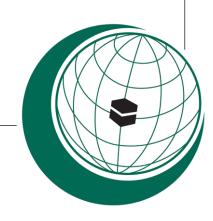


Improving the Quality and Sustainability in Heritage Tourism

in OIC Countries

CONCEPT & METHODOLOGY

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Introduction

Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)



Four Continents

≻57 member states

It distinguishes itself with varied cultural and natural heritage tourism attractions

Tourism in OIC Nations

- OIC nations hosted 233 million international travelers in 2023
- Share of global traveler arrivals from 13% in 2019 to 18%
- > Tourism revenues grew from \$238 billion to \$250 billion
- Global share increase from roughly 14% to 17% over the same period



Tourism in OIC Nations



Most tourists visiting OIC destinations are also leisure tourists.

Tourism Motivations

Leisure Travelers

Sunlust (Holiday) Tourism

Wanderlust (Heritage) Tourism

Business Travelers

Meetings

Incentives

Conventions

Events



Wanderlust & Heritage Tourism

What is Wanderlust?

• A strong desire to travel and explore new cultures and places

Connection with Heritage Tourism

- Wanderlust tourists are drawn to **unique cultural and historical heritage**
- Motivated by deep, meaningful experiences with local traditions

Respectful Travelers

- More likely to value and respect local culture
- Appreciate authentic interactions with local communities



«an inheritance from the past that is valued in the present and is hoped to be passed on to future generations»

Core Focus

- Emphasizes history, culture, and traditions
- Attracts tourists seeking education and cultural enrichment

Complementary Role

- Supports other travel motivations (e.g., **MICE** & sunlust tourism)
- Many travelers are also interested in **local heritage** during their trips



Destination-Specific Appeal

- Cultural heritage assets are unique to each location
- Facilitate branding of the destination

Willingness to Pay

- Heritage tourists are less price-sensitive
- Spend more compared to sun-lust tourists

Tourism Share

Heritage tourism accounts for 36% of global tourism volume



Traveler Interests

- Growing demand for:
 - Cultural and natural heritage
 - Arts and local traditions
 - Festivals, historical sites, and authentic experiences

Global Trends

- Rising middle class in emerging economies
- Increased demand for experiential travel



Tourists seek **meaningful connections** with destinations through community and cultural engagement.

Preservation & Sustainability

- Encourages protection of cultural and environmental heritage
- Generates sustainable sources of income

Community Impact

- Fosters meaningful interaction between tourists and local people
- Supports the local economy

Pride & Awareness

- Inspires people to value their history, nature, and traditions
- Promotes respectful and enriching experiences through cultural connection



Challenges of 3S (Sun, Sea, Sand) Tourism

Heritage tourism offers a more sustainable alternative to mass tourism and should be prioritized in tourism strategies!

With 3S Tourism is;

- Overuse of natural resources
- Inadequate infrastructure & pollution
- Overcrowding in tourist hotspots
- Commercialization of local traditions
- Cultural erosion

- Seasonal nature \rightarrow unstable employment
- Income fluctuation for local communities
- Destruction of natural landscapes
- Loss of ecological and aesthetic value

UNESCO divides heritage tourism resources into two main categories:

- > Tangible Heritage
- Intangible Heritage



Tangible Heritage

Historic and Natural Heritage Assets:

- Archaeological landmarks
- Historical buildings & monuments
- Museums
- Sacred & religious sites
- National parks & natural settings

Appeals to: Tourists seeking direct, visual, and physical experiences



Intangible Heritage

Living cultural expressions:

- Local cuisine
- Traditional arts & crafts
- Folklore, music, and dance
- Spiritual ceremonies & festivals
- Storytelling & community rituals



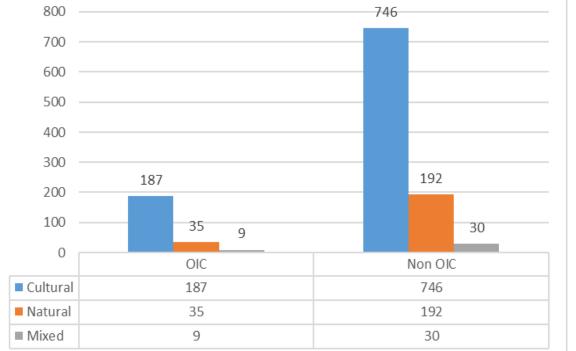
Appeals to: Tourists seeking interaction and cultural immersion



- > OIC nations have considerable growth potential in heritage tourism
- Possess a competitive advantage over non-OIC destinations due to rich tangible & intangible cultural assets
- Authenticity strongly influences tourist satisfaction and loyalty to heritage tourism attractions, leading to increased intention to revisit and recommend
- Heritage tourism is potentially a key driver of economic growth in OIC countries

