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Tourism and Cultural Heritage: Higher Education and Entrepreneurship Development in Transition Phase. The Tunisian Experience

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ABSTRACT

This is to lay down an approach to develop tourism and cultural heritage through higher education and entrepreneurship development for economies in transition: The case of Tunisia. There is a need to provide incentives to people to have favorable preferences toward a tourism based in part on cultural heritage in a phase where everything is being under construction institutions, legislations, and relationships alike. Cultural heritage and tourism development may be enhanced by a diversification strategy to enrich the image of local touristic destinations (diversification of site visits, purchases of new products, new circuits, and discovery of monumental heritage, museum, park and gardens, natural sites). Moreover, it is of great importance to invest in youth entrepreneurship development to orient toward business creation and development in the domain of tourism and cultural heritage.

Keywords: Cultural Heritage, Higher Education, Tourism Development, Tunisia

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Introduction

There is a need to provide incentives to people to have favourable preferences toward a tourism based in part on cultural heritage in a phase where everything is being under reconstruction, institutions, legislations, and relationships alike.

Indeed, Cultural heritage and tourism development may be enhanced by a diversification strategy to enrich the image of local touristic destinations (diversification of site visits, purchases of new products, new circuits, and discovery of monumental heritage, museum, park and gardens, natural sites). Moreover, it is of great importance to invest in youth entrepreneurship development to orient toward business creation and development in the domain of tourism and cultural heritage.

Furthermore, the promotion of cooperation between higher education institutions in Europe and North Africa, on the issue of cultural heritage and tourism development is viewed as part of a national strategy that may achieve these objectives in term of experience sharing and know-how transfer.

For both academics and decision makers, it is important to lay down an approach to develop tourism and cultural heritage through higher education and entrepreneurship development for economies in transition: the case of Tunisia.

Also, in order to insure the implementation of sustainable cultural heritage and tourism policies, there is need to provide incentives to local and foreign consumers to have favorable preferences toward tourism based in part on cultural heritage in a phase where everything is being under construction institutions, legislations, and relationships alike.

On another grounds, it is important to enhance cultural heritage and tourism development by a diversification strategy to enrich the image of local touristic destinations (diversification of site visits, purchases of new products, new circuits, and discovery of monumental heritage, museum, park and gardens, natural sites).

On a related ground, there is a need to invest in youth entrepreneurship development to orient toward business creation and development in the domain of tourism We consider that we could achieve a mutual and beneficial cooperation between higher education institutions in Europe and North Africa, on the issue of cultural heritage and tourism development.

I. The Historical Context: The situation

At this historical moment our country is moving slowly but steadily toward hopefully, and I am very much optimistic in this regard, a smooth democratic transition and especially heading for the reconstruction of our laws, legislation, institutions as well as our heritage in a context characterized by a wide range of freedom and private initiatives

Moreover, this historical moment, in Tunisia there is room to build up new relationships between Tunisian citizens, public institutions and organizations whether firms, associations and administrations and thus lay down the premises of a new model of society based on freedom and democracy. In the same time, there is a need to implement a new economic development model to sustain the new model of society.

II. The main characteristics of cultural heritage Assets

It is important to stress the scarcity nature of cultural heritage assets, due in part to its limited number, which supposes optimal allocation and the non its renewable nature.

Also, the actors or players are very heterogeneous being public and private institutions, touristic operators, hotels, cultural institutions, non private organizations, cultural associations, as well regulators authorities etc.

Moreover, this sector of activities is characterized by the diversity of cultural tourism supply: circuits, discovery of monumental heritage, museum, park and gardens, natural sites.

III. The Link between Cultural Heritage and economic Development

There is a clear relationship between cultural heritage and economic development.

Indeed, we could note the followings:

- The management or development of a monument, a historic district or a Museum still is not without effects on the economy
- The development of cultural tourism generates jobs and revenues.
- The development of cultural heritage and tourism mobilizes knowledge, expertise and induced innovations (restoration, training) that may be valuable to the rest of the economy.
- Cultural heritage is of great interest to the economist as well as management or marketing specialist.

IV. Cultural Heritage and economic Development: The fundamental issues

It is of great importance to develop people awareness, and preferences toward cultural heritage and in particular in developing economies.

We believe that a weakness of preferences for cultural heritage assets is mainly due to education and media deficiency.

There is a need for cultural heritage sector to have the proper economic dimension, cultural heritage and also to have an appropriate market share in comparison to other competing service activities.

Authors stress the non-renewable nature of cultural heritage assets, suggesting an approach in terms of "heritage ecosystem". They also show the difficulty in reaching an optimal allocation of cultural heritages resources (museum visits, exhibitions) by only market mechanisms, market failure as in Xavier Greffe.

In order to increase people awareness and their level of preferences for cultural heritage assets, the country ought to develop an effective public management by going beyond simple legal measures of financial assistance and information, such as by persuasion, education and entrepreneurship development.

