

Elements of Tourist Attractions and their Role in Tourism Development in the City of Tebessa (Algeria)

Dr. Benhammada Aissa

Institute of Management of Urban Techniques, University of Oum El Bouaghi, Algeria.

Abstract

The strategy of planning for tourism development starts from identifying the factors contributing to the tourist attraction to the tourist destination concerned with the study, and this in order to develop them in terms of tourism services, transportation, accommodation... to attract as many local and international tourists as possible.

In this context, we will try through this research to clarify the role of the ingredients of tourist attractions of the city of Tébéssa (Algeria) which can push the wheel of tourist development, because they are tourist attractions, and which allow the practice of many types of tourism, especially cultural and heritage tourism, on the basis of which it is possible to provide a strategic vision for the planning of tourism in this city.

Key words: Elements, tourist attraction, tourism development, Tebessa, Algeria.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism plays an important role in economic and social development due to its income and revenues that contribute to the completion and implementation of many development projects. This is why it has become part of the directives of many countries to develop their tourism capabilities in order to organize and plan the tourism field and develop tourist areas with the aim of qualifying them for tourist attractions and advancing development In it¹.

Hence the necessity of activating tourism activity in order to achieve tourism development as an effective tool for comprehensive development in various economic, social and even environmental fields, and to increase the individual income and the national income of the country by pushing the tourism variables in society to grow faster than the natural rate of growth, meaning that tourism development is considered voluntary growth Actually.

Tourism elements are the most important pillars on which tourism development is based, as they are tourist attractions, as Algeria has multiple natural, human and urban tourism elements spread across its geographical area from the coastal strip, the plains, the high plateaus, the mountains and the vast desert.

Hence, a tourism planning strategy must be adopted to direct the process of directed investments in tourism activity, in order to optimize the use of the various tourism elements as tourist attractions.

In this context, we will shed light in this research on the city of Tebessa, which is rich in many tourist elements and requires investment in it by its tourism planning as tourist attractions in order to be a tourist destination that attracts varying sizes of local and foreign tourists.

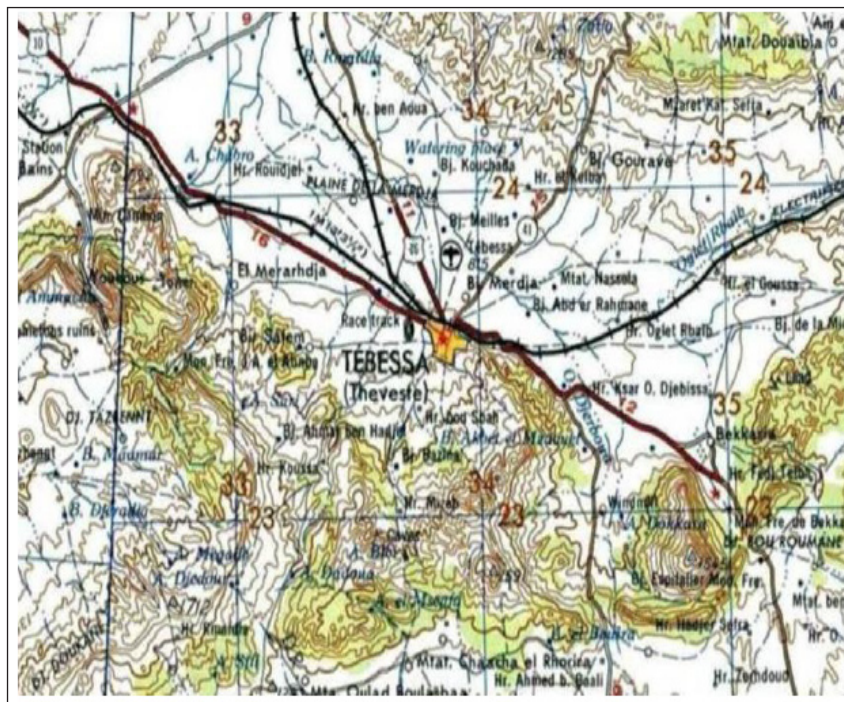
The Touristic Importance of the Location of the city of Tebessa

The city of Tebessa occupies an important location in eastern Algeria. It is considered a transitional area between the hill region and the Great Sahara. It is also a border city because it is adjacent to the Algerian-Tunisian borders, and is 326 km away from the capital, Tunis, which makes it occupy an important strategic location (Map: 01)².

The city of Tebessa is located at an altitude of between 800 and 900 meters in the foothills of Mount Ouzemour. It extends over an area of 184 km² and is inhabited by approximately 161,440 people.

