

THE POSSIBILITY OF EXPLOITING THE TOURISM POTENTIALS IN BISKRA PROVINCE (SOUTH-EASTERN ALGERIA)

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Abstract: Saharan tourism in Algeria is promising and can give a boost to the country's tourism and the economic sector. The aim of this study is to measure the tourist appeal of Biskra through its natural and cultural assets. We will try to identify its potential and constraints in order to promote local tourism while taking into account the specificities of our territory. This study will focus on the Biskra province, which is one of the Saharan Algerian cities. It is located in the loop of oases, connecting the north and the south of the country. It is famous for its palm trees, dates (Deglet Nour) and its traditional architecture. Within the framework of spatial planning and tourism development our research theme will focus on the enhancement of local assets in order to promote the tourism sector so that it is equitable and sustainable while respecting moral and cultural integrity of the region. To do so, we opted for a theoretical and analytical approach by consulting a set of bibliographic references, interviewing local officials and conducting field visits. Driven by SWOT analysis (Strengths – Weaknesses – Opportunities – Threats), which is a diagnostic and decision support tool. The results show that our study area is rich in natural and cultural potential. Nevertheless, the development of tourism is lagging behind and it is therefore necessary to seek the tourism model adapted to the specificities of the region and the capacities to be developed to achieve the objectives defined by the SDAT 2030 (Master Plan for Tourism Development).

Key words: challenges of tourism, development, local assets, opportunities, SWOT analysis Biskra province, Saharan tourism

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INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a vital source of foreign exchange income for many countries and contributes significantly to the economy by creating jobs and providing development opportunities (Boulhila et al., 2022). And this translates into its share of global GDP (gross domestic product), 10% in 2018, with a number of tourists reaching 1.4 billion in the same year (UNWTO World Tourism Organization 2018). The contribution of tourism to Algeria's national GDP will remain very low at only 4% (ONS National Statistics Office 2017). The Algerian Sahara covers about 2 million square kilometers, or 80% of the total area, known for its scientific and tourist value, its oases and its animals that are rarely found elsewhere. Socially and culturally, its inhabitants have unique customs, traditions and heritage. Sustainable Saharan tourism means the optimal use of the available tourist areas. It represents the point of convergence between the needs of tourists and the needs of the state as a renewable tourist destination (Eshraghi et al., 2010). It is a trend tourism whose demand has increased in recent years, especially during the winter season, by the influx of foreign tourists, 90% of whom are European, French, German and Italian (WHO World Health Organization 2010). The province of Biskra is an important tourist hub (SDAT, 2030) because of its strategic location, natural potential, archaeological and historical sites, which are no less important than the other diversified regions tourist attractions in Algeria. This article will focus on promoting the tourism sector in Biskra while identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The main problem of this research is to try to explore the various tourist attractions of the Algerian Sahara, especially in the oasis region, which contains important basic elements for sustainable tourism for people, the environment and the economy. From the, how can we put the local tourist wealth of Biskra province known for its specificity and fragility in favor of a sustainable tourism? It will also be necessary to highlight how the results of a SWOT analysis can help in decision-making regarding the development of the tourism sector in the province? We can assume that tourism is an effective tool for sustainable development in the event of rational exploitation of local resources under the 2030 SDAT. To answer our problem we will first of all identify the theoretical aspect of the study continues with an exhaustive study of the tourist potentialities of our area. As we have seen that it is essential to put everything in a scientific approach call to be the SWOT analysis in order to exceed the limits noted previously. In the end, we recommended more nuanced and clear proposals to overcome the various limitations encountered.

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LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourism becomes a hotly discussed topic because it has a significant impact on the economy, social, and culture (Waridin and Astawa, 2021). Support for growth and a key vector for the Tertiariation of the economy due to the potential for wealth creation, employment in the southern zone of the country (Aroub, 2015). Tourism is a multifaceted industry that can have an impact on most of the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations and of Agenda 2063 of the African Union. Agenda 2063 envisages a substantial increase in tourism's contribution to gross domestic product, for which tourism in Africa must grow at a faster pace. Tourism in the deserts is part of a series of paradoxes: it can be both a vector for development and poverty reduction if it is well managed and takes into account the specificity and the fragility of desert ecosystems, but can also very quickly be destructive of both modes of local populations and natural environments, if it is not sufficiently controlled. In the deserts, tourism is part of contexts that are fragile from an environmental and human point of view and therefore, more than anywhere else in the world, it must meet the challenge of sustainability in still relatively intact from these negative effects. These are therefore preventive messages that this guide tries to pass while giving the actors concerned some tips and tools international and local levels, in order to combat poverty and desertification while allowing tourism to play its true role as a vector for development. Our country has enormous potential in this area. The first in-depth publications on the subject began to appear in the late 1960s. This study aims to identify the tourist potential and quality of Biskra province to find the adequate solutions to estimate this sector, as it has an essential role in the economic development, and work to describe and overcome the impediments. The Algerian government's policy strategy tourism is emerging and integrated into the framework of the sustainable development strategy of Algeria.

