

TOURIST ROUTES AT TAFILALET OASIS AND THE PROSPECTS OF TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT

Zakaria Hmidani¹

Mohamed Sguenfle²

Abstract

Today, tourism is a factor of economic growth. It has become one of the most developed sectors in the world, including planning, construction, promotion and marketing. As a source of currency, it is a catalyst for economic development and the development of basic services.

Tafilalet is one of Morocco's oasis tourist area. It has a rich and diverse heritage that makes it a destination for tourists and visitors from the world. The tourism routes project, which can contribute to the development of a pioneering development, will qualify these oasis region to be competitive and consolidate integration with other national areas.

In this article, we will attempt to identify the importance of tourism routes in Tafilalet and how to contribute to the territorial development

Keywords: Tafilalet oasis, palaces and bays, heritage, tourist trails, territorial development

INTRODUCTION

Morocco is among the countries that have given the tourism sector a great importance for economic growth. This is reflected in the 2010 Vision for Tourism Development strategy, which attracts 10 million tourists, and Vision 2020, which aspires to be among the top twenty in the world's tourist destinations.

Tafilalet is one of the most important tourist attractions of Morocco. This is due to its natural potential, its historical importance and its rich heritage, it has excellent sights that make it a destination for tourists and visitors from around the world. This wealth can lay the groundwork for a pioneering development that would qualify this territory to be competitive and consolidate integration with other national regions.

In this context, the project of tourist routes, which can contribute to the local and sustainable development of the region, as long as the economic profit is more than a tourist stay longer. That the possibility of achieving this remains dependent on the valuation of tourism assets, and offer the consumer a new and pleasant product. In this article, we will try to identify tourist routes in Tafilalet and demonstrate their importance in territorial development.

¹ National School of Business and Management, Ibn Zohr University, P . O. 32/S, Présidence Université Ibn Zohr 80000 Agadir, Morocco, Tel : +212 6 62 85 47 27, E-mail : z.hmidani@uiz.ac.ma

² National School of Business and Management, Ibn Zohr University, E-mail : mohamedsguenfel67@gmail.com

1. TOURIST ROUTES AT TAFILALET OASIS

1.1. Definition of tourist routes

In the tourist areas, the routes (or circuits) hold an original place. As their name suggests, their shape is essentially linear, that is, narrow and elongated. Routes are corridors or corridors that channel the flow of travelers between destinations. They can be terrestrial, aerial, maritime or fluvial (Cazelais et al, 1999).

Unpaved secondary roads can be more fun than the main roads for discovering the natural, historical and cultural assets of a region. Their tourism promotion is linked to the variety of complementary services, such as accommodation, catering, gas stations and reception services.

The tourist circuit can be short and can be explored on foot for a limited period of time, as it can involve a large area. Tourist routes can also be linked to a single theme or to various themes.

1.2. Types of tourist routes

The circuits differ from each other in their distance, the nature of their subjects and their degree of importance. The decision of a tourist in the choice of a destination is related to the attractive factors as we can classify them in three themes:

- Cultural factors: the desire to discover beliefs, behaviors and lifestyles. It is the different forms of artistic expression, the techniques used, as well as the traditions of society. Cultural tourism is a bridge for the exchange of ideas and knowledge, it is a cultural communication linked to the history and civilization of peoples (Anbi 2012);

- Natural (environmental) factors: play a leading role in attracting tourists. Nature or environmental tourism is dictated by the desire for adventure and discovery and imposed by the nature of international tourism economies;

- - archeological and historical factors: this type of tourism aims to discover the history of peoples and civilizations, where tourists visit archaeological sites and museums, which include the remains of buildings and monuments dating from historical periods,

1.3. The tourist project Majhoul road of Tafilale

It is a pilot project to lay the foundation for sustainable tourism that makes oases a green and sustainable destination. It is a tourist route that aims to discover the oases with the taste of the dates, which will allow the tourist to discover more than 100 types of dates. Its importance lies in the preparation of a quality plan for the translation of the tafilalt landmark

It brings together a dozen players hosting (bed, camping, hotel, hostel, guest house) which are federated in a network managed by the "Association of Ecotourism Promoters Tafilalet" (APECTAF), which has for the purpose of promoting the Road through a set of actions. Each accommodation structure has developed a theme that distinguishes it from its partners and that reflects the tourist attractions of its neighboring region. A charter of ethics, thematic guides has been developed. But the heterogeneity of interests and categories of

accommodation structures has created several tensions and discordances within APECTAF, which has delayed the execution of several actions.

