

SOCIAL CULTURE, INFRASTRUCTURE, AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH TOURISM IN ALGERIA

Ali ALLIOUA

Professor, PhD, Mohamed-Cherif Messaadia University - Souk Ahras (Algeria)

E-mail: a.alioua@univ-soukahras.dz

Abstract: *Infrastructure and a tourism mindset contribute to the support and development of the tourism sector. Infrastructure forms the foundation upon which the sector relies, encompassing transportation, accommodation, recreational facilities, and public services that make the tourist experience comfortable and appealing. Additionally, having a robust digital infrastructure has become essential in the technological age to facilitate access to information and tourism services. On the other hand, a tourism mindset, characterized by welcoming tourists and understanding their needs, plays a pivotal role in enhancing the tourism experience and creating a hospitable environment. This study also aims to address the importance of urban planning, waste management, and investment in infrastructure to ensure the sustainability of natural and cultural resources. Moreover, investments in healthcare services, security, and digital payment methods are vital factors for the success of tourist destinations. In summary, tourism requires a comprehensive blend of advanced infrastructure and an open mindset to create a successful and sustainable tourism experience.*

Keywords: tourism, tourism mindset, infrastructure.

1. Introduction

Tourism is considered one of the most important economic and cultural sectors in the world today, as it combines meeting the needs of travelers and entertainment with enhancing cultural understanding among peoples. Tourism is not merely an economic activity aimed at generating profits; it serves as a bridge connecting different cultures and provides an opportunity to learn about the traditions, customs, and histories of other communities. Through this cultural exchange, tourism contributes to fostering mutual understanding and broadening the horizons of both visitors and host communities.

Moreover, tourism plays a significant role in stimulating infrastructure development in tourist countries and regions. The development of infrastructure—such as airports, hotels, roads, and recreational facilities—is directly linked to the prosperity of the tourism sector. As the number of tourists increases, countries need to improve these facilities and services to accommodate the growing numbers and ensure high-quality service. This infrastructure benefits not only tourists but also local communities, improving living standards and enhancing regional development. On the other hand, tourism significantly impacts the social culture of host communities. It can lead to changes in lifestyle, consumption patterns, and even social values. Tourism can enhance cultural diversity and tolerance, but it can also pose challenges in preserving local cultural identity, especially in areas heavily reliant on foreign tourism.

In conclusion, the relationship between tourism, social culture, and infrastructure is integrative. While tourism relies on the development of infrastructure and the stability of local culture, it simultaneously serves as an effective means to enhance that infrastructure and broaden cultural interaction among peoples. Tourism acts as an open window through which communities observe each other, making it an effective tool for transferring cultures and promoting mutual understanding. This direct cultural interaction can lead to positive changes within communities, as local populations gain new experiences from visitors, whether related to lifestyle, technology, or art. At the same time, tourists learn about new cultures and different ways of life, fostering respect for cultural diversity and appreciation for differences.

In addition, tourism serves as a strong incentive to preserve cultural and historical heritage. Many communities find themselves driven to maintain their historical landmarks and local cultures to attract tourists. This creates a balance between economic progress and the preservation of cultural identity. Traditional markets, handicrafts, and popular festivals often attract tourists and help support the local economy, leading to the revival of cultural heritage that might face extinction without tourism interest.

Regarding infrastructure, tourism exerts a positive pressure on governments and institutions to develop and enhance public facilities. In countries that rely on tourism as a primary source of income, we find significant investments in improving roads, developing airports, building luxury hotels, and providing advanced communication networks. These improvements benefit not only tourism but also elevate the

quality of services provided to citizens, enhancing quality of life and increasing opportunities for local development.

However, it is essential to note that rapid growth in tourism can lead to some environmental and social challenges. Pressures on natural resources and infrastructure may occur if proper planning is not implemented. Therefore, it is crucial to adopt sustainable tourism strategies that consider the long-term preservation of environmental and cultural resources. Sustainable development in tourism aims to ensure that the economic and cultural benefits continue for future generations without harming the environment or cultural heritage.