The latter is summarized in the national report Algeria for the Summit Sustainable Development, World Cup in Johannesburg in 2002, this report constitutes the contribution of the Algerian Government to implement a specific sustainable policy. He has presented a summary of the progress of the implementation of Agenda 21 since the last UNCED follow-up conference (1997), through the implementation of the strategy of sustainable development, mainly represented by the economic recovery plan 2001-2004, from the Presidential program. As part of the development and diversification of Saharan tourist destinations, The Ministry of Tourism and Crafts is launching a study on the exploitation of thermal springs in order to contribute to the propulsion of tourism activities in this region with important tourist potential, classified as World Heritage. Algeria is developing an overall strategy. The approach is reflected in the development of the Master Plan for Tourism Development 2030 (SDAT). A long-term policy. The SDAT derives its essence and its coherence from the National Land Use Plan. Operationally broken down into concrete actions on the ground (in progress). In this context, the SDAT is an instrument that reflects the State's desire to exploit the country's natural, cultural and historical potential and to put it at the service of Algeria's "tourism development" in order to raise it to the status of a competitive destination. So the studies and the experiences in our field of study are diverse and rich in ideas but we really need an innovative exhaustive study and to have the data updated in a systematic way interpreted in collaboration with the various actors involved in the sector tourism.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In this study, we opted for a theoretical and analytical approach. We are talking about identifying our theme with data that is summarized and presented using a graphical method to illustrate the results of the study and improve the level of perception of the information. To succeed, we adopted the SWOT Analysis matrix to identify the four key points, namely Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. Allows a general development of the study area by combining two types of data: internal and external. The internal information taken into account will be the strengths and weaknesses. External data will address nearby threats and opportunities. The opportunities developed in our study as historical, natural and economic will be barometers and indicators for decision-making. To interpret the SWOT matrix, we use the reading grid. After from the matrix analysis, the situation allows to identify the major issues. Finally, the results of the SWOT analysis make it possible to establish a monitoring table for future decision-making by the local authorities and the central authorities of the state.

General presentation of the study area

The geographical location

The province of Biskra is located in the southeastern territory of Algeria. The geographic coordinates are 34°40'0" north and 5°25'0" east, at the foothills of the Aures massif. It occupies an area of 21,509 km² and it is about 422km from the Algerian capital city. It is bordered by state of Batna in the north, state of Ouargla in the south, state of El Oued in the southeast, M'Sila in the northwest and Djelfa in the southwest as shown on the map above (Figure 1).

Natural and environmental potentialities of Biskra

Natural factors

The Biskra climate is characterized by a very hot and dry summer with an average temperature of 43.5°C, an average relative humidity of 12%, and a very cold winter (minimum average temperature of 4°C, maximum relative humidity of 89%). Rainfall is rare and does not exceed 31 days per year. Moreover, its sub-desert climate is influenced by arid to relatively semi-arid climate due to its location on the outskirts of the North and the Sahara (Tartar, 2013).

Biskra have an average height of 128m and it is considered as one of the most relevant oases in Algeria. The geography of Biskra is situated between the mountainous ranges, which consist mainly of two main terrain chains, the Tell Atlas and the Saharan Atlas mountain ranges. This feature leads to the diversity of its relief units from mountain in the north, plains and plateaus in the middle and sub-Sahara steppe in the south, besides the oases extending from the east and the west. State of Biskra provides to the visitor the opportunity to explore the different features of the nature due to the combination of the mountains, wadis and the desert presenting authentic sites with palm forests, fruit trees and dunes.