Figure1: Master tourist route of route de Majhoul road



Source website of the Tafilalet oasis program POT

2. THE TYPES OF TOURIST ROUTES IN THE OASIS OF TAFILALET

2.1. The archaeological heritage route

This route aims to promote the most important monuments; it offers visitors the opportunity to see the remains of the old man. Among the most important monuments to visit, we refer to:

- Archaeological Site of Sijilmasa: a city founded in the middle Ages, prospering politically, economically, culturally and urban (Taouchikht, 1993). The ruins of Sigalmasa stretch across a vast plain: It is part of a heritage enhancement perspective as well as the promotion of the Tafilalet territory, based on three components that form Sijilmasa's markers of space, notably the ruins of the urban site that developed between the 8th and 15th centuries (city), the palm grove and its agrarian and settlement dynamics in a fragile environment

(oasis), and lastly the regional and international trade and technical exchanges of which Sijilmassa was a major hub (crossroads).

- Petroglyphs in Taous: of great historical and tourist importance, it is an important tourist place frequented by tourists, especially foreign ones, it shelters a certain number of prehistoric Petroglyphs, which provide information and precious data which allow researchers to re-establish and reconstruct the history of the social and economic structure of our ancestors (MEUNIE, 1972).

These sites reflect the richness of the route archaeological heritage of Tafilalet, which refers to the prehistoric periods of the oases and which has become more and more of scientific importance.

2.2. The architectural heritage route

This is characterized by a symbolic and cultural representation; this circuit wants to make known the Ksours and Kasbahs of residential and / or defense function. It allows the tourist to discover the architecture of the ksours their original urban planning.

The architectural heritage is able to create new resources, related to the revitalization of cultural tourism, training, research, industry and commerce. So, you have to save it and to rehabilitate it, it can be considered as the first point in the oases that must be visited.

2.3. Natural and environmental heritage route

2.3.1. Geological heritage

The manufacture and production of fossilized marble stones in the region has been practiced by traders and professionals who have innovated products and forms of decoration and use (tableware, tables, laundries ...) and artistic materials which add to the aesthetic appeal (Moloudi, 2007).

The manufacture of these fossils is widespread in Erfoud, Rissani and Merzouga. A sector linked to the tourist routes that must be explored, whether by tourists or scientific researchers.

Figure 2. Elements of Marble art

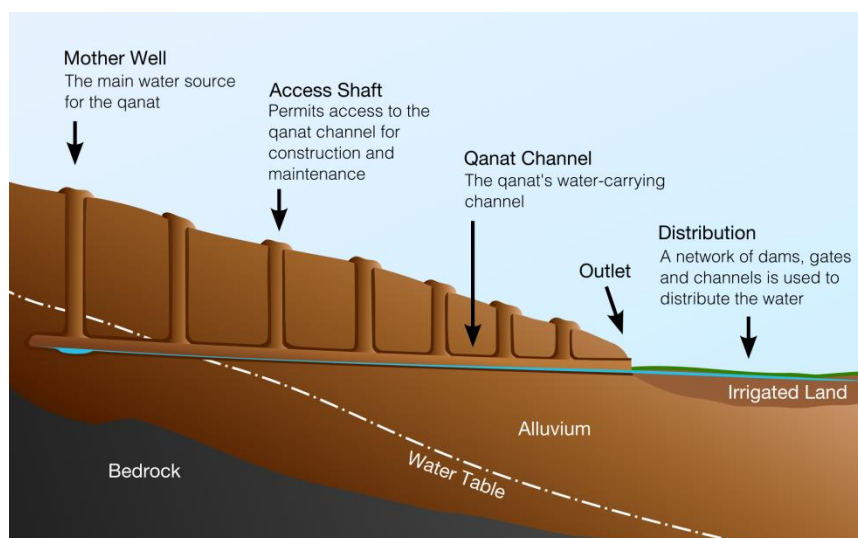


2.3.2. *heritage of hydric knowledge (khattara)*

Khattaras represent a rich socio-cultural heritage of oases. An irrigation system that has proven its ability and efficiency to adapt to climatic conditions in desert and semi-desert areas. The need for water and its conservation was behind the invention of this human technology, which was brought from Iran and used in the Maghreb for hundreds of years.