2. Problem statement

The relationship between tourism, social culture, and infrastructure lies in how to achieve a balance between economic development through tourism and the preservation of cultural identity and environmental sustainability. On one hand, tourism serves as a primary source of income and promotes the development of local infrastructure, contributing to improved quality of life and increased economic opportunities. On the other hand, the pressures resulting from large tourist inflows can threaten local culture, whether through social change or the overwhelming influence of foreign values and customs on the original identity of the host community. Furthermore, there is a question regarding the ability of infrastructure to accommodate large numbers of tourists without negatively impacting the environment and natural resources. Mass tourism can lead to the depletion of environmental resources and the deterioration of historical sites, necessitating the establishment of sustainable strategies to preserve these resources. The issue lies in how to utilize tourism as a tool for development and cultural exchange while minimizing negative impacts on the local community and infrastructure, ensuring that this development is sustainable in the long term without compromising cultural identity or the environment.

3. Social culture and tourism

Social culture plays a pivotal role in promoting or hindering tourism, significantly affecting the experiences and expectations of visitors. The relationship between social culture and tourism can be summarized in the following points (Weaver, D. B. 2019, p. 55):

1. Cultural Attraction:

Social culture, including customs, traditions, arts, music, and food, is a major draw for tourists. For example, tourists are attracted to countries with rich cultures, such as popular festivals, traditional markets, and historical landmarks that reflect the lives of local communities.

2. Respect and Cultural Interaction:

Openness to other cultures and hospitable treatment of tourists enhance a country's reputation as a tourist destination. Conversely, communities that may be closed off or unwelcoming to tourists can weaken their appeal, deterring visitors from choosing that destination (Hall, C. M., & Page, S. J. 2014, p. 42).

3. Cultural Exchange:

Tourism contributes to promoting cultural exchange among different communities. When tourists interact with locals, ideas and values are exchanged, leading to increased understanding of each other's cultures. This interaction can enrich and evolve the social culture itself over time.

4. Social Impacts of Tourism:

Tourism can lead to changes in local lifestyles. Sometimes, it may commercialize certain traditions or rituals to meet tourists' needs. In some cases, this can result in the erosion of traditional values or the emergence of conflicts between cultures (Weaver, D. B. 2019, p. 295).

5. Social Structure and Tourism Promotion:

Communities that rely on tourism as a primary source of income often promote cultural and social activities as part of the tourism experience. This trend can drive the revival of cultural heritage and the development of tourism infrastructure, such as museums and cultural centers (Hall, C. M., & Page, S. J. 2014, p. 121).

6. Cultural Marketing:

Social culture is an essential component of tourism promotion for destinations. Countries utilize aspects of their culture in tourism marketing campaigns, such as traditional food, folklore, handicrafts, and heritage clothing, to attract foreign tourists.

4. Individual culture and tourism

Individual culture in communities plays a crucial role in how tourists are received and interacted with, and it can be a key factor in the success or failure of tourism in some countries. When social or individual culture is conservative or unwelcoming towards tourists, challenges may arise that affect the tourism sector.

1. Cultural and Religious Influences:

In some communities, traditions and customs associated with religion or conservative values can strongly shape individuals' attitudes toward tourists. Some individuals may refuse to welcome tourists if they perceive that the tourists' cultures or behaviors conflict with local values. For example, non-conservative Western clothing or behaviors that may be deemed disrespectful in the local community can provoke residents' displeasure (Hall, C. M., & Page, S. J. 2014, p. 412).

2. Fear of Negative Cultural Impact:

Some communities fear that the presence of large numbers of tourists may lead to changes in local lifestyles or loss of cultural identity. These fears may result in resistance to welcoming tourists, as individuals feel that their original culture may be marginalized or that their traditional values could weaken under the influence of foreign culture.

3. Stereotypes and Preconceptions:

At times, individuals within a community may hold negative perceptions or stereotypes about tourists or certain nationalities, affecting their ability to interact warmly. These perceptions may stem from previous negative experiences or media portrayals, leading to discomfort or even hostility towards tourists (Weaver, D. B. 2019, p. 257).

