

A study of tourism awareness among undergraduate students at the University of Jordan

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ABSTRACT

In Jordan, tourism is an important force behind social and economic progress. The aim of this study is to investigate the awareness of Jordanian university students about tourism, with particular emphasis on the primary methods they adopt in choosing travel destinations, the harmful effects of tourism on the nation, and the functioning of tourism authorities. The study used non-probability sampling and a statistical analysis method to assess data collected from questionnaires given to 422 students. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze the data. The results revealed that the primary factors influencing university students' choice of travel destinations in Jordan include the availability of appropriate curricula and courses designed to increase tourism awareness. The importance of tourism awareness in promoting cultural and international understanding was also recognized by the participants. The research findings highlighted the importance of providing university students with comprehensive information about tourism in Jordan and its attractions. This can be achieved through awareness programs aimed at increasing their tourism awareness, with the importance of continuously developing these programs to meet the growing educational needs of students and encourage their continued participation in tourism activities.

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1. Introduction

Tourism is considered one of the most dynamic and fast-growing sectors globally, which makes countries give due concern to its development due to its role, which contributes greatly to the national economy, employs a large number of people and preserves cultural and historical heritage [1]. In the Middle East context, tourism is an important tool to overcome economic and regional problems that not only contributes to economic development but also builds bridges through cultural exchange resulting in understanding between different groups [2]. Although tourism has many benefits, its successful implementation requires deep awareness in the host communities. Tourism awareness involves the active participation of the local population in promoting a favorable environment for the expansion of the tourism industry. To guarantee a satisfactory travel experience, this involves accepting shared responsibility for hosting visitors, understanding their

rights and taking into account their needs [3]. Development of tourism awareness is essential to the long-term development of tourist destinations as it improves both the standard of services offered to guests and the overall reputation of the destination [4].

Jordan's tourism sector faces particular difficulties due to different levels of awareness among citizens, especially the younger generation, who are future stakeholders in the industry [5]. The dependence on interpersonal relationships inherent to effective tourism practices underscores the need for an informed society that understands the importance of tourism and its potential impacts. Therefore, create a strong tourism framework that promotes investment, competitiveness and sustainable practices

1.1. Previous Studies

Tourism awareness has been studied in many previous research papers, as well as its impact on local communities and its role in tourism development. A previous study in Indonesia focused on the role of government policies in the development of tourism sectors by emphasizing tourism awareness. The survey results revealed areas of dissatisfaction including security, safety and services that require improvement. Local and innovative projects were also promoted to raise awareness among tourists with entrepreneurial qualities [7].

Another study assessed sustainability awareness among university students in a group of recent graduates in physical activity and sports science in Spain. The results showed that regular stay and training in natural environments is associated with the university students' general behaviour. Researchers indicate that active interaction with the natural environment increases our level of consciousness [8]. Another study examined the feasibility of tourism as a development strategy for remote fishing communities in the Philippines. The results revealed tourism awareness in two distinct regions, while cooperation with coastal communities in tourism development planning was limited. This suggests the possibility of effective and sustainable participation of local communities within a community-based tourism strategy [9].

A study also analyzed community awareness and local tourism knowledge in two Namibian communities: Katutura, Windhoek and King Nahal Sanctuary. It found that educating local residents can make them active participants in tourism development rather than remaining passive subjects, as is often the case in disadvantaged rural and urban areas [10]. A study examining tourism among secondary school students in Africa indicated that i

2. Method

2.1. Sources of Data

Primary and secondary data were used to obtain the information that would be relevant and complete to collect the required information on this study. Primary: To collect data on the perceptions and awareness of the undergraduate students of the University of Jordan regarding tourism, a structured questionnaire was conducted in the field. It is necessary that this primary data is used to understand the views and experiences of Jordanian tourists. Secondary: To supplement and complement the primary data secondary sources of information were used. These were books of the Tourism Promotion Authority, the University of Jordan, the ministry of tourism and antiquities and the ministry of higher education. As well, pertinent scholarly articles, theses, and academic books in the field of tourism studies were looked into. This secondary data provided the major findings with a contextual framework.

