitation and conservation of Ajloun’s interest zone is the ideal solution to increase the tourism revenues. Ajloun is one of the best places in Jordan to live within nature and culture and has been dubbed “a tourism trend” by Arthur Pedersen. (2002) [28] and is heading toward:

- Environmental protection (Ajloun reserve and other reserves forest as Birgish)
- Cultural tourism (many archaeological sites, the most important is Al-Rabad castle)
- “Real” experiences with other cultures and lifestyles (life with communities of local Ajloun villages)

Tourists seek to experience the unspoiled, uncrowded and interesting protection of the environment.

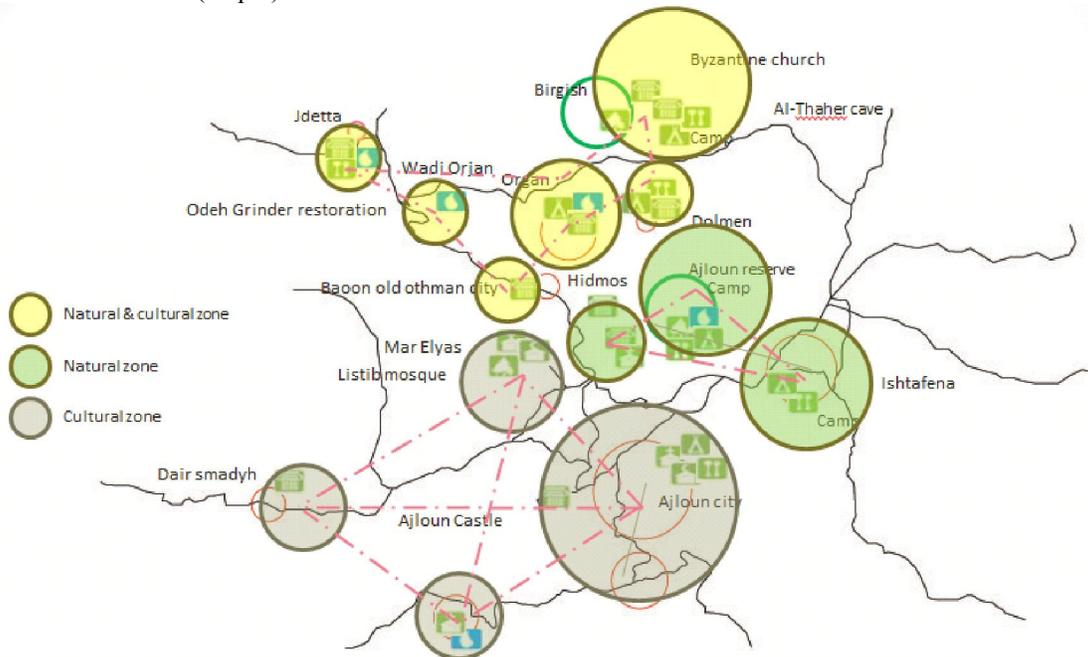
Map of archaeological and natural sites

Source: Researcher 2014 (map 2)



Analysis of Ajloun’s Interest Zone by Dividing into Three Sectors

Source: researcher 2014 (map 3)



Strategy of the Development Process

Understanding the heritage roots of any site leads to set successful policies for the future allowing the adaptation of the right decisions. Some of these decisions made in tourism trails are considered as a

part of development in the level of street networked tourism.

All of Ajloun’s sectors serve the development process and depend on human resources to maintain its sustainability, in regards to its effective role.

Therefore, human resources must take the priority of leading the wheel to achieve the development goals by improving their skills and knowledge to appreciate the value of their legacy.

The effective partnership between communities and other sectors determines the successful shape of the development.

The Importance of Tourism Trails

The major impacts of tourism trails in Ajloun are enhancing and strengthening the connection between heritage sites, and leading to organized spaces around the trails as to obtain the parties of archaeological or natural sites. However the trails must have specific and important characteristics for a purpose of use such as be well defined and passing the interest zone in Ajloun. The most important specification is for it to be safe.

Ajloun with its significant diversity divides the trails into many types that suit Ajloun’s potential in walking, hiking trekking, and rappelling. Ajloun can be divided into 3 zones depending on whether the area represents nature, or archaeology, or both.