4. Lack of Openness and Cultural Communication:

In some communities, a lack of communication or interaction with other cultures can result in individuals being closed off and not understanding cultural differences. These communities may lack experience in dealing with strangers or tourists, making them ill-equipped to welcome them or comprehend their cultures and needs (Baker, D., & O'Reilly, K. 2020, p. 254).

5. Traditional Values vs. Modernity:

There can sometimes be a conflict between traditional values and modernity, as some individuals view the welcoming of tourists and reliance on tourism as leading to the adoption of behaviors foreign to the community. This cultural gap may widen, especially if there is no balance between preserving traditions and adapting to modern tourism demands.

6. Economic Incentives vs. Cultural Resistance:

In some countries, despite tourism providing job opportunities and improving the economic situation, there may be strong cultural resistance. Individuals may feel that economic benefits do not compensate for the cultural and social changes that may be imposed by the influx of tourists. This creates tension between those who wish to benefit from tourism and others who seek to protect their culture.

7. Importance of Awareness and Education:

To address these challenges, cultural awareness and education can play a significant role. Individuals should be taught how to interact with tourists in a manner that respects cultural diversity, and at the same time, tourists should be made aware of the necessity to respect local culture. Through this mutual understanding, tensions can be reduced, and harmony between the local community and tourists can be enhanced (Baker, D., & O'Reilly, K. 2020, p. 51).

8. Gradual Integration:

In some countries that were previously closed to tourism, openness can be achieved gradually through programs aimed at building bridges between tourists and local communities. Responsible tourism initiatives can focus on minimizing negative impacts on local culture and work with communities to preserve their heritage and culture.

5. Barriers to tourism in communities

1. Cultural Isolation and Wariness of the Foreign:

In some communities, particularly those that live in relative isolation or do not interact continuously with foreign cultures, there may be feelings of suspicion or caution toward tourists. These feelings may stem from concerns about losing cultural identity or from previous negative experiences with foreigners (Jansen-Verbeke, M. 2018, p. 45).

Examples:

2. Rural Communities: In many countries, rural communities are often more conservative compared to urban ones. Individuals in these areas may view tourism as external interference that could alter their lifestyle or threaten their traditions.

3. Tribal or Traditional Communities: Sometimes, tourism is seen as a threat to the intrinsic nature of tribal communities, as it can lead to the "commodification" or loss of their authentic character.

4. Tension Between Globalization and Local Identity:

There is an ongoing conflict in communities that have started to open up to tourism between their desire to join the modern world and their need to maintain local cultural identity. This conflict is often evident in the policies of developing countries that try to attract tourism but fear its negative impact on social values (Prideaux, B., & Cooper, C. 2017, p. 154).

Examples:

5. Interaction with Western Culture: Tourism from Western countries often brings a lifestyle that differs significantly from local values, such as wearing non-conservative clothing or engaging in behaviors like drinking alcohol or publicly expressing romantic relationships. These behaviors may not align with conservative communities and can create tension.

6. Economic and Social Pressure:

Tourism is an important economic source for many countries, but it can also put pressure on the social fabric. Communities heavily reliant on tourism may experience social tensions stemming from economic disparities between local residents and wealthy tourists. This disparity can lead to resentment towards tourists (Jansen-Verbeke, M. 2018, p. 51).

Examples:

7. Developing Countries: In some developing countries, local residents may feel compelled to provide services to tourists at the expense of their own needs. This can lead to feelings of exploitation or resentment, especially if the economic benefits of tourism do not reach all community members.

8. Adherence to Customs and Traditions:

Many communities are very protective of their customs and traditions and see the reception of tourists as a potential threat to those customs. In this case, there is an internal conflict between the need for tourism as a source of income and the desire to maintain established traditions (Baker, D., & O'Reilly, K. 2020, p. 22).

Examples:

9. Bedouin Communities: In some areas, such as Bedouin communities, individuals may feel that tourism leads to changes in their traditional ways of living. They may feel that their original customs are being exploited or superficially marketed to tourists rather than preserving their true essence.

10. Cultural Resistance to Globalization:

Some communities view tourism as a tool for cultural globalization that may erase local identities. These communities are often more resistant to tourism, seeing that a large influx of tourists may lead to the "globalization" of their culture and make it similar to other cultures following global consumer patterns.