Heritage Tourism Potential in OIC Nations

- UNESCO World Heritage sites, approximately 231
 (19%) were located in OIC nations.
- Among them, 187 are classified as cultural heritage sites, 35 are natural heritage sites, and nine are hybrids of both categories





Challenges in Heritage Tourism across OIC Countries

- Underdeveloped infrastructure, visitor facilities, and site management
- Limited investment & funding for heritage preservation
- Low share of global tourism revenues despite rich heritage assets
- Need for strategic action to enhance sustainability and improve quality
- Weak planning, site governance, and coordination
- Ineffective branding and promotion of heritage destinations
- Natural disasters, human imapcts and environmental degradation which threatens long-term site integrity

Heritage Tourism Sustainability

Environmental

Pollution

Climate Change

Floods & Erosion

Wildfires

Earthquakes

Industrial and urban development

Tragedy of commons



Heritage Tourism Sustainability

Social

Authenticity

Exploitation of local populations and traditions

Mass consumption

Changing Life Styles

Migration

Wars & Terrorism

Community Involvement & Capacity Building



Heritage Tourism Sustainability

Economic

Agricultural, industrial and urban pressures

Commercialization

Gentrification

Contribution to local economy

Funding



Challenges

While heritage resources like landmarks or monuments are often perceived as fixed and abundant, they can be depleted or damaged. Heritage sites are finite, especially in terms of physical space, and Heritage Resources are Finite tourism can cause both direct damage (e.g., wear and tear from visitors) and indirect damage (e.g., visual clutter or negative impacts on the experience of other users). However, heritage resources are and Vulnerable different from natural resources because they can often be reproduced or interpreted in new forms, such as through virtual experiences or replica sites. Many heritage resources are managed as public goods, meaning they are publicly financed, generally free to access, and not easily excluded from other users. This Heritage Resources as **Sustainability** presents a conflict, as heritage tourism competes with other local uses, such as community identity or national image-building. Tourists and local residents have **Public Goods** different expectations and needs, which can lead to management challenges, especially when heritage experiences are compulsory for visitors. Heritage tourism creates externalities—costs and benefits that are not accounted for within the tourism system itself. Tourism generates significant external costs, such as congestion or environmental degradation, and can also create indirect benefits, like **Externalities from Tourism** enhanced local amenities or improved place images. The challenge is to balance these externalities and ensure that the costs and benefits are fairly distributed across the stakeholders involved. Heritage resources are often managed by agencies that are separate from the tourism producers or local managers. This creates a complex situation where multiple agencies, each with different goals, organizational structures, and management **Organizational Challenges** practices, must work together. The difficulty lies in coordinating these different agencies to ensure effective management of the heritage resources for the benefit of both tourists and local communities.

Structures & Stakeholders

Managing Tourist Activity

Balancing tourism development with conservation

Stakeholder involvement

- Local Community
- Tourism industry
- Government

Methodology

- Mixed Methods Sequential Design
 - Secondary Data
 - Research Articles
 - Reports
 - Policy Documents
 - Primary Data
 - Qualitative
 - Interviews
 - Focus Groups
 - Quantitative Survey
 - Benchmark Case Studies
 - Desk based
 - Field-visit



Methodology – Secondary Data

- Research Articles
 - WoS & Scopus Databased
 - Keywords: Heritage tourism, sustainable tourism, tourism governance
- Reports
 - OIC
 - COMCEC
 - SESRIC
 - UNWTO
 - WTTC
 - UNESCO
 - ICOMOS



Methodology – Interviews

- Semi-structured
- 20 heritage tourism experts from OIC countries
- Questions
 - Heritage assets inventory
 - Heritage tourism product development
 - Sustainability and improvement of heritage tourism resources
 - Strategies for future development of heritage tourism
- Transcriptions & Thematic Content Analysis



• 150 heritage tourism experts in OIC countries

SURVEY

- Items
 - Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria (GSTC), (Bricker & Schultz, 2011)
 - Sustainable Tourism Attitude Scale (SUS-TAS; Hsu et al., 2020)
 - Heritage Experience Scale (Su et al., 2020)
 - Tourism Governance Scorecard (TGS; Vila et al., 2010)
 - Service Quality (SERVQUAL Model; Parasuraman et al., 1988)
- Descriptive and Inferential Analysis

- 2 Focus Groups 8 heritage tourism experts each
- Validate Findings
- Capture additional stakeholder perspectives
- Create Final Policy Recommendations



Methodology – Case Countries

- 5 Case Countries
 - 3 Desk based (Türkiye, Egypt and Italy)
 - 2 Field study (Indonesia and Senegal)
- Review of national reports
- Integration of Empirical data
- Benchmark Analysis



Thank You