Its strategic location has given it great importance, as it contributed to the succession and emergence of various civilizations in the city through different ages, it is characterized by its urban pole, which was well organized before the arrival of the Carthaginians and Romans, which allowed it to contain many tourist elements for the spread of many monuments and heritage³sites Which it abounds and which qualified it to be a tourist destination locally and internationally.

As its border location qualified it to be the gate of Algeria from the eastern side, its border location adjacent to the Republic of Tunisia made it close to the border crossings, where we mention the “Ras El-Ayoun” crossing (39 km) , “Al-Marij” crossing (60 km), and this allows it to be a border city par excellence, This requires tourism planning for its tourism potential as an international transit center.



Map 1. Geographical location of Tebessa Province.

Source: Topographic map, Tebessa (1/50.000)

The multiple elements of the tourist attractions in the city of Tebessa

The strategic location of the city of Tebessa, which knew the passage of several civilizations through different times, had the emergence of several tourist elements⁴ which represent tourist attractions, reflecting multiple values of civilizations that left their mark and made it a border city with many tourist elements (Map: 02) , namely:

The Byzantine Wall: It is also called the Byzantine Citadel with 14 watchtowers. It is a nationally classified archaeological landmark. It was built during the reign of General S. Lemon during the period 538-535 AD. (Picture: 01).

Caracalla Gate: The Byzantine wall is pierced by four separate gates located on four faces. The Caracalla Gate was built in the Byzantine era in 535-538 AD (Picture: 02).

The citadel: It is located in the center of the city of Tebessa, surrounded by fourteen (14) exposed towers, with an area of approximately 16 m², and a thickness of 1.5 meters for the outer walls and more than 2 meters for the inner walls, and its height ranges from 14 to 17 meters.

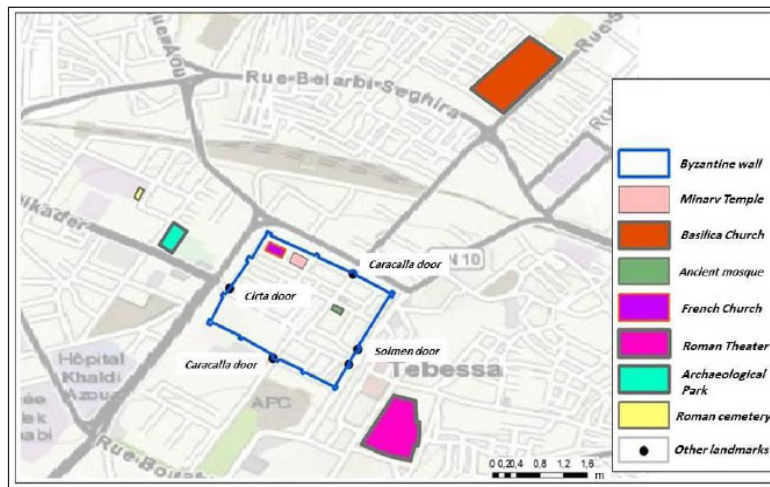
Roman Amphitheater: Its construction dates back to the Roman period and is a nationally classified archaeological site (Picture: 03).

Basilica Church: It is close to Caracalla Gate at a distance of 50 meters (Picture: 04). It was built in 1885 by the contractor engineer Delapardo, and it still retains its original condition. It was completed in 1908³.

Archaeological Park: It is modern located in the center of Tebessa, and contains many monuments and archaeological symbols scattered in the open air.

The Christian cemetery: It was built by St. Augustine in the period from to 385 AD in honor of St. Crispina. It is located about 300 m west of the Byzantine wall. It is the only historical site that shows the time of the Vandals in the city of Tebessa.

It is worth noting that there are many other tourist attractions spread outside the urban area of the city of Tebessa.



Map 2. Distribution of the most important tourist attractions in the city of Tebessa
(Source: Jediyat Kheireddine⁵)



Figure 1. The byzantine wall
source: Author, 2019



Figure 2. caracalla gate
source: Author, 2019



Figure 3. Roman amphitheater
source: Author, 2019



Figure 4. caracalla gate
source: Author, 2019

Various Services and a Variety of Infrastructure that Support Tourism Activities in the City of Tebessa

In addition to the tourism elements that the city of Tebessa acquires, it also contains within its urban fabric many cultural equipment that provides its services to the visitors, and we mention the House of Culture “Mohamed El-Shabouki”, the Archaeological Museum and the Mujahid Museum, in addition to 03 cinema halls, and sports equipment also contributes in the support of tourism movement in the region through the presence of the sports complex “March 04, 1956”, the municipal stadium, as well as swimming pools with a local and regional dimension, which receive many arrivals to follow many sporting events that carry a touristic, cultural and sports dimension.