Examples:

11. Conservative Communities in the Middle East: In some Arab countries, there are concerns that Western tourism may lead to changes in religious and social values, prompting some individuals or governments to restrict tourism or control the type of tourists allowed to visit the country (Jansen-Verbeke, M. 2018, p. 23).

12. Sustainable Tourism as a Solution for Cultural Balance:

One of the solutions that can mitigate the impact of these challenges is adopting the concept of "sustainable tourism," which focuses on positive cultural interaction between tourists and local communities. This can be achieved by encouraging tourists to respect local traditions and directing support towards projects that enhance rather than weaken local culture (Gossling, S., & Hall, C. M. 2019, p. 554).

Examples:

13. Rural Tourism Programs: Some countries, such as India or Morocco, have started to develop rural tourism programs where tourists can experience traditional rural life authentically while adhering to local values and customs.

14. Need for Mutual Education:

To reduce tensions between tourists and local residents, there is a need to educate both parties. On one hand, tourists should be educated about local customs and the importance of respecting them. On the other hand, local residents can learn how to interact with foreign cultures in an open manner without compromising their core values (Jansen-Verbeke, M. 2018, p. 147).

Examples:

15. Local Tour Guides: In some places, local tour guides are trained to act as bridges between tourists and the local community, educating tourists about local culture and inviting them to respect it.

5. The need for infrastructure and a tourist mindset in tourism

Tourism requires developed infrastructure and an open tourist mindset to achieve success and sustainability. Infrastructure forms the foundation of the tourism industry, contributing to the provision of means and services that make tourists' experiences comfortable and attractive. This includes the presence of airports, paved roads, effective public transportation systems, and hotels of various classifications, in addition to recreational facilities, restaurants, and shopping centers. This infrastructure is essential to ensure that cities and tourist destinations can accommodate the increasing numbers of tourists, while also providing an appropriate level of services, thereby increasing the chances of repeat visits and enhancing the destination's reputation (Prideaux & Cooper, 2017, p. 35).

However, in addition to infrastructure, there is a pressing need for a tourist mindset, which is the general culture that embraces tourism and understands tourists' needs and requirements. This mindset includes the willingness of the local community to positively interact with tourists, offering assistance and services with a spirit of hospitality (UNWTO, 2021, p. 362). Training workers in the tourism sector and raising their awareness about the importance of providing high-quality services is part of developing this mindset. Additionally, attention to tourism education, whether for those working in the sector or the general population, contributes to enhancing local communities' understanding of the importance of tourism and its positive impact on the economy.

The tourist mindset is not limited to hotel and restaurant workers; it also includes government and administrative institutions responsible for managing tourist sites. This requires cooperation among various sectors to ensure a comprehensive experience for tourists, from their entry into the country until their departure.

Therefore, it can be said that tourism fundamentally depends on a combination of robust infrastructure and an open tourist mindset. While the importance of roads, hotels, and facilities is undeniable, the warm welcome and positive interaction with tourists are what enhance the tourism experience and encourage them to return, thus achieving sustainability and ongoing development in this sector (Prideaux & Cooper, 2017, p. 51).

Tourism relies on infrastructure and a tourist mindset as two essential pillars to ensure the sustainability of this vital sector. Tourist destinations require strong infrastructure to effectively and sustainably support tourist movement. This includes advanced transportation networks linking cities with tourist areas, as well as providing comfortable and diverse transportation options such as high-speed trains, buses, and modern airports. It also involves developing hotels and resorts across various categories to meet the needs of different types of tourists regarding comfort and quality, as well as providing healthcare facilities and public amenities such as tourist information centers, shops, and recreational facilities.

Infrastructure is not limited to just physical aspects; it also includes digital infrastructure. With the advancement of technology, providing strong and fast internet connectivity for tourists has become essential, whether to facilitate hotel and transport service bookings or to guide tourists through map and information applications. This also includes digital payment systems and electronic services that make navigating and accessing services easy and quick (Prideaux & Cooper, 2017, p. 21).