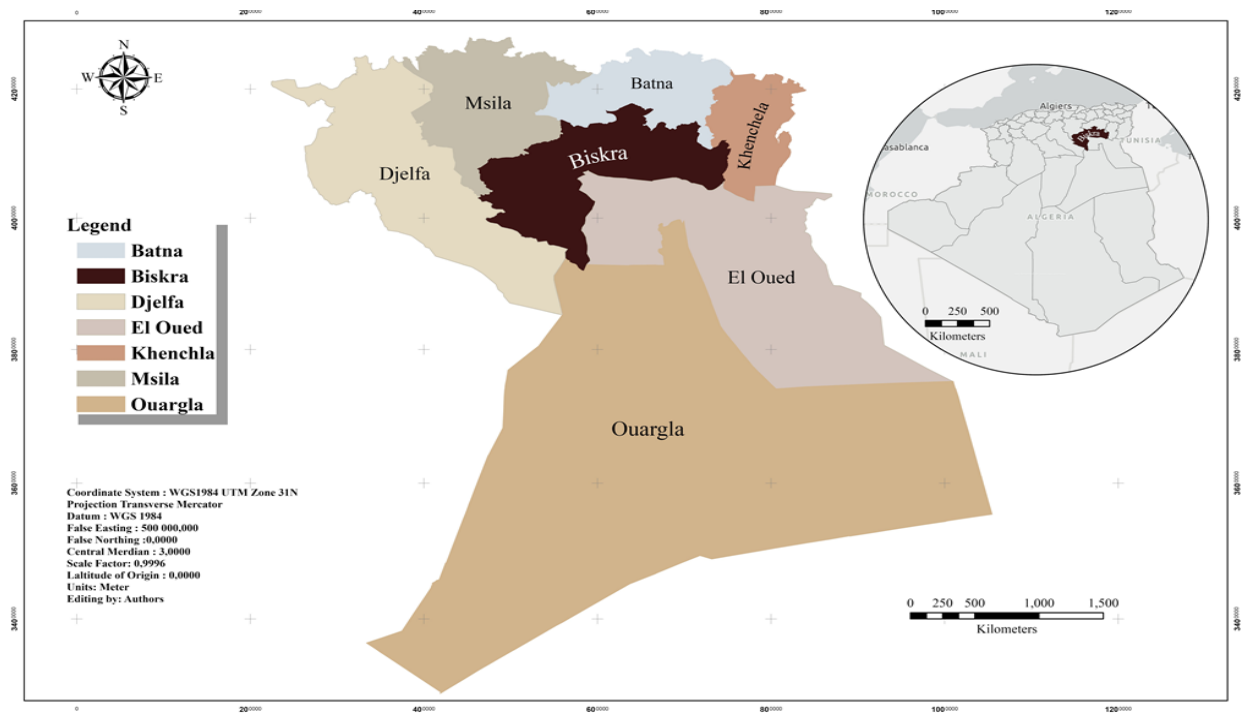


Figure 1. Location of Biskra province in Algeria (Source: Authors)

The diversity is noticed in the distinct natural features distinguished through the natural richness of the barren mountainous areas (Kelfaoui et al., 2021), and the flat agricultural land interspersed with hydrographic grid consisting of Wady, lakes and dams along with the great expansion of palm groves all over the region (Kadiri, 2009): The first part is situated in the northeastern area of the Tell Atlas Mountains of the province, which extend from the plains to the mountainous regions to the north such as: The bends of M'Chouneche (Figure 3), the bends and the strait of El Kantara (Figure 4), the saddle of Beni Souik, the mountain forests of Djammoura and Ain Zaatout.

The second natural part is situated in the southwest of the Saharan Atlas, which is relatively a flat land with attractive landscapes that extended all along the Atlas range westward. It is characterized by the high quality dates from the region of Tolga to Sidi Khaled (DTH, 2012). Biskra includes a group of natural and artificial wetlands, the most relevant is a part of Chott Melhrir, which is the greatest basin in Algeria that covers an area of 5515 km².

These regions are identified by biodiversity, and they are a major habitat for migratory birds from the Mediterranean Sea to the Sahara especially in winter. The artificial wetlands are represented by both Manbaa al-Ghezlane dam with a capacity of 55.5 million m³ shared by the two municipalities of EL Kantara and Loutaya, with a perimeter area of 9.5 km² and a regular annual capacity of 14 million m³ of fresh water used for irrigation. In addition to the dam of Fom El Gharza, with a capacity of 47 million m³ and capacity of 8 million m³. The region has two nature reserves; the first with an area of 8.61 km², and the second one with an area of 311 km² (DTH, 2012).