2.2. Study Sample

The study population comprised all undergraduate students enrolled at the University of Jordan during the summer semester. A sample was selected from this population for a case study, and a

questionnaire was administered to a random subset of these students. The sample size was established based on the number of respondents, and an exploratory distribution of 25 questionnaires was conducted to assess the questionnaire's appropriateness and to refine it in order to meet the study's objectives. The responses to one of the inquiries were chosen in the exploratory sample. The sample size was calculated by the Admission and Registration Unit based on the enrollment of 35,900 University of Jordan students in the summer semester for the academic year 2023-2024. The applied formula yielded a study sample size of 422 students, as shown in Table 1, and Fig. 1.

Table 1. Number of students and sample size

No.	Faculty	No. of Students	Relative Weight	Sample Size Determined
1	Arts	3823	10.6	6.7
2	Educational Sciences	2300	6.4	37
3	Business	2590	7.2	37.8
4	Foreign Languages	2540	7.2	37.8
5	Law	2420	6.7	38.2
6	Sharia	1416	3.9	20.4
7	Arts	2290	6.3	26.5
8	Archaeology and Tourism	2266	6.3	28.5
9	Sciences	2233	6.2	26.1
10	Agriculture	1400	3.8	16.3
11	Pharmacy	677	1.8	7.5
12	Physical Education	720	2.9	12.2
13	International Studies	210	0.5	0.01
14	Medicine	2390	6.6	27.8
15	Dentistry	955	2.6	10.9
16	Rehabilitation Sciences	1787	4.9	20.6
17	Engineering	3944	10.9	45.9
18	Information Technology	1900	5.2	21.9
Total		35900	99.9	422

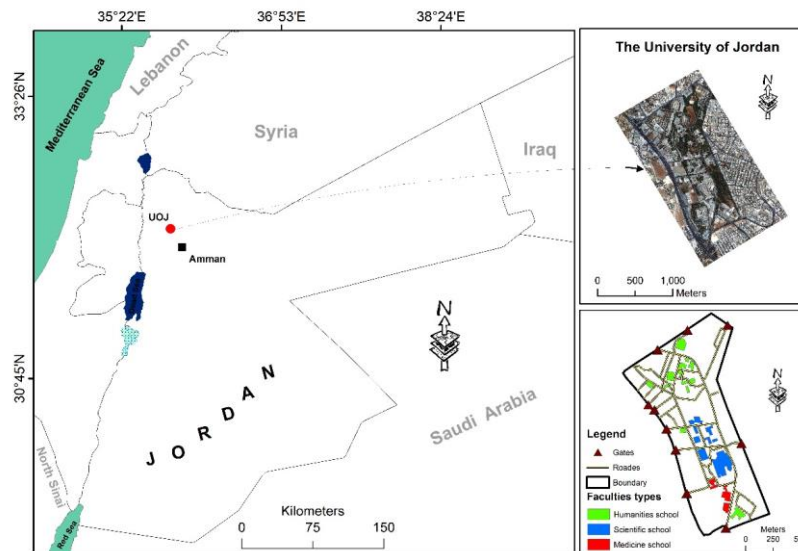


Fig. 1. Geographical distribution of the game using (GIS) software.

2.3. Study Instrument

This research utilized a survey composed of five parts. These parts covered details gathering fundamental data about the participants, such as age, gender and field of study. The survey also investigated ways of recognizing tourist sites showing how students identify and differentiate tourist

attractions in Jordan. Additionally, it aimed to comprehend tourism's role, in exchange and its perceived effects according to students enrolled in tourism courses. Questions also addressed the potential negative impacts of tourism on Jordan's environment and culture, and students' opinions on the responsibilities of various stakeholders in the tourism sector, including governmental bodies and private institutions.

2.4. Reliability and Validity of the Instrument

To confirm the reliability and validity of the questionnaire, the research was examined by experts in tourism and research methods. We adjusted significant parts of the study based on these experts' comments.

The clarity of the questions was checked through a pre-test carried out on a sample of 25 students from the University of Jordan. We measured the reliability of the instrument through Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which resulted in 83.8.