As for the tourist mindset, it is the human factor that is just as important as infrastructure. Local communities must adopt a welcoming approach towards tourists, and residents should be fully aware of the significance of tourism as a major source of income and job opportunities. This includes creating a social environment that respects and understands the different cultures that tourists bring with them. Positive interactions with tourists and providing services with kindness and professionalism are key to providing a distinctive tourism experience. Tourists seek more than just visiting landmarks or staying in luxury hotels; they want to connect with the local culture and feel welcomed (UNWTO, 2021, p. 25).

Investing in training the tourism workforce is an important part of enhancing the tourist mindset. Those working in this sector need a deep understanding of tourists' expectations and to provide exceptional experiences. This includes improving service levels in hotels and restaurants, developing the capabilities of tour guides, and even enhancing daily interactions with tourists in shops and streets (Gossling & Hall, 2019, p. 254).

On the other hand, governments and tourism institutions need to encourage sustainable tourism that balances infrastructure development with the protection of natural and cultural resources. This

includes establishing policies and procedures to ensure that the environment is not depleted or cultural heritage is destroyed. An infrastructure that supports sustainable tourism enhances the experience of tourists who seek eco-friendly destinations and preservation of local heritage.

In summary, the success of any tourist destination depends on the harmonious cooperation between developing modern and advanced infrastructure and fostering an open and accepting tourist mindset that combines professionalism in service delivery with friendly hospitality that reflects the authenticity and culture of the local community (Dredge & Jenkins, 2018, p. 251).

Therefore, tourism needs the following:

1. **Transportation:** Transportation is a fundamental pillar of tourism infrastructure. Highways, airports, and seaports facilitate tourists' access to tourist destinations, whether local or international (UNWTO, 2021, p. 215). The presence of world-class international airports eases the flow of tourists from various parts of the world. Internal transportation networks such as trains and buses contribute to improving the travel experience within the country, allowing tourists to explore areas easily and comfortably (Williams & Hall, 2022, p. 365).

2. **Accommodation (Hotels and Resorts):** Tourism requires strong infrastructure that includes diverse accommodation facilities, from luxury hotels to budget hostels. Hotels are not just a place to sleep; they represent a part of the tourist experience, relying on the quality of service and comfort provided. The hotel infrastructure plays a significant role in attracting tourists; the more modern and high-quality the hotels, the higher the tourist influx.

3. **Recreational and Cultural Facilities:** Tourism is not only about natural scenery; it also includes recreational and cultural facilities such as museums, parks, beaches, and amusement parks. These facilities require significant investments in infrastructure to ensure they can accommodate large numbers of tourists. For example, museums need modern display systems, while beaches need facilities such as restrooms and restaurants (Dredge & Jenkins, 2018, p. 59)

4. **Digital Infrastructure:** With technological advancements, internet connectivity and digital systems have become integral to modern tourism. Having strong digital infrastructure allows tourists to use mobile apps for booking hotels, purchasing travel tickets, or obtaining information about tourist destinations. Public Wi-Fi in public places and hotels enhances the tourist experience and makes them more engaged with the host country (Gosling & Hall, 2019, p. 59).

5. **Waste Management and Environmental Sustainability:** Tourism requires advanced infrastructure in waste management to maintain cleanliness in tourist destinations. Mass tourism can exert pressure on environmental resources, necessitating destinations to adopt advanced strategies for waste management and environmental protection. Infrastructure that supports sustainability, such as renewable energy use and water conservation technologies, enhances the image of the destination as an eco-friendly choice.

6. **Healthcare Services:** Healthcare services are a fundamental element of tourism infrastructure. Tourists need access to high-quality medical services in case of health emergencies during their visit. Therefore, the presence of well-equipped hospitals and clinics close to tourist areas is essential to ensure a safe and reassuring experience for tourists (Dredge & Jenkins, 2018, p. 75).

7. **Security and Safety:** Security infrastructure is an essential component of attracting tourists. Tourist destinations need effective security systems such as checkpoints, surveillance cameras, and rapid emergency services to ensure the safety of visitors. This boosts tourists' confidence and makes them feel secure during their stay (Weaver, 2019, p. 52).