Figure 2. Photos of natural sites of Sidi Okba (Source: Authors)



Figure 3. Photos of the throats of M'chouneche (Source: Authors)



Figure 4. Photos of natural sites El Kantara (Source: Authors)

The thermal and mineral sites:

The region is known for its mineral springs that the highest amount of water in the region comes from a group of mineral water sources for consumption, such as the water of Droh, EL Kantara, Echaiba and El Branis, which is known for its health value after drinking. The thermal sources are divided, in terms of exploitation, into two parts:

-Untapped sources of water: There are more than 20 untapped sources in the province located on an axis extends from the city center to the southwest of the province, from Oumach to Ras El-Miaad municipalities, where their components differ according to the components of the mineral water and its temperature that ranges between 39°C-75°C, and these are high temperature levels considering the active volcanic layers through the high flow rates of up to 50 l/s. (HTI, 2019).

These sources are used on the local level by the nomadic Bedouin population, individually or collectively without health culture. The sources of the tapped thermal water will be mentioned under the tourism front office structures of the province.

Demographic and human characteristics of Biskra

This table (Table 1) provides information on the dynamics of changes in the composition of Biskra. The total population is estimated at 774,681, an average density of 36 inhabitants/km². Employed population (2010): 277,976. Unemployment rate (2010): 10.01%. Distribution

of the employed population as follows:- Administration: 37.169

- Agriculture: 113.120

- Services: 51.730

- BTPH: 31.544

- Industry: 11.573; - Other: 32,382

So we estimate a population in full evolution distributed through various economic sectors that can only be benign for the touristic sector

through the upgrading of the tertiary sector (Benbelaid, 2022).

Table 1. The population evolution in Biskra (Source: DTH of Biskra, 2019, completed by authors)

Year	Population	Men	Women	Median age
1950	151,557	77,068	74,489	19
1962	198,492	99,683	98,809	18
2000	530,270	268,722	261,548	22
2010	614,575	310,236	304,338	26
2022	774,681	391,399	383,281	29

Table 2. The tourist movement in Biskra (Source: DTH of Biskra, 2019, completed by authors)

years	Number of tourists by category		
	Local	Foreigners	Total
2009	70919	5384	76303
2010	90146	4514	94660
2011	73102	3293	76395
2012	73282	3033	76315
2015	75325	3603	78928
2016	63427	3255	66682
2017	56414	3516	59930
2018	63033	3441	66474

The tourist movement in Biskra

The number of the foreigner tourist's arrival to Biskra was estimated to 2826 foreigners; French, German, Italian and Swiss, while the number of local visitors was 46582 tourists in terms of overnights till May, 2019 DTH (Direction of Tourism and Handicraft). According to the table (Table 2), and the two figures (Figure 5 and 6), we notice a fluctuation in the number of tourists from one year to the next. The year 2010 saw a significant increase in the number of tourists with a percentage of 19,40%, it decreased in 2011 by 19,30%. In 2012, a slight decrease in the number of tourists was recorded, despite an increase of 3,32% in 2015. From 2016 until 2018, a decrease that varies from 14% to 11% and does not reflect the actual tourist qualifications involved in Biskra. Thus the situation in Biskra does not differ from that of the country. From 1969 to 2019, the very attractive South did not receive more than 200,000 foreign tourists as part of the tour-operating, that is to say the trips organized by tour operators and travel agencies. The biggest tourist flows we received during the 70s and 80s (170,000 approx.). Only 25% of Saharan tourist territories have been visited by tourists since 1969 (MTH Ministry of tourism and Handicraft, 2018).