Forces that Impact Ajloun’s Tourism Trails

Many forces have an influence on Ajloun’s tourism trails and contain an ability to change, upgrade, or omit the trail for reasons such as:

The Obstacles of Touristic Development

The process of development which occurs in Ajloun has many important stages of reforming the patterns of Ajloun’s urban context; but there are many common obstacles that are raised during touristic development which prevents the achievement of desired goals such as:

Lack of financial support
Shortage of proper planning decisions
Uninitialized properly
The place for the domestic tourism is very distant
Too expensive
Lack of essential activities to do there

Some trail will be harmed from tourist activities
Touristic disturbances to a specific path
Unsafe trails
Utilized improperly
Uninteresting path
Crowded path
Local communities have better trails to experience than the tourism agency's
Some locals already planned trails which aren't proper to other communities, as a result they change the direction of the these trails
Some trails are created but the density of urban context will suffocate the trails activities.
Some trails are enforced to urban context and the communities refuse it for some reasons.

But these obstacles can be reduced by changing planning policies and the perception of domestic and foreign tourists to what they already have about Ajloun. For example, all the involved sectors must have a huge participation to drive the development process toward improving the current status of Ajloun’s financial situation (eventually improving the total income of Jordan – see figure 8).

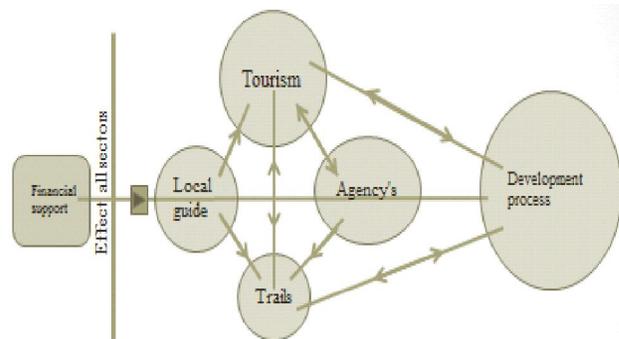
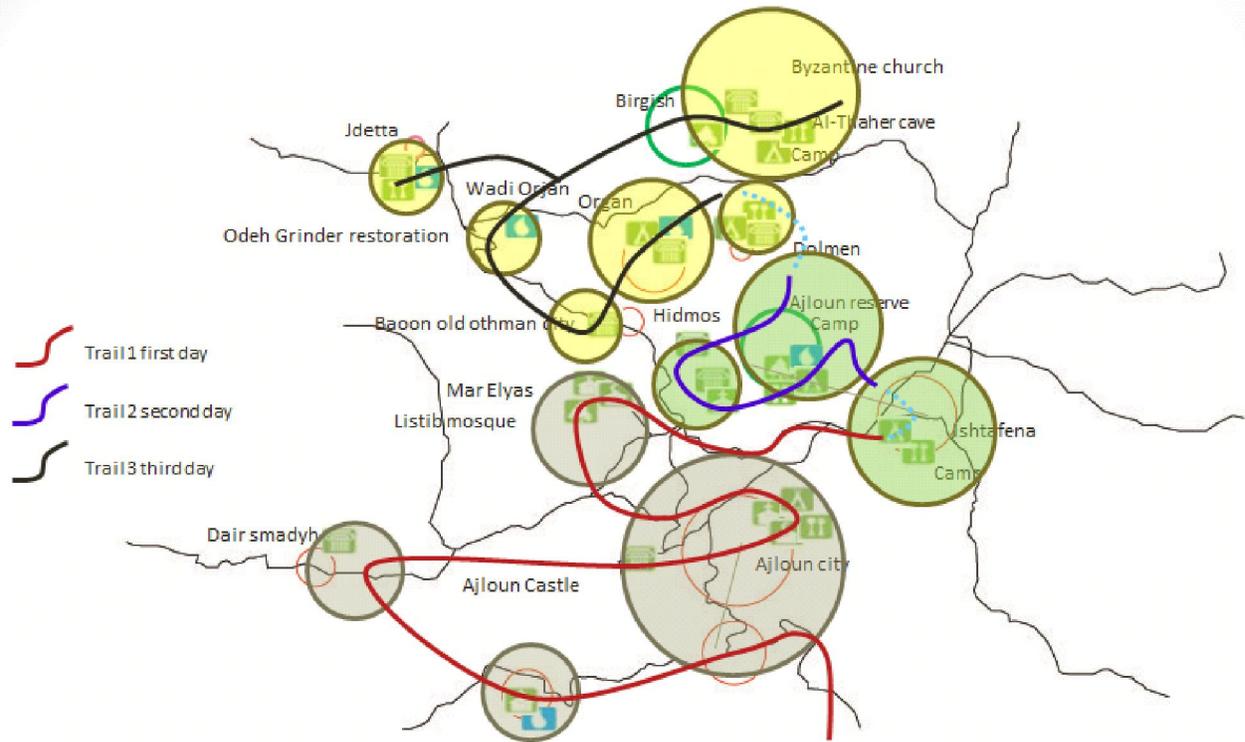