8. **Public Amenities (Electricity and Water):** It is crucial for public amenities such as electricity and water to be continuously and reliably available in tourist destinations. Any interruption or shortage of these services can negatively impact the tourist experience and create a poor impression of the destination. Therefore, investing in stable electricity and water networks and ensuring reliable supply is essential for successful tourism (Williams & Hall, 2022, p. 51).

9. **Signage and Information Boards:** Signage and information boards play a significant role in guiding tourists within cities and tourist areas. These boards provide information about landmarks, directions, and amenities, making it easier for tourists to navigate and explore places without direct assistance. Tourist destinations need advanced informational infrastructure, including multilingual boards to ensure the comfort of visitors from various nationalities (Dredge & Jenkins, 2018, p. 96).

10. **Funding and Investment in Infrastructure:** Developing infrastructure requires substantial funding and ongoing investments. Governments and private companies need to invest in building and maintaining roads, hotels, tourist facilities, and public services. The success of tourism depends on the destination's ability to attract investments that enhance its competitiveness in the global tourism market.

11. Urban Planning: Good urban planning ensures optimal distribution of infrastructure in tourist cities, making access to attractions and facilities easy and organized. This involves allocating dedicated areas for tourism, providing green spaces and parks, and establishing pedestrian and bicycle paths, making the tourism experience more enjoyable and facilitating tourists' movement and exploration of places (Weaver, 2019, p. 412).

12. Payment Systems and E-commerce: Having advanced payment systems such as credit cards and electronic banking applications increases the convenience for tourists and enhances their shopping and spending experience. Tourist destinations need developed banking and commercial infrastructure to facilitate payment and commerce processes, especially as tourism moves towards digital solutions.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, infrastructure and a tourist mindset are critical factors for the success and sustainability of the tourism sector. Strong infrastructure, which includes transportation, accommodation, recreational facilities, and public services, forms the foundation that allows tourists to enjoy a comfortable and attractive experience, while digital infrastructure enhances accessibility to services and destinations. Conversely, the tourist mindset plays an essential role in creating a welcoming environment that enriches the tourist experience and contributes to positive cultural interactions between visitors and host communities. Additionally, infrastructure associated with environmental sustainability and resource management is vital for preserving tourist destinations and protecting them from degradation, thereby ensuring that these areas remain attractive for tourism in the long term. Investing in the development of this infrastructure and improving the tourist mindset enhances the competitiveness of tourist destinations, making them more appealing to visitors from around the world. Ultimately, the success of tourism requires the concerted efforts of governments, the private sector, and local communities to deliver a comprehensive tourism experience that balances the needs of tourists with the preservation of cultural and natural resources.

References:

1. UNWTO. (2021). *Tourism Infrastructure and Sustainability*. United Nations World Tourism Organization [online] available at: <https://www.unwto.org>
2. Jansen-Verbeke, M. (2018). *Cultural Tourism and Urban Infrastructure*. Routledge, ISBN: 978-1138927397
3. Dredge, D., & Jenkins, J. (2018). *Tourism Planning and Policy*. London, Routledge, ISBN: 978-0367339523
4. Weaver, D. B. (2019). *Sustainable Tourism*. Routledge, ISBN: 978-0367339448
5. Hall, C. M., & Page, S. J. (2014). *The Geography of Tourism and Recreation: Environment, Place, and Space*. Routledge. ISBN: 978-1138888048
6. Baker, D., & O'Reilly, K. (2020). *Tourism and the Local Economy*. Palgrave Macmillan. ISBN: 978-3030215918
7. Williams, A. M., & Hall, C. M. (2022). *Tourism and Development: Concepts and Issues*. Routledge. ISBN: 978-0367334460
8. Prideaux, B., & Cooper, C. (2017). Tourism Infrastructure and the Challenges of Managing Growth. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 25(1), 15-30.
9. Gossling, S., & Hall, C. M. (2019). *Tourism and Sustainability: Development, Globalisation and New Tourism*. Routledge. ISBN: 978-0367336805
10. Harrison, D., & Henderson, J. C. (2019). *Sustainable Tourism Development in the Global South*. Routledge. ISBN: 978-0367338755