Such a value reflects a very good level of internal consistency and is therefore a strong confirmation that the questionnaire is a powerful tool in the research process.

2.5. Ethical Considerations

This study was conducted in accordance with ethical guidelines for research involving human subjects. An institutional review board gave the go-ahead for the study before data were collected. Participants were informed of the aims of the study and their permission was actively sought before administering the questionnaire. Furthermore, the confidentiality and privacy of the participants' responses was maintained throughout all phases of the survey, thus guaranteeing that no personal identity would be revealed in the presentation of the results.

2.6. Modern Relevance of the Research

This is a contemporary research on students' awareness of tourism at a Jordanian university that reflects the growing recognition of the importance of tourism education in a rapidly changing world. Since the study focuses on the opinions of the younger generation, it becomes a powerful tool for the future of the tourism sector in Jordan, and additionally points to the need to educate students about tourism through academic curriculum. Therefore, proposing mandatory classes and awareness programs is one way to emphasize the importance of taking additional steps to guarantee that future leaders in the tourism industry are well-informed and culturally sensitive.

Through the rigorous application of this approach, the study aims to uncover a comprehensive picture of students' awareness of tourism and the resulting impacts on educational institutions and the tourism sector in Jordan.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Demographic Characteristics of the Study Sample

The findings of this research reveal that most of the sample are females, making up 86.1%, as shown in [Table 2](#). This proportion corresponds to the educational situation where higher education in Jordan is more attractive to female students than male students. The finding reinforces the opinion of [\[13\]](#) whose research results had the same trend regarding gender distribution in higher education.

The figures also outline that the percentage of Jordanian students is about 81.5% which means that this research is mainly based on the national demographic. Understanding this aspect is a prerequisite for comprehending how 'education through tourism' can be a means of safeguarding the cultural heritage of Jordan. The fourth-year students are the major group of the sample, making up 44.9% of the total participants. Even though the year of study does not have a direct effect on tourism awareness, it still depicts a period that is close to graduation and thus may indicate trends related to the importance of tourism awareness in the labor market. Besides that, the data also depict

that 34.1% of students come from Amman, the capital city. This is due to the fact that geographically Amman is the center of the country and therefore is the most attractive place for higher education seekers. The results emphasize the need for the higher education community, including academics and staff, to realize how location and social context can influence students' learning in the tourism field.

Table 2. Demographic characteristics of the sample

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	59	13.9
	Female	363	86.1
Nationality	Jordanian	344	81.5
	Non-Jordanian	78	18.5
Academic year	Year 1	44	10.4
	Year 2	90	21.3
	Year 3	99	23.4
	Year 4	189	44.9
Place of Residence	Amman	144	34.1
	Zarqa'	55	13.3
	Balqa'	45	10.6
	Madaba	28	6.6
	Karak	22	5.2
	Tafila	20	4.7
	Aqaba	18	4.2
	Ma'an	10	2.3
	Irbid	20	4.7
	Jarash	44	10.4
	Ma'raq	7	1.6
	Ajloun	9	2.1

3.2. Methods Used to Identify Tourist Destinations

the study findings indicate that majority of students perceive that university curricula and academic courses are the major source of learning tourist destinations in Jordan. This shows that the effect of special curriculum that creates tourism awareness is substantial. This result indicates that there is a necessity to design the existing curricula to feature more topics related to tourism, something that has been highlighted by various researchers in the past who have associated education as one of the means through which tourism awareness can be fostered [14].

Table 3, indicates that the variable 'The subject of tourism is important in education curricula at all stages of primary, secondary, and university' has the highest percentage of recognition of tourist destinations in Jordan, with an arithmetic mean of 4.12. This is followed by 'Spreading tourism awareness is the responsibility of the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities alone,' which has an arithmetic mean of 3.94, and subsequently, 'There are sufficient university curricula and courses to spread tourism awareness among students in Jordanian universities.' There exist adequate university curricula and courses to disseminate tourism awareness among students in Jordanian universities. The promotion of tourism awareness is a significant contributor to political, social, and cultural advancement. Furthermore, tourism awareness is a critical element of tourism development in Jordan, with arithmetic means of 3.89, 3.83, 3.77, and 3.66, respectively.