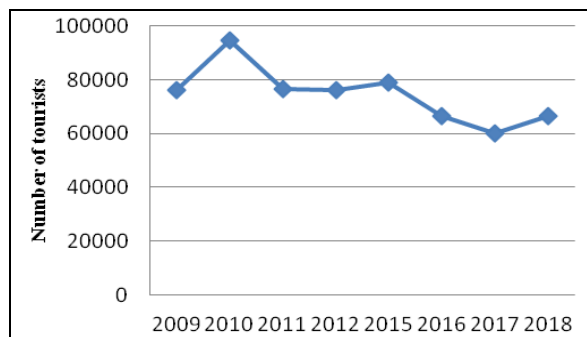


Figure 5. The tourist movement in Biskra 2009-2018

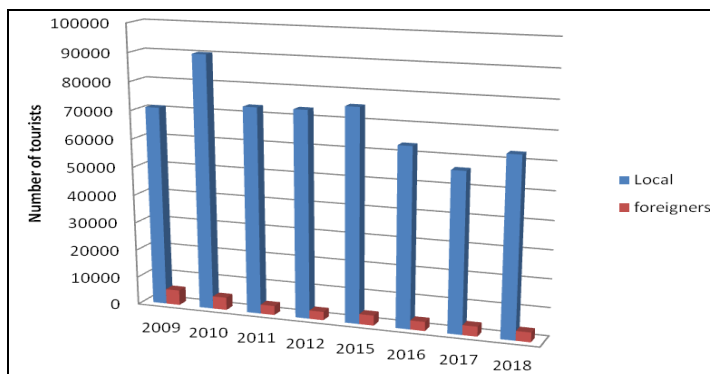


Figure 6. Evolution of tourists by category (Source: Authors)

The Historical Potential

To talk from Biskra requires a return to its ancient history. It is rooted in the depths of history and each of these historic periods has left an urban legacy that is also considered a state tourist attraction (Lak et al., 2020).

Historic sites

Culture can contribute to a healthier society, facilitates civic involvement and gives tourists a reason to visit. It continued to shape the heritage and identity of cities, creates jobs and introduces pro-social behavior (Morar et al., 2020).

Archeological sites

Archaeological sites are currently considered as one of the most important tourism industry drivers, becoming an autonomous economy (Rahal et al., 2020). The province of Biskra has several historic sites that are spread across its areas (Figure 7), besides many archaeological features dating back to different periods. Cultural heritage, such as museums, churches, historical landscapes (Figure 8), urban parks, and exhibitions attract many visitors and countries (Kherrou et al., 2020), regions and cities which house such historic-cultural amenities have seen increasingly large waves of tourists (Girard and Nijkamp, 2009). These features can be classified according to the nature and the era they belong to:

- Primordial relics: They are represented by rock paintings in Ouled Djelal, Petroglyphs in El-Besbes and Ras El-Miaad municipalities, also the ruins of Djemina castle or Tadjmount in Meziraa.

- Roman ruins: They exist in all municipalities of the province (Haif et al., 2013) and they are variable in terms of

emergence and importance, including: the remains of the Roman bathhouse in the university campus in Biskra, and the Roman arch in El Kantara (Figure 9).

-Colonial remains: The most relevant ones are St. Germain castle in Biskra, and the military camp in Bordj Ben Azouz.

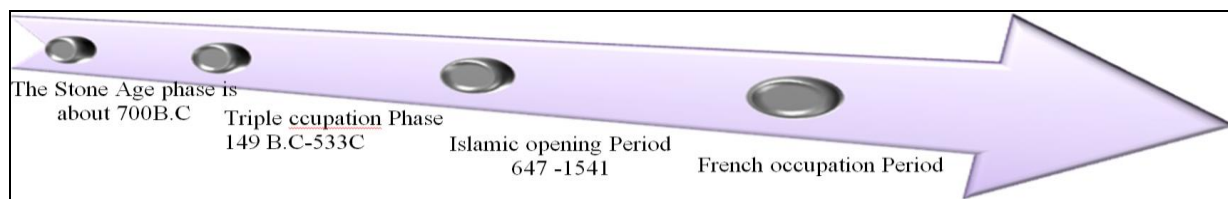


Figure 7. The Historic Periods in Biska (Source: DTH of Biskra, 2019, completed by authors)



Figure 8. Photos Ghoufi balcony (Source: Authors)



Figure 9. Photos El-Kantara Monument (Source: Authors)



Figure 10. Photos Okba Ibn Nafaa Mosque (Source: Authors)



Figure 11. Photos of Ottoman Zaouiya (Source: Authors)



Figure 12. Photos Shrine and Mosque of Sidi Khalid (Source: Authors)

The religious places

The remains of the Islamic antiquities are considered to be rare, including the Turkish relics of El Haoouch, and the oldest non diacritic inscription in Sidi Okba (Figure 2), Shrine and Mosque (Figure 10 and 12), Ottoman Zaouiya (Figure 11) and the gate of El Mahdi mosque.