V. Cultural Heritage and economic Development: An Economic Analysis

A comprehensive economic analysis of the cultural heritage and tourism allocation supposes is a two analysis a demand side and a supply side and this is order to provide a comprehensive and sustainable solution:

The *demand side* includes the analysis of

- the state of awareness, attractiveness and preferences toward cultural heritage for the consumer in developing economies
- the willingness to pay since cultural heritage are non market goods and services and thus there is no prices for these assets
- the role of media and education in term of influencing demand curve for these assets

The *supply* side includes the analysis of:

- the conservation of these assets as well as the scarcity issue
- how to do business in this market or sector of activity know how, rules, structure, organization, etc
- entrepreneurship quality and development
- strategies of Innovation in this market

VI. Cultural Heritage and economic Development: The preference issue

It is of great importance to develop people awareness, and preferences toward cultural heritage and in particular in developing economies using a variety of policy incentive measures.

The fundamental idea is that it is widely admitted that on the average preferences for cultural heritage assets are very low (Tunisia) due to education, cultural, economic reasons as well as media failure.

In addition, the awareness of the benefits and cultural heritage value is on the

average very low.

Also, the willingness to pay of consumer from developing countries for the consumption unit of the cultural heritage asset is also very low and in particular with regard to other competing activities such a soccer games, sea visits, pilgrimage

VII. Cultural Heritage and Consumers Preferences: Looking for Sustainable Solutions

It is not clear how public policy and programs are able to develop favorable preferences and increasing awareness toward cultural heritage

There is a need to implement a comprehensive and sustainable development strategy that has multiple dimensions:

- Infrastructure,
- Education,
- Entrepreneurial
- Communication and Marketing
- Technological related

VIII. Cultural Heritage and Consumers Preferences: Looking for economic measures

There is a need to develop an adequate infrastructure and policy measures inducive to cultural heritage tourism development:

- Economic infrastructure in particular adequate and convenient transportation, roads, public electricity, hospitals, security, adequate hotels, quality restaurant, etc.
- Providing financial, fiscal incentives to promote investment in cultural heritage initiatives
- Providing preferential tariffs and specific financial instruments for investors

IX. Cultural Heritage and Consumers Preferences: Reforming Education Policy

In order to develop a dynamic and high growth cultural heritage and tourism, it is of great importance to develop local consumer's preferences for cultural heritage and tourism by investing in education since early age as well as in higher education such as by:

- Introducing modules designed to increase awareness of the values of these assets for students as individuals and for the local communities, the

economy and the society as a whole.

- Develop curriculum to train graduates in cultural heritage domain and related fields mainly conservation, management, guides, communication and marketing etc.
- To allow for preferential tariffs to access to sites and related services for students and youth in general
- Organize conferences and seminars to debate issues related to cultural heritage in management, innovation and development.
- A smart and beneficial use of social media to reach youth for persuasion purposes.

X. Cultural heritage and the youth entrepreneurship challenge

There is a need to develop entrepreneurial competencies and in particular for youth who are potentially motivated by investment in the domain of cultural heritage and tourism projects.

- More than 90% of business are small and medium enterprises and generates most national income and jobs Entrepreneurship factor of growth locally and globally (Labor, Capital, R&D)
- Entrepreneurs may differ by motivations namely necessity and opportunity and thus determining quality of entrepreneurship.
- Contribution of entrepreneurship to economic growth differs from one country to the other according to the quality of entrepreneurship.

Conclusions and Policy Recommendations

In conclusion, we would like to stress the necessity to make sure that cultural heritage and tourism sector have the proper development level and economic dimension.

Cultural heritage does not have an appropriate market share in comparison to other competing service activities. In order to do so, we propose to:

- Improve internal market organization and regulation by stimulating competition in the market of cultural heritage and related services
- Insure the growth of the sector as measured by the value added in a sustainable way
- Increase public investment and stimulate private investment
- Boost growth in local as well as foreign demand for cultural heritage
- To attempt to reach an optimal allocation of cultural heritages resources (museum visits, exhibitions) by proper mechanisms as in Xavier Greffe to

reduce market failure due to the nature of these goods and services being non-market resources. In this respect, we point out to the inadequacy of classical pricing schemes and the need to search for alternative valuation mechanisms. Indeed, there is an need for proper pricing approach to assess the value of these assets such as contingent valuations based on users willingness to pay

- To implement a minimal public regulation to protect these valuable assets.

Also, policy measures need to be implemented to stress the non-renewable nature of cultural heritage assets, suggesting an approach in terms of "heritage ecosystem".

These objectives could be achieved by the following measures such as:

- Increase awareness of all stakeholders of the scarcity of this valuable resource and the non renewable nature of this assets
- Develop sustainable protection and innovation policy
- Provide financial and adequate pricing policy to preserve the cultural heritage resources

Similarly, there is a need for an effective public management by:

- Enacting adequate legal measures
- Proper and preferential financial
- Investing in training and education
- Provision of Information, Media and communication strategy
- More persuasion and awareness
- Boost youth entrepreneurship development.