Table 3. Means of recognizing tourist sites in Jordan

Statements	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Percentage	Rating
Jordanian institutions offer ample curriculum and courses to enhance tourism awareness among	4.36	1.233	87.2%	High

students.				
Tourism is a significant topic in educational curricula at basic, secondary, and tertiary levels.	3.82	1.17	76.4%	High
The obligation to promote tourism awareness rests only with the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities.	3.69	1.611	73.8%	High
Enhancing tourism awareness is a crucial element in political, social, and cultural advancement.	3.59	1.024	71.8%	Moderate
tourism awareness profoundly influences the efficacy of the tourist process.	3.56	0.584	71.2%	Moderate
Tourism awareness is seen as a critical element in the growth of tourism in Jordan.	3.54	0.749	70.8%	Moderate

Other areas that the participants identified tourism awareness to be is their revelation of more than mere the simple knowledge of landmarks to the knowledge of the culture, customs, and traditions that go with them. This view justifies why the awareness programs need to be continuous in order to create awareness of tourism amongst students in the universities.

Hence, there is the need to give information in details regarding tourism in Jordan and its landmarks by ensuring that there are compulsory courses to all students as part of developing a study track that incorporates the aspect of tourism in the curriculum. It is a good move towards improving the education experience of the students which will lead to growth of the tourism sector in the country.

Table 4, indicates that the primary indication about the significance of tourism for the students of the University of Jordan is 'tourism awareness contributes to spreading culture and enhancing international understanding,' with an arithmetic mean of (4.0). The researcher elucidates that university students' comprehension of tourism awareness and its significance fosters a positive disposition through tourism education and a thorough understanding of tourist destinations and products, particularly given Jordan's notable attractions such as Aqaba, Wadi Rum, and Petra. These sites serve as primary tourist destinations in Jordan, as many visitors lack familiarity with these locations due to insufficient experience and inadequate tourism awareness.

Table 4. The importance of tourism in Jordan according to the University of Jordan students

Statements	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Percentage	Rating
Students at the University of Jordan possess adequate tourism awareness to remain abreast of tourist development.	4.02	0.919	80.4%	High
Tourism awareness fosters cultural dissemination and enhances global comprehension.	3.99	0.94	79.8%	High
The tourist industry is a major economic sector in Jordan.	3.89	1.228	77.8%	High
Tourism enhances the interest of youth in Jordanian society in acquiring foreign languages.	3.66	0.939	73.2%	Moderate
Tourism is the primary economic contributor to the state treasury through the generation of foreign currency.	3.62	1.063	72.4%	Moderate
There exists ample interest and collaboration from both the governmental and private sectors to develop tourist locations.	3.58	0.470	71.6%	Moderate

3.3. The potential negative effects of tourism and the role of public entities in spreading tourism awareness

The results revealed that the potential negative effects of tourism in Jordan, as shown in Table 5, manifested as a culture and tourism gap among many youths, with an average score of (3.78), indicating a significant level. The researchers point out that tourism awareness is a fundamental element that should not be ignored when developing strategies to promote and develop the tourism

sector. This awareness is essential for improving the public perception of tourism and mitigating some of the negative repercussions associated with the tourism industry in any country, by building a tourism-literate society that understands the importance of the achievements and successes of the tourism sector.

Table 5. Possible adverse impacts of tourism

Statements	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Percentage	Rating
Tourism constitutes a detrimental rather than beneficial factor impacting Jordanian society.	3.78	1.014	75.6%	High
Tourism and tourism awareness positively contributes to promoting understanding among youth in Arab countries.	3.65	1.192	73%	Moderate
The absence of collaboration across pertinent ministries to promote tourism awareness among university students.	3.64	1.066	72.8%	Moderate
A cultural and tourism disparity exists among numerous young individuals.	3.6	1.07	72%	Moderate

The results also highlighted the important role of several public institutions, such as the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and the Jordan Tourism Board, in raising awareness of tourism, as shown in Table 6. The arithmetic mean of the statement "The Ministry of Tourism provides financial support to promote tourism awareness among university students" was 3.69, indicating a high level of agreement. The results underscored the need for the Jordanian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities to allocate financial resources to tourism awareness initiatives among university students, given the effective role of such awareness in promoting Jordanian destinations through the development of existing tourism programs both in Jordan and abroad.