The principle of Khattara gravity is based on the drilling of a well, followed by a series of wells through a waterway through which water flows from the hollow to the surface of the earth. A process that requires technical expertise and a complete knowledge of the nature of the region (grandguillaume, 1973).(figure 2)

Figure 2. Illustrative diagram of khattara



Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Qanat_cross_section.svg

This route offers the tourist the opportunity to visit many Khattara in the oasis, where he will know the morphological configuration (well, underground canal,) and the socio-cultural organization of the water (experience and skills, joint cooperation, respect for the Nuba system,).

2.3.3. the panoramic view of the oasis of Tafilalet

The oasis area is characterized by a unique natural landscape. The green strip along Wadi Ziz is the best view of the oasis providing a panoramic view from the summit. On entering, we discover more than 100 types of dates (Mejhoul, Fegouss, Bouserdoune, etc.).

2.3.4. Sand dunes in Marzouka

They constitute a marvel and a source of tourist pride for the province. They are 50 km from Erfud. These dunes, known by Erg Chebbi, are famous for their therapeutic value, especially in cases of re-emergence. Said dunes sometimes reach 100 meters in height extend over a surface of 30 km. There is the contrast: It is a true arid desert where no plant grows, but, paradoxically, gives the visitor's sight when he contemplates these waves of sand especially at dawn and from a peak.

2.4. the economic route

2.4.1. -Traditional Crafts

This circuit shows the most important branches of traditional industry in Tafilalet, which is one of the economic sectors whose marketing of its products is related to domestic demand on the one hand and to tourism on the other. Given the declining demand for traditional products at the local level, tourism can be seen as a tool to save some trades from disappearing. The handicraft products, reflecting the authenticity of the region's heritage, are of interest to tourists.

2.4.2. -the local market

It is a historical, economic and tourist monument that offers the tourist the opportunity to know many things, locally called the Rissani Market or Moulay Ali Al-Sharif. It is one of the most important markets in the province, both in terms of its authentic architecture and its distinct traditional features, or in view of the size and value of organized commercial and craft activities. What attracts the most attention in this market is the availability of all traditional products of all kinds, given the development of trade and tourism in the region.

2.4.3. Religious cultural heritage route

This circuit shows the scientific and cultural value of the region, which was at the heart of science and scientists. It houses several ancient libraries that hold collections of ancient manuscript reservoirs as a living memory that enriches history and reveals some aspects of the region's intellectual, religious and social life. It is also home to several marabouts.

3. THE TOURIST ROUTES IN THE OASIS: A CHALLENGE OF TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT

Diversity can be considered as an advantage for the Tafilalet Oasis because of the nature of the tourism sector and the distribution of tourist traffic through polarization centers and annual tourist seasons. This is reflected in the fact that the tourism product in the region contributes to attracting distinct social groups of tourists and visitors who tend certain types,

among them, for example, exploration tourism, desert tourism, tourism oasis, ecotourism. The reduction of pressure on the major tourism poles (Agadir, Marrakech, ...) during the tourist seasons will make the marginal areas benefit from new investments that are important to strengthen tourism infrastructure and make them occupy an important place in the future based on valuing the resources and the potential of the tourist routes.

3.1. The advantages of the tourist routes

The region encompasses many hotel establishments that contribute to the tourism movement and support it through the routes mentioned above. These institutions are distributed as follows:

TABLE 1: Breakdown of accommodation establishments in Tafilalat

	classified hotels	unclassified hotels	classified hostel	un classified hostel
Errachidia	9	7	2	0
Erfoud	9	7	2	0
Rissani	3	3	2	16
Merzouga	0	0	5	59
Total	21	17	11	75

Source: Delegation of the Ministry of Tourism Errachidia, 2013

The development of hotel accommodation capacities is a strategic objective of the 2020 vision, which will improve the competitiveness of all segments of the tourism chain, including the establishment of a genuine culture of quality of tourist services and the development of a innovative presentation in the field of tourism. In addition, this vision has placed sustainable development at the center of its ambition to follow the country's general trends in order to see Morocco become, by 2020, one of the top 20 destinations for tourists.