Tourism infrastructure review

The province of Biskra contains a group of tourist structures. However, it suffers from extreme weakness in its tourism potential.

Hotel and restaurant

24 hotels in a total, with a capacity of 2201 beds over 1011 rooms: (DTH, 2019). The hotel management ownership is limited to institutional framework. The public sector such as the hotel of the thermal bathhouses Hammam Essalihine and Hammam Ziban, are under the Tourism Management Company South. For the rest of the hotels, they are owned by private properties as we note by naming some of them with the names of their owners. Furthermore, the hotel structures of the province consist of classified and unclassified hotels that among 24 hotels are used in tourism front office, we find 09 classified hotels including two with 3 stars rating, where they have a large number of capacity and overnights for tourists, and employ a number of the tourism work labor force which includes:

-Hammam Essalihine hotel.

-Ziban Hotel (designed by the French architect "F.Pouillon" which it was opened in 1969 (Chouaib, 2009).

For the unclassified hotels, there are 15 hotels which represent one third of the total capacity of the tourism structures in the province (DTH, 2019), which have no annexed services such as: restaurants and any other services, as their services are only dedicated for accommodation where "Dar El Moualem" is the most relevant hotel that provides services within conference tourism, in addition to scientific and cultural meetings of national and international dimension. It is also

classified under the semi-hotel structures in the province which are designated for reception including two youth hostels in Biskra and El Kantara. The restaurants have an advertising role to introduce the traditional and popular dishes of the province (Alloui, 2021) of which there are two types: The hotel restaurants and other restaurants (Figure 13) that do not belong to any hotel or tourist structure. There are classified restaurants in the province such as the restaurant of Hammam (bathhouse) Essalihine with a capacity of 190 seats, and the restaurant of Ziban hotel with 80 seats (DTH, 2019), which are identified by the preparation of the varied traditional dishes (Figure 14) such as the plate of Chakh'choukha of all kind, in addition, to serve some good quality local dates. However, these restaurants do not make the world's varied dishes.



Figure 13. Photos of traditional restaurant (Source: Authors)



Figure 14. Photos of traditional dishes (Source: Authors)

The thermal activity

Its potential is an essential touristic tool, since the mineral therapy became adopted by the medical community (Drouin, 2004). The province has significant potential, yet the thermal activity (Table3) is set in few treatment facilities, which are limited compared with the number of the untapped thermal sources. (Boumaraf and Amireche, 2020).

One of the main therapeutic centers in the province is the bathhouse of Hammam

Essalihine (Figure 15). Where the rate of its mineral water flow reaches 65 l/sec, and is the highest rate in the province with a considerable capacity due to its accommodation structure and the potential of the medical care. Traditional treatment is also adopted, as the treated patient number reached to 7074 medically treated patients, and 100.089 traditionally treated persons compared to the mineral bathhouse of Hammam El Baraka which has no front office structure. However, a hotel project of 100 beds will be planned. The number of the therapists of both Hammam Essalihine and Hammam Elbaraka bathhouses reached 9066 therapists, and they hire in total 67 workers of the medical and paramedical fields.

Moreover, we should mention the treatment of land filling with hot sand which is called "sand-therapy" or "the sand bathhouse" (Magherbi, 2014), but currently it is used traditionally and spontaneously to heal dermatological disease and rheumatism disorder. Sand treatment is performed by the wind-borne sand which is deposited in the western slopes of the Saharan Atlas Mountains, where it is exposed to high heat during the hot season; particularly the slopes of Ain Bennaoui and EL Hadjeb, but this type of healing did not evolve due to the lack of the structures of medical and technical exploitation in this field (Fertas et al., 2022). The travel agencies in the province is estimated to 38, most of them are situated in the center of the province, and they hire 133 tourist agents with little experience including 77 temporary workers and 56 permanent workers (DTH, 2019). These agencies have the following activities and tasks: visa issues, but some of them cannot afford this service due to the lack of professional credibility (Souiher and Rezzaz, 2020). They also introduce land and air travel on domestic and international airlines, and organize touristic trips and seasonal camps, in addition to the organization of travel itinerary of Umrah and Hajj to the holy sites. The lack of financial and operational potential is one of the main reasons that made tourists not use these agencies, besides the bureaucracy and the prejudgment about its organizational incapability, which lead tourists to self-service concerning travel procedures (Cole, 2006). Although the contribution of tourism agencies in the promotion and the development of tourism, they are only limited to ticketing and sending local tourists according to a time schedule, in addition to the absence of any real commitment to attract tourists through advertising the tourism potential of the province.