The various types of health facilities in the city provide health services to its visitors. The city has three general hospitals, a surgical clinic, and many treatment rooms scattered in most areas of the city, which makes it easier for tourists to obtain health services whenever they need them.

The tourism activity in the city of Tebessa is also supported by the presence of the public library “Sheikh Al-Arabi Al-Tebssi” in the city center, and many religious equipment, perhaps the most important of which are the “Ancient Mosque” and some corners (Sidi Obeid, Sidi Yahya bin Talib...).

It should be noted that the city of Tebessa provides a tourist accommodation capacity estimated at 1038 beds distributed over 15 hotels (Table (01)) spread over the urban area of the city (Prince Hotel, Bin Osman, Al-Aseel, Al-Manar...), which shows the availability of accommodation services For tourists coming to it from all sides.

Table 1. Distribution of hotels in the city of Tebessa.

Capacity		
The number of beds	number of rooms	The hotel name
102	48	Theprince
77	32	MahiyaPalace
68	30	Bensman
87	41	Pyramids
65	30	Bahdja
88	37	Tarek
77	35	Caracalla
49	23	Theauthentic
82	37	Marhaba
34	14	Imrane
120	56	Dar diaf
46	19	Al-Manar
22	10	Anis
80	40	Dokane
41	20	Tefast
1038	472	Total

Source: Directorate of Tourism and Handicrafts of Tebessa Province, 2018.

At the same time, the city of Tebessa is characterized by its easy accessibility, despite being a border city, as it is linked to many large neighboring cities: Annaba, Constantine, Biskra and El Wadi via many national roads (No. 10, 16, 82).

A railway line crosses the city, and connects it to several cities such as: Annaba, Souk Ahras... There is an international airport on the northeastern side of the city of Tebessa. Which allows tourists to flock to it from all sides and practice many types of tourism there, including the following:

- **Cultural tourism:** The most important types of tourism practiced in the city of Tebessa due to the concentration of its components in the city center.
- **Febrile tourism:** it can be practiced in all its activities, especially with the presence of many febrile sources in the region.
- **Natural and environmental tourism:** This type of tourism is active with the presence of natural environmental diversity and the formation of beautiful landscapes, especially in the Qastal, Naqrin and Hammamet regions, where the mountain, the plain, the valley and the forests.
- **Sports tourism:** The city of Tebessa and its surroundings is a very suitable area for receiving various local and national sports events, especially the regions of “Bakaria” and “Negrine”.
- **Religious tourism:** The elements of this type of tourism are abundantly available in the city of Tebessa through the presence of Roman temples, Christian churches, mosques and Islamic corners⁷.

A Limited Role for Actors in the Tourism Activity in the City of Tebessa

The city of Tebessa knows many actors in the tourism activity, headed by the Directorate of Tourism and Handicrafts of the wilaya, which works to introduce its tourism components. Through brochures and billboards, it works to revive many tourist events, as well as follow up on many tourism projects that are under implementation in the state, and in many cases resorts to the assistance of the Municipal Office of Tourism.

Travel and tourism agencies also play an important role in the city's tourism development. It works on organizing and marketing travels, tourist trips, and individual and group stays. With the organization of tours and visits, accompanied by tour guides, to sites of a tourist nature. In addition to ensuring accommodation and booking rooms in hotels and providing related services. As well as providing tourist transportation and selling tickets. With the reception and assistance of tourists during their stay⁸. However, its role has recently become limited only to selling tickets and organizing many tourist trips with its focus on organizing Hajj and Umrah trips, despite the fact that the number of travel and tourism agencies in the city of Tebessa has reached 19 agencies (Al-Jarf, Yukos, Yugurta, Anfal...).

In order to promote tourism activity and achieve the desired tourism development in the face of the great wealth of tourism potentials. There are three tourist associations: the Minarv Association for the Protection of Antiquities and the Environment, and the Caracalla Association for Tourism and Culture. And the "Kahina" Association for Culture and Tourism, which works to preserve the historical monuments that are abundant in the city of Tebessa, achieves environmental balance and makes sure to spread the local culture to introduce it to the newcomers to the city, whether local or foreign.