Table 6. The role of tourism stakeholders in Jordan

Items	Mean	Standard Deviation	Percentage	Degree
Internal factors adversely impact tourism awareness, including conventions, traditions, and apprehension toward interactions with tourists, who are viewed as outsiders.	3.69	1.2	73.8%	High
Certain internal causes enhance tourism awareness, including the pursuit of information and the financial advantages derived from travelers.	3.65	1.08	73.0%	High
The Ministry of Tourism provides financial assistance to enhance tourism awareness among university students.	3.64	1.14	72.8%	High
Supplying the university library with scholarly references concerning Jordanian heritage tourism and its diverse forms	3.63	1.521	72.0%	High
Conducting introductory seminars on tourism in Jordan and inviting a field specialist.	3.62	0.749	72.4%	High

3.4. Comparing the Results with Previous Studies

The findings of this research work are aligned to those of past researches that dealt with tourism awareness and the effects of education on tourism. Indeed, the research [15], highlighted that the awareness of tourism increases the knowledge of the traveler about the social and cultural aspects related to tourism; that is, the visitor in the foreign country. Examining the concept of tourism awareness introduced [16], one will see that the given study adds on to his ideas and helps strengthen the necessity of the basic knowledge about tourism among youth.

The findings are also inherent to a common direction related to the necessity to introduce tourism into higher education in its different manifestations that correlates with the global issues of enhancing the tourism education approaches. Other past researchers have shown that it is important to acknowledge tourism as a social and economic development tool hence the urgency of conducting such research and education.

Consequently, the findings of the current research suggest that it is essential to offer a holistic tourism program, which puts a focus on the fusion of the cultural and civilizational aspects. Tourism awareness creation among the students will also play a key role in enhancing the tourism experience among the students in Jordan and creating a stronger cultural identity among the people. The results presented in this study are a solid basis of future study on how these recommendations may be applied to the educational systems, therefore, paving way to future activities aimed at enhancing tourism as one of the main elements of university life and the tourism experience in general.

4. Conclusion

This paper has determined that tourism awareness among the students of the University of Jordan is an important aspect in improving their study and tourism experiences. The outcomes underscore the need to incorporate tourism-oriented programs in higher learning studies. The results obtained have shown that when students are provided with information and educational materials on the topic of tourism, it becomes easier to comprehend its influence on the cultural and social aspects of the identity of the Jordanian society.

These findings hold value in that they might help the educational institutions to formulate academic programs that enhance tourism awareness and hence help in the production of well-trained graduates who have a profound knowledge of tourism and its contribution to national economy. Moreover, the paper states that offering training programs and workshops on tourism may contribute to improving the competencies of students and their preparedness to become productive participants of the labor market upon graduation.

The findings also endorse the need to have collaboration between tourism authorities and academic institutions in Jordan. Such cooperation will promote the sharing of knowledge and experience and will stimulate the shift towards sustainable tourism approaches. This type of cooperation is needed not only to raise the level of tourism awareness among students but also to enhance the role of Jordan as a whole and as a unique tourist destination in the region.

Conclusively, this study suggests future researches on other sector or groups of people in the society like non university youth or professionals in the tourism industry to study the degree of tourism awareness and the effects of education in that respect. Increasing research in this field will help in coming up with more effective and innovative education strategies that could capture the significance of tourism as a core aspect of the social and economic growth development in Jordan.

Consequently, the results of the current paper are a step towards a further insight into tourism awareness and its effects, which will lead to the progressive development of sustainable development in the Jordanian tourism industry, and the criticality of the educational solutions needed to address the requirements of the contemporary age.

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