

The Economic Importance of Luxury Tourism in the Tourism Offer: A Case Study of Malaysia

الأهمية الاقتصادية للسياحة الفاخرة ضمن مزيج العرض السياحي: عرض التجربة الماليزية

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Abstract: This article aims to present the economic importance of luxury tourism within the tourism product mix. Focusing on the Malaysian experience as a case study, the paper studied and analysed various reports published by Malaysian government agencies and international organizations on the luxury tourism market. Based on the findings, practical policies were proposed to develop the luxury tourism sector in Algeria, which will enable the country to diversify its tourism offerings and strengthen its economic development. The proposals highlighted the importance of strategic planning, infrastructure development, and marketing to position Algeria as a competitive luxury tourism destination.

Keywords: Luxury Tourism; Tourism Offer; Malaysia Tourism.

Résumé : Cet article vise à présenter l'importance économique du tourisme de luxe au sein de l'offre touristique. Concentrant sur l'expérience malaisienne, l'article a analysé divers rapports publiés par des agences gouvernementales malaisiennes et des organisations internationales sur le marché du tourisme de luxe. Sur la base de ces résultats, des politiques concrètes ont été proposées pour développer le secteur du tourisme de luxe en Algérie, ce qui permettra au pays de diversifier son offre touristique et de renforcer son développement économique. Ces propositions soulignent l'importance de la planification stratégique, du développement des infrastructures et du marketing pour positionner l'Algérie comme une destination touristique de luxe compétitive.

Mots-clés : Tourisme de luxe ; Offre Touristique ; Tourisme Malaisien.

ملخص: يهدف هذا المقال إلى عرض الأهمية الاقتصادية للسياحة الفاخرة ضمن مزيج المنتجات السياحية، مع التركيز على التجربة الماليزية كدراسة حالة. حيث قمنا بدراسة وتحليل لمختلف التقارير الصادرة عن الهيئات الحكومية الماليزية والمنظمات الدولية حول سوق السياحة الفاخرة. ومن خلال النتائج المتوصل إليها تم اقتراحات سياسات عملية لتطوير قطاع السياحة الفاخرة بالجزائر، والتي ستسمح لها من تنويع عروضها السياحية وتعزيز تنميتها الاقتصادية. وسلطت الاقتراحات الضوء على أهمية التخطيط الاستراتيجي وتطوير البنية التحتية والتسويق لوضع الجزائر كوجهة تنافسية للسياحة الفاخرة.

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I. Introduction:

Tourism sector has emerged as one of the most dynamic and economically significant sectors globally, contributing considerably to economic growth, job creation, and foreign exchange earnings. According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), international tourist arrivals reached 1.4 billion in 2024, that made a remarkable recovery (99%) from the Covid19 pandemic, and generating approximately \$1.9 trillion in export earnings and accounting for 7% of global trade (UNWTO, 2025). The sector of travel and tourism recruits 357 million individual, that is approximately one in ten (1/10) jobs worldwide, which making it a pivotal driver of employment and socio-economic development, particularly in emerging economies (World Travel & Tourism Council [WTTC], 2025). In fact, luxury tourism has gained prominence as a high-value niche segment, characterized by its ability to attract high-spending tourists and generate disproportionate economic benefits relative to mass tourism.

Luxury tourism, defined by its exclusivity, personalized services, and premium pricing, has become a key component of the global tourism product mix. In 2019, luxury travel accounted for 20% of global tourism receipts, despite representing only 5% of international tourist arrivals (Bain & Company, 2020). This segment is particularly attractive to destinations seeking to maximize revenue per tourist, as luxury travellers spend on average three to five times (3to5) more than traditional tourists (McKinsey & Company, 2021). Furthermore, luxury tourism stimulates investment in high-end infrastructure, such as luxury hotels, private resorts, and gourmet dining establishments, while creating employment opportunities in specialized sectors like hospitality, wellness, and entertainment. Many countries around the world, precisely developed countries give an importance space to luxury tourism within its tourism offer, and also some emerged countries as like Malaysia.