An Acceptable Influx of Local Tourists and a Limited Influx of Foreign Tourists to the City of Tebessa

The data of the Directorate of Tourism and Handicrafts of the Wilaya of Tebessa, shown in Table (02), indicate that the number of tourists arriving in the city witnessed a clear fluctuation during the period 2014-2017. As the year 2014 recorded the largest number of arrivals, estimated at 3,818 tourists, while the number decreased in 2016 to 1656 tourists. And the reason for this is due to the deterioration of the security situation in the State of Tunisia, due to the factor of the border neighborhood of the city, which made it a transit area between the two countries (Algeria and Tunisia). As for the relative increase recorded in 2017, in which the number of incoming tourists is close to 2000, it is primarily due to the beginning of interest in the tourism sector by some actors, through the completion of many tourism projects, especially with regard to accommodation and the preparation of many archaeological sites in the city and the preparation of paths Tourism... with the aim of promoting the tourism sector as an important economic resource.

On the other hand, the number of local tourists has risen compared to foreign tourists, and the reason for this is the multiplicity of educational trips organized by many educational institutions and cultural associations to visit the archaeological areas in the city of Tebessa, and the natural areas that they enjoy. As for foreign tourists, they record a very low percentage; the reason for this is the lack of tourism investments of a high level suitable to attract foreign tourists, especially with regard to accommodation and other tourism services, such as tourist transport and communications⁷.

Table 2. The evolution of the number of incoming tourists to the city of Tebessa.

Years	Number of Tourists
2014	3818
2015	2726
2016	1656
2017	≈2000

Source: Directorate of Tourism and Handicrafts of Tebessa Province⁸, 2018.

Planning for the elements of tourist attractions in the city of Tebessa to achieve tourism development

Despite the great wealth that the city of Tebessa acquires in terms of containing many tourist attractions. Which is considered a key driver for the wheel of tourism development. However, it was not able to achieve the desired tourism development. This requires planning according to scientific principles and principles that take into account the geographical and social specificity of the city.

The tourism potential in itself represents the tourist attractions. It is on which all development and tourism development operations depend, for its important role in guiding the tourist to choose his tourist destination⁹.

The absence of rational and balanced tourism planning in the city of Tebessa. This led to the accumulation of problems faced by tourism activity and the marginalization of the role of tourism operators of different occupational affiliations. It prevented their participation in making important decisions to promote tourism activity. And push the wheel of tourism development in the city of Tebessa. Stimulating the tourism activity in order to attract tourists and valuing the tourism potentials that the city of Tebessa abounds in, and presenting it in its best form.

Therefore, it is necessary to:

- Develop a comprehensive strategy for tourism development in the city of Tebessa that takes into account all its components (attractive factors, tourism services, transport and communication facilities...) and its economic and social repercussions...
- Preparing and rehabilitating various archaeological sites (lighting, roads, tourist services...).
- Providing and upgrading tourism services (accommodation, feeding, transport, accommodation...).
- Inclusion of the various actors within the tourism development strategy to ensure integration and coordination among them.
- The need for the participation of the local community in order to provide job opportunities, and to suggest appropriate tourist paths to introduce the various tourism components of the city of Tebessa.
- Encouraging the local traditional industries, and working on introducing them to spread the culture, customs and traditions of the inhabitants of the city of Tebessa among the incoming tourists.
- Develop a tourism marketing plan for the various tourism components to attract local and foreign tourists to the city of Tebessa.
- Working on exploiting the peculiarity of the border location of the city of Tebessa, in providing all the foundations for the advancement of cultural and heritage tourism in the city. And compatible with the presence of many monuments and historical sites, especially the city center.
- Working to spread the awareness of tourists among groups of society because of its effectiveness in attracting tourists and prolonging their stay, by strengthening the role of local associations.
- Hosting various scientific, cultural, and sports events in the city of Tebessa because of their role in attracting tourists and introducing the tourism potential of the city of Tebessa as one of the most important tourist attractions.

CONCLUSION

The city of Tebessa has many tourist attractions, which are the most important tourist attractions. However, these components are not exploited optimally as a result of the absence of comprehensive tourism planning for them, which can achieve tourism development in them.

The multiple tourist components have allowed the possibility of practicing many tourist activities. Especially the cultural and heritage ones, which are enhanced by the various monuments located in the city center, but the role of actors in the tourism sector remains very limited. The thing that had a great reflection on the decline in the number of local tourists. And a significant weakness in the proportion of foreign tourists arriving.

This calls for the need to develop a strategy for tourism planning that works on valuing the city's tourism potential. According to a coordinated system that brings together the various actors in the tourism field. To activate their role and improve tourism services. With the wide participation of the local community and the promotion of the tourist attractions in the city of Tebessa.

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