Tourist routes

A tourist circuit is a tourist product that includes routes between different sites. In Biskra we have five circuits:

1- Biskra – El outaya - Djemora - Ainzaatout – Elkantara (Figure 17); 2- Biskra - T'houda - Sidi Okba - Khanget sidi Nadji – Djemina 3- Biskra - Lehbai - M'chouneche – Baniane; 4- Biskra - Lichana - Zaatcha - Tolga - Bordj ben Azzouz – Mekhadma (Figure 18). 5- Biskra - Leghrouss - Doucen - OuledDjellal - Sidi Khaled – Chaiba

Table 3. Hammam mineral (Source: Directorate of Tourism and Handicraft of Biskra, 2019)

Hotel institution	Therapeutic sessions
The thermal complex of Hammam Essalihine	-140 rooms; - 363 bads
The thermal Hammam of El Baraka El-Hadjeb	- 30 single rooms - 02 collective rooms - cafeteria +restaurant - super market - handcraft pavilion
The thermal Hammam of rest and recuperation El Raouda	- 30 single rooms
The thermal Hammam of Sidi Yahia (Figure 15)	-118 Rooms; -267 Bads
The thermal Hammam of Chegga	Only the hotel that works

These tours are used by authorities and tourist organizations for various visits and activities. However, their condition is very poor and poorly managed; it remains to be revalued.



Figure 15. Photos of thermal hammam El Salihinne (Source: Authors);



Figure 16. Photos of thermal Hammam Sidi yahia (Source: Authors)

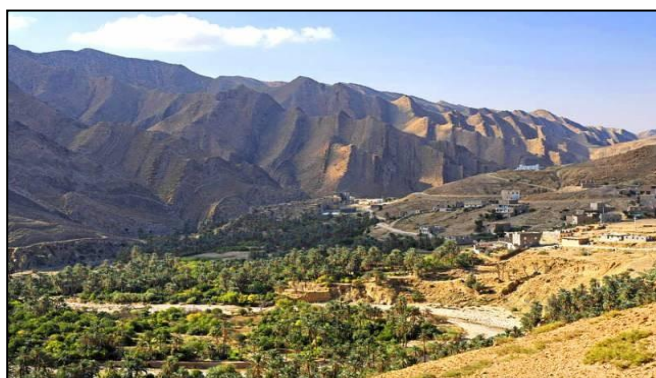


Figure 17. Photos of tourist circuit El outaya-Elkantra (Source: Authors)



Figure 18. Photos of tourist circuit Lichana-Mekhadma (Source: Authors)

Tourism investment in Biskra

Tourism is one sector of the economy that contributes greatly to the economic development of a country (Kodir, 2018). In this sense, we will spread out on the scale of investments in our area (Table 4), as well as the analysis of the potentialities and constraints facing the development of Saharan tourism (Isac et al., 2022). The ZET (tourist expansion zone) is a very important tourist development tool and according to an official at the Ministry of Tourism, Algeria has 225 ZET and the south contains 23 exploitable sites for the realization of tourist projects for the year 2021.

Table 4. Tourism investment projects (Source: DTH of Biskra, 2019+ completed by authors)

Tourism investment projects	Num-ber	Jobs to be created	Costs (D.A)
Inside the ZET	11	685	10.303.571.907,59
Outside the ZET	62	5204	46.107.460.000,95
Total	73	5889	56.411.031.908,54

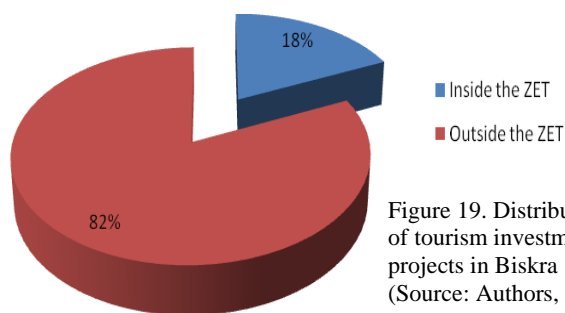


Figure 19. Distribution of tourism investment projects in Biskra (Source: Authors, 2022)

Table 5. Synthesis of the SWOT matrix (Source: Authors 2022)

	Internal factors		External factors	
	strengths	weaknesses	opportunities	threats
chance factors	9+		8+	
Sum	17+			
challenge factors	9+			5-
Sum	4+			
conflict factors		9-	8+	
Sum	1-			
hazard factors		9-		5-
Sum	14-			

Based on the previous situation (Figure 19) 81.83% of the investments are localized outside the ZET which calls to examine the state of the ZET. The tourist expansion area Ain bin al-naoui. Department of Elhajeb with an area of 0.51 Km², the legal nature of the land ownership of the state, the area can be configured of 0.34 Km².