Figure 8: chart shows the sectors of development
Source: researcher 2014

Results:

- Improving the overall view of Ajloun to be more attractive without affecting the overall shape by researching suggestions on developing a new way of experiencing the Ajloun trails. (Map 4)
 - Successful strategy of touristic marketing.
 - Developing and marketing the productivity of home-based businesses
 - Developing traditional products, works, and hand crafts.
 - Establishing institutions in order to qualify local tourism guide
 - By the development process, new job vacancies will be available. (Maps 5 & 6 shows the development of local businesses whether establishing camps by the locals, homemade products or by providing accommodations and restaurants within their residence.)
 - This trail has the identity of Ajloun content. Beginning from the culture district (first day tour) and then passing through the natural district (second day tour), and finally ending with natural-culture district (third day tour). Each district has its own services of accommodations and restaurants along with rest areas. The suggested trail is supplies a well-planned transportation network and is considered to be in good condition.

Suggested Trails for Three Days, resource: researcher 2014(map 4)



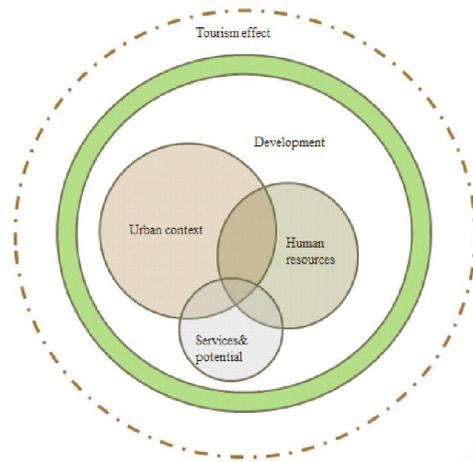
The events which may be found through this trail must suite the spirit of this trip. Therefore, some trained local people have their own adventures to let the tourist experience the life within Ajloun. The trails are divided by type that fit Ajloun's nature and potential to do the following:

- Walking: to walk on a path which is not defined as a trail
- Hiking: walking a trail already defined and end during the day
- Trekking: a trail that is not defined and takes several days to accomplish
- Rappelling: a kind of path that includes places containing cliffs to rappel.

Trails are range from short, medium, to long distance, and easy, medium, to hard level.

The aim behind increasing the duration of the tour is to extend tourist stay at least 3 days in order to get the maximum beneficence of a tourist's temporary residency through economical, social, and cultural aspects.

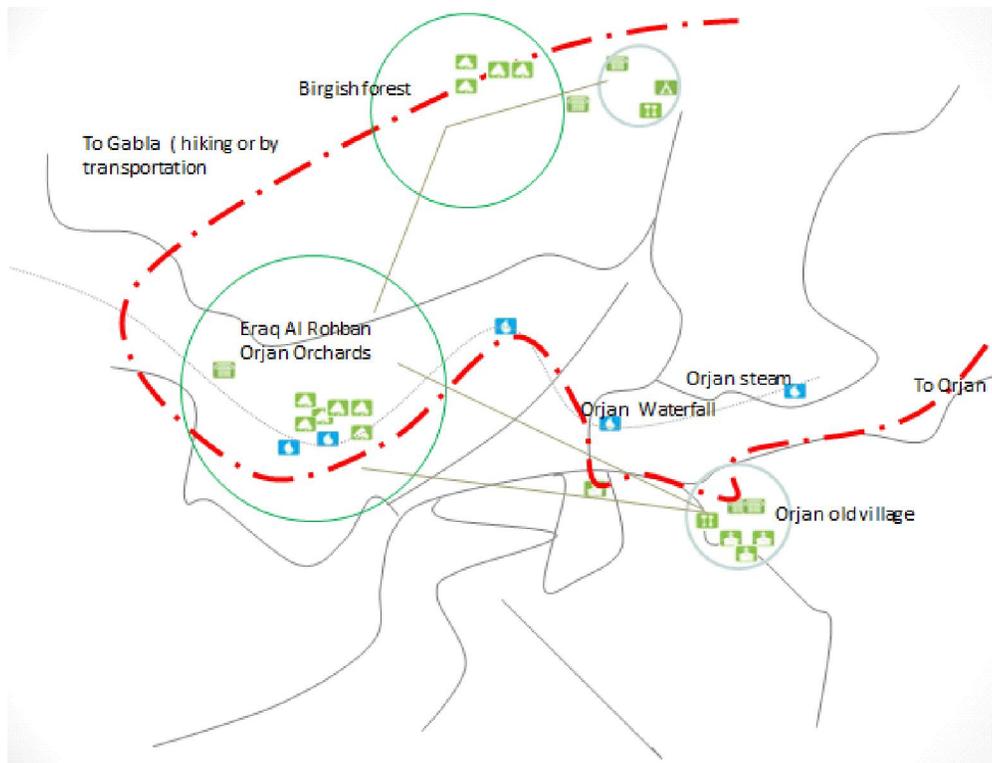
The tourism impact which deeply affect Ajloun development process.