3.2. To adopt a strategy for the development of tourism in oases

The official directions of the state show that tourism will remain among the major options for the development of oases in the future, which raises questions about the developmental and environmental dimensions of these trends, which can be allocated in the following:

- The allocation of oases with regional design and development designs that integrate historical and cultural dimensions as a tributary of the country, as well as urban planning whose objectives aim at restoring the architectural heritage without forgetting the renewal of modern life;
- Appropriate mobilization of local development resources and environmental protection through the adoption of local working methods that harmonize with the components of the medium and maintain its balance;
- Valuing the cultural heritage, which is an essential dimension of development and a component of land formation. This requires conservation of heritage within a holistic view that monitors the interaction between heritage and other sectors, particularly tourism.

The adoption of tourist routes at Tafilalet as a viable project can make the region a tourist destination. It can also play an important role in the development process if its resources are invested and valued effectively. It is natural to achieve positive results at the local level. The contributions are reflected in the following:

First: Improving the quality of the tourism product and the environmental environment

The dynamics of tourism are governed by a number of factors, including purchasing power level, the development of periods of seasonal and annual holidays, the provision of air, sea and land transport, and the spread of means of communication (information, television, internet). These factors will make the tourism sector a promising economic sector in the region, which will allow a great dynamism for individuals from different countries to meet the desire of mobility and identity to identify each other. But there are challenges that bet the future of the national tourism product in general and the units in particular. Which requires interventions at the local level by the state, the dust communities and the private sector, in line with the general strategy of tourism development, which requires the challenge to reach 20 million tourists by the year 2020.

Second: Encouraging investment environment

Investment promotion is an important element in revitalizing the tourism sector and improving its overall environment. These investments are envisaged as follows:

- Responding to growing tourist demand, along with other incentives of interest to economic sectors with close links to the tourism sector. Some of the new trades (mobile camp profession, tour operators, etc.)
- The establishment of tourism vocational training units to meet the 2020 challenge in order to provide sufficient numbers of qualified manpower, re-establish staff and improve their professional level;
- Work to sensitize the local population and deal with the tourist and improve their behavior while dealing and avoid all the abusive forms that underestimate the value of tourism.

Third: Preparing tourist areas and sites

In the framework of the new strategy to promote the tourism sector, the watchdog institutions are looking at the tourism sector as a key element in the process of reconstruction based on the national debate on tourism in Marrakech, which aims to double the size of tourism sector in the national economy, . It also includes the preservation of arable land and the green areas and oases of palm trees that foreign investors and analysts are rushing to turn into hotels, camps or hostel.

CONCLUSION:

The experience of the tourist tracks is really a project aimed at marketing the tourism product of the desert and desert, and suitable to explore some of the natural characteristics, historical and heritage, through which the tourist offers the advantages of the field. To

enhance the role of these tracks, there are proposals that can contribute to improving the conditions of the Oasis visit by:

- paving and network of roads with the reinforcement and diversification of tourist buildings (transport, hotels, restaurants, swimming pools, tourist residences, ...);

- Introducing tourist routes on a regional, national and international level, providing visitors with a special guide known as the field of tourism, and promoting these paths with signboards with maps and information in different languages, and carrying photographs of heritage features and components;

- Encouraging investors to value tourism qualifications through these paths in a rational and decent manner while preserving the environmental environment.

REFERENCES

Journal articles

Anbi, A. (2012). Le tourisme culturel et son rôle de dans le développement des oasis : cas de Tafilalet. *Revue de développement durable rural et des oasis, série de conférences 33, Faculté des lettres Meknes,*

Attou, M. B., & Aziki, S. (2008, October). Modele urbain oasien et stratégie touristique marocaine: quel lien?: cas du Draa et de Tafilalet. In *Colloque International" Tourisme oasien: formes, acteurs et enjeux". Université Ibn Zohr, Agadir (Maroc), Faculté Polydisciplinaire de Ouarzazate. 23-25 octobre 2008.*

Grandguillaume, G. (1973). Régime économique et structure du pouvoir: le système des foggara du Touat. *Revue de l'Occident musulman et de la Méditerranée, 13(1), 437-457.*

Jacques-Meunie, D. (1972). Notes sur l'histoire des populations du sud marocain. *Revue de l'Occident musulman et de la Méditerranée, 11(1), 137-150.*

Books

Cazelais, N. (1999). *L'espace touristique.* PUQ.

Moloudi, M. (2007). *Le patrimoine géologique de Tafilalet.* Dafatir, 3-4, FLSH FES, INFOPRINT.

Websites

http://www.ma.undp.org/content/morocco/fr/home/operations/projects/poverty_reduction/programme-de-developpement-territorial-durable-des-oasis-du-tafi.html