-Chagga tourist expansion area is 0.24 Km², the legal nature of state + private land ownership, the area can be configured to 18 hectares.

-the area of tourist expansion corresponds to El gharza of the area of plantation of 0.71 Km², to the legal nature of the lands and assets of the state, to the area able to prepare 0.44 Km².

- The tourist expansion area: hammam Salihine, which can be configured, 0.274 Km². the legal nature of the land: ownership of state property. Recently to catch up in terms of land and tourism investment; there is a preliminary draft of three proposed Tourist Expansion Areas for classification:

-Elkantara Tourism Expansion Zone; -Khanget sidi Nadji tourist expansion areas; - Biskra Tourist Expansion Areas.

RESULTS /ANALYSIS

The SWOT analysis is a strategic analysis tool (Figure 20). It combines the study of the strengths and weaknesses of an organization, of a territory, a sector, etc. with that of the opportunities and threats of its environment, to help define a development strategy (Teddy, 2019). It is a decision-making tool designed to take into account a strategy for developing internal and external factors by maximizing the potentials of strengths and opportunities and minimizing the effects of weaknesses and threats. To interpret the SWOT matrix, we use the following reading grid (Table5):

1. High Strengths/Opportunities: The odds factors are high=> Take advantage of opportunities by building on your strengths.
2. High Forces/Threats: Challenge factors are high=> Use your strength to make a place for yourself.
3. High Weaknesses/Opportunities: Conflict (decision) factors are high=> Neutralize weaknesses to take advantage of opportunities.

4. High Weaknesses / Threats: Risk factors are high => Circumvent difficulties by revising positions or take measures to reduce weaknesses and neutralize threats.

From the matrix analysis, the situation allows to identify the following major issues:

- Review the tourism investment policy in Biskra province by directing tourism projects in tourist expansion area to enhance their initial vocation.
- Improve the hotel offer and the quality of accommodation
- implement the guidance and directives of the SDAT in the field of tourism.
- Value natural and cultural sites by attributing them normative tourist qualities.
- Maintain tourist routes to open up most historic and natural sites. In addition to many archaeological and historic sites, Biskra has diverse natural and environmental potential dated back to different periods, which can be classified under primitive relics, Roman ruins, Islamic antiquities and colonial traces, besides significant and nationally classified religious sites including the tomb and the Mosque of Uqba Ibn Nafi al-Fihri.

The province of Biskra has different tourism structures including classified and unclassified hotels, in addition to thermal water structures with curative properties. Moreover, travel agencies are a key tool to revitalize tourism in the region. There are many impediments that face tourism sector in the province of Biskra including:

- Pollution which threatens the environmental and natural sites, and present a significant risk to their biological diversity.
- Historic sites abandonment and the absence of security which can frighten the visitors.
- The considerable weakness of front office structures which are not up the level of global services, and they are only specific to lodging and food services.

CONCLUSION

The assessment of the tourism sector in Biskra province needs further efforts for a successful strategic plan that can stand against the impediments of the sector through the implementation of proper plans for the maintenance and the restoration of archaeological sites to protect them from extinction and disappearance (Yankholmes, 2018).

Following the tourist movement in recent years, we note that demand is growing slowly and fluctuating, following the lack of a clear strategy taking into account the elements of tourist attractions (Zuo et al., 2017), in addition to poor services, high prices, lack of promotional campaigns and lack of adequate facilities and incentives for tourists to visit the region.

The province of Biskra is an important touristic area which has distinguished tourist attributes, due to its unique location and its varied history as the diversity of the past civilizations that made it an important tourist pole and a destination for local and foreign tourists (Bouchama, 2018). However, this potential faces many impediments, particularly pollution and abandonment on one hand, and the absence of a serious attempt to advance this sector on the other hand.



Figure 20. SWOT Analysis

(Source: Authors, 2022)

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