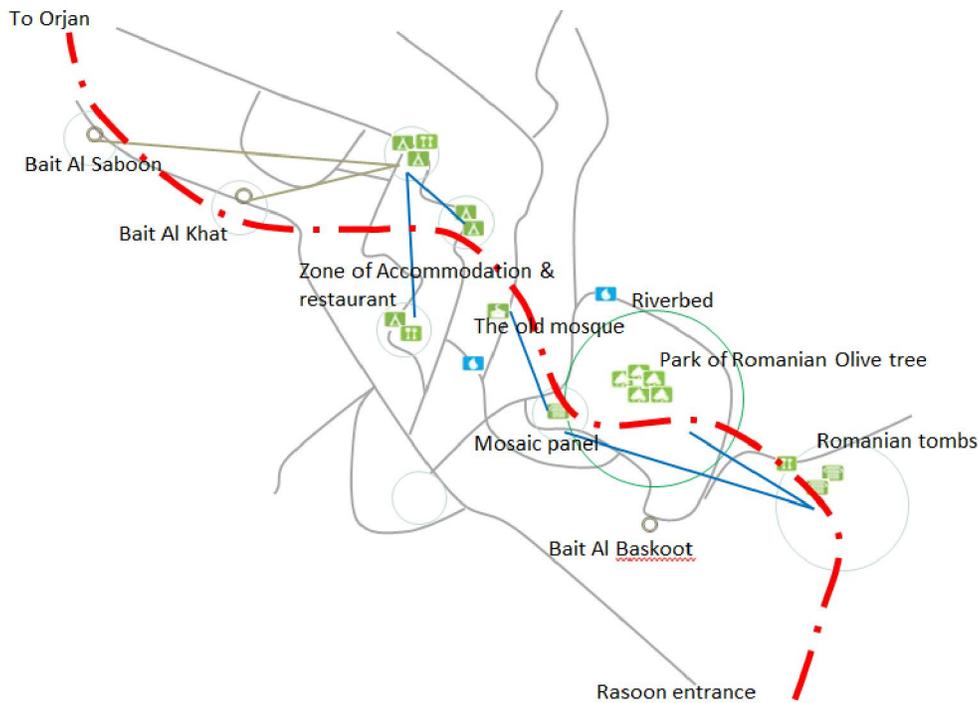
Source: researcher 2014

Orjan trail map, source: researcher 2014

Map 5, map 6 shows the part of Ajloun major trail passing through Rasoon and Orjan within important zones, this lead to create service zones such as accommodations, restaurants, and rest areas along with establishing local shops. These local shops deal with local manufacturers who depend on neighboring communities and their respective skills.



Rasoon trail map, source: researcher 2014



Conclusion

The tourism industry is considered to be one of the most influential sectors among the development process in terms of significance and size, therefore it

takes the biggest share from the development and renewable process.

Case studies, Siwa and Sayda, put emphasis on trail development within the urban context. The

similarity with our case is significant, therefore the study is in regards to the development of new touristic trails in Ajloun to improve and enhance tourist experience. This will lead to longer durations of tourist stays thus increasing their financial contribution. This will also positively upgrade the quality of local community life.

Tourism trails are suggested and divided into three sectors, each having a group of archaeological, cultural and natural sites which are connected to each other with new network trails

Finally, the development of Ajloun can't be accomplished without local communities participation. They are the key to all the developmental processes along with the other sectors and the enhancement of the tourism trails.

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