Malaysia serves as an exemplary case study of how luxury tourism can be successfully integrated into a country's tourism product mix to drive economic growth. As one of Southeast Asia's leading tourist destinations, Malaysia attracted 26.1 million international tourists in 2019, contributing 15.9% to the country's GDP and supporting 3.4 million jobs (WTTC, 2020). The country's luxury tourism sector, centred around destinations such as Langkawi, Kuala Lumpur, and luxury resorts in Sabah and Sarawak, has played a pivotal role in enhancing its global competitiveness. By offering unique experiences such as private island tours, luxury rainforest retreats, and world-class hospitality. In contrast, Algeria, despite its rich cultural heritage and diverse natural attractions, remains underdeveloped in the luxury tourism sector. With only 2.7 million international tourist arrivals in 2019 and a tourism contribution of just 4.2% to GDP, Algeria's tourism industry lags behind its potential (WTTC, 2020). The country's vast Sahara Desert, Mediterranean coastline, and

UNESCO World Heritage sites, such as Tassili n'Ajjer, offer immense opportunities for luxury tourism development.

This article seeks to address two key research questions:

1. What is the economic importance of luxury tourism in Malaysia's tourism product mix?
2. What lessons can Algeria learn from Malaysia to adapt luxury tourism and diversify its tourism offerings?

By examining Malaysia's success in leveraging luxury tourism for economic growth, this study aims to provide actionable insights for Algeria to unlock its untapped potential.

II. Literature Review

1. Definition of Key Research Variables

1.1. Luxury Tourism

Luxury tourism has been defined in various ways by scholars and tourism experts. The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) defines luxury tourism as high-end travel experiences characterized by exclusivity, personalized services, and premium pricing. These experiences often include luxury accommodations, private tours, and unique cultural or natural experiences (UNWTO, 2025). From an academic perspective, Kapferer and Bastien (2012) argue that luxury tourism is not merely about high prices but about delivering exceptional value, emotional satisfaction, and a sense of exclusivity to travellers. Industry experts, such as Bain & Company (2021), emphasize that luxury tourism is defined by the presence of high-end amenities, such as five-star hotels, gourmet dining, private transportation, and tailored experiences intended to the preferences of affluent travellers.

In this study, luxury tourism is understood as a niche segment of the tourism industry that caters to high-net-worth individuals seeking unique, personalized, and exclusive experiences. It is distinguished by its ability to generate high revenue per tourist, stimulate investment in premium infrastructure, and enhance a destination's global brand image.

1.2. Tourism Offer

The tourism Offer refers to the combination of offerings that a destination provides to attract and satisfy tourists. According to Cooper et al (2018) tourism offer refers to the combination of products, services, and experiences provided to tourists to meet their needs and expectations. Kotler et al. (2017), refer tourism offer to tourism product which is the mix comprises both tangible

elements, such as accommodations and attractions, and intangible elements, such as hospitality and cultural experiences, which collectively create a destination's appeal. Goeldner and Ritchie (2012) further specified that the tourism product mix is the set of natural, cultural and artificial resources that a destination exploits to meet the various needs of tourists. From our perspective, the tourism offer is a strategic combination of diverse offerings, including cultural, natural, adventure, and luxury tourism, designed to cater to different market segments and enhance a destination's competitiveness. The tourism offer is a fundamental concept in the travel industry, comprising various interconnected components that shape the tourist experience. A well-designed tourism offer enhances destination competitiveness (Ritchie & Crouch, 2003). It influences tourist satisfaction, repeat visits, and positive word-of-mouth promotion. By integrating luxury tourism into the tourism offer, destinations can attract high-spending tourists and differentiate themselves in the global tourism market.

1.3. Economic Importance of Luxury Tourism

The economic importance of tourism is often measured through its contribution to GDP, job creation, foreign exchange earnings, and infrastructure development. Recent statistics highlight the significant role of tourism in the global economy. In 2019, tourism contributed \$8.9 trillion to global GDP, accounting for 10.3% of total GDP, and supported 330 million jobs worldwide (WTTC, 2021). Within this broader context, luxury tourism has emerged as a high-value niche segment. Despite representing only 5% of international tourist arrivals, luxury tourism accounted for 20% of global tourism receipts in 2019, generating approximately \$340 billion (Bain & Company, 2020).

The economic importance of luxury tourism can be understood through four key dimensions. First, luxury tourism generates high revenue per tourist, with luxury travellers spending three to five times more than traditional tourists (McKinsey & Company, 2021). Second, it creates employment opportunities in high-end hospitality, transportation, and entertainment, often with better wages and working conditions. Third, luxury tourism stimulates investment in premium infrastructure, such as luxury hotels, private resorts, and gourmet dining establishments, which benefits the broader tourism industry. Finally, by attracting high-spending tourists and enhancing a destination's brand image, luxury tourism contributes to a country's global tourism competitiveness.

2. Case Studies of Successful Luxury Tourism Models

The success of luxury tourism in various countries provides valuable insights into its economic potential and strategic implementation. This section examines three exemplary models: the Maldives, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Switzerland. Each of these destinations has leveraged luxury tourism to drive economic growth, create jobs, and enhance their global competitiveness.

2.1. Maldives

The Maldives is widely regarded as a global leader in luxury tourism, renowned for its overwater villas and private island resorts that attract high-net-worth travellers. Tourism is the backbone of the Maldivian economy, accounting for 28% of GDP and 60% of foreign exchange earnings (Maldives Monetary Authority, 2021). The country's focus on luxury tourism is evident in its accommodation offerings, with over 70% of tourist accommodations classified as luxury. The average daily spend of luxury tourists in the Maldives is approximately \$1,200, significantly higher than the global average (Maldives Ministry of Tourism, 2020).

The economic impact of luxury tourism in the Maldives extends beyond revenue generation. It has created 44,000 direct jobs in the hospitality and tourism sectors and stimulated investment in high-end infrastructure, such as private airports and luxury yachts. By positioning itself as a premier luxury destination, the Maldives has enhanced its global brand image and attracted a constant stream of wealthy travellers.

2.2. United Arab Emirates (UAE)

The UAE, particularly Dubai and Abu Dhabi, has successfully established itself as a luxury tourism hub. Tourism contributes 11.5% to the UAE's GDP and supports 570,000 jobs, making it a critical sector for the country's economy (Dubai Tourism, 2021). Dubai, in particular, is known for its luxury hotel market, which accounts for 30% of the total hotel inventory. The average room rate in Dubai's luxury hotels is \$450 per night, reflecting the high demand for premium accommodations (STR Global, 2021).

The UAE's luxury tourism sector has driven significant investment, such as the Burj Al Arab and Louvre Abu Dhabi. These developments have not only attracted high-spending tourists but also enhanced the country's global brand image. By offering a blend of luxury, culture, and innovation, the UAE has positioned itself as a leading destination for affluent travellers.

2.3. Switzerland

Switzerland is renowned for its luxury alpine resorts and high-end experiences, which cater to affluent travellers seeking exclusivity and natural beauty. Tourism contributes 2.9% to Switzerland's GDP and supports 170,000 jobs, underscoring its importance to the national economy (Switzerland Tourism, 2021). Although luxury travellers represent only 15% of total tourist arrivals in Switzerland, they generate 40% of the country's tourism revenue, underscoring the significant and disproportionate economic influence of this market segment (Bain & Company, 2020).

The country's focus on luxury tourism has led to the development of world-class ski resorts, luxury train services such as the Glacier Express, and high-end wellness retreats. These offerings have not only drawn high-spending tourists but also solidified Switzerland's status as a leading luxury destination. By capitalizing on its natural beauty and investing in high-end infrastructure, Switzerland has effectively incorporated luxury tourism into its broader tourism portfolio.

Case studies from destinations like the Maldives, the UAE, and Switzerland illustrate how luxury tourism can elevate a country's global competitiveness. These findings offer a robust framework for analysing Malaysia's achievements in this sector and extracting actionable insights for Algeria's tourism strategy.

III. Methodology

The methodology of this study is designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the economic importance of luxury tourism in Malaysia's tourism product mix and to derive actionable lessons for Algeria. This section outlines the research design, data collection methods, and analytical framework employed in the study.

This study adopts a qualitative research design to explore the economic significance of luxury tourism and its integration into the tourism product mix. Qualitative research is particularly suited to this study as it allows for an in-depth analysis of complex phenomena, such as the role of luxury tourism in economic development and the transferability of strategies between countries. The research is structured around the case study of Malaysia's luxury tourism sector, focusing on its economic impact and strategic implementation. And analysis methodology to identify lessons for Algeria, drawing on Malaysia's experience and global best practices in luxury tourism.

For Data Collection Methods, the study relies on secondary data collected from academic journals, government reports, industry publications, and international organization databases. The use of secondary data is justified by its accessibility, reliability, and relevance to the research objectives.

The collected data was thoroughly reviewed to gain a comprehensive understanding of the research context. The descriptive analysis examines the similarities and differences between Malaysia's luxury tourism model and Algeria's current tourism landscape. This descriptive approach allows for the identification of transferable strategies and potential challenges in adapting luxury tourism to Algeria's context.

Limitations of the study. Firstly, relying on secondary data collected from academic journals, government reports, industry publications, and international organization databases. Secondly, for the objective reasons corresponding to the degree of recovery of tourism industry in the world. Thirdly, the study focuses primarily on Malaysia as a case study, which may not fully reflect the diversity of luxury tourism models globally. Finally, the recommendations for Algeria are based on descriptive analysis and may require further validation through primary research or pilot studies.

IV. The Economic Importance of Luxury Tourism in Malaysia

Malaysia has established itself as one of Southeast Asia's premier tourist destinations, celebrated for its rich cultural heritage, stunning natural landscapes, and exceptional hospitality. Within its

diverse tourism portfolio, luxury tourism has been instrumental in fuelling economic growth, boosting global competitiveness, and solidifying Malaysia's reputation as a top choice for high-net-worth travellers. This section examines the economic significance of luxury tourism in Malaysia, with a focus on its role in revenue generation, employment opportunities, infrastructure advancement, and international branding.

1. Revenue Generation

Luxury tourism plays a vital role in Malaysia's tourism revenue, attracting high-spending visitors who deliver disproportionate economic benefits compared to mass-market tourists. In 2019, Malaysia welcomed 26.1 million international arrivals, contributing RM86.14 billion (approximately \$20 billion) to the country's GDP (Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board, 2020). While luxury travellers represent a smaller segment of total arrivals, their spending is substantially higher. For example, luxury tourists in Malaysia spend an average of RM2,000–RM5,000 (\$480–\$1,200) per day, compared to the average tourist spend of RM500–RM1,000 (\$120–\$240) (Malaysia Tourism Review, 2021). Although luxury travellers represent a smaller share of total visitors, their spending significantly surpasses that of the average tourist. For instance, luxury tourists in Malaysia spend between RM2,000 and RM5,000 (\$480–\$1,200) per day, compared to the average tourist spend of RM500–RM1,000 (\$120–\$240) (Malaysia Tourism Review, 2021). Key luxury destinations such as Langkawi, Kuala Lumpur, and high-end resorts in Sabah and Sarawak have become central hubs for premium tourism. Langkawi, in particular, has capitalized on its natural beauty and exclusivity, offering luxury experiences such as private island tours, luxury yachting, and premium eco-tourism. These offerings have successfully attracted affluent travellers from Europe, the Middle East, and East Asia, significantly boosting local economies.

2. Job Creation

The luxury tourism sector has generated significant employment opportunities in Malaysia, particularly in high-end hospitality, transportation, and entertainment. According to the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC, 2021), the tourism industry supports 3.4 million jobs in Malaysia, representing 11.6% of total employment. Luxury tourism, with its emphasis on personalized services and premium experiences, has been a major contributor to job creation within this sector.

For example, upscale hotels such as the Four Seasons Resort Langkawi, The St. Regis Kuala Lumpur, and Gaya Island Resort employ hundreds of staff, including roles in concierge services, culinary arts, spa therapy, and tour guiding. These positions often offer higher wages and better working conditions compared to those in mass tourism, thereby enhancing livelihoods and fostering economic stability for local communities.

3. Infrastructure Development

Luxury tourism has driven substantial investment in Malaysia's tourism infrastructure, enhancing the country's ability to cater to high-end travellers. The development of luxury resorts, private airports, and gourmet dining establishments has not only elevated the experience for affluent tourists but also enhanced the broader tourism ecosystem.

For instance, the Langkawi International Airport has been upgraded to accommodate private jets and luxury travellers, positioning it as a critical entry point for high-net-worth visitors (Malaysia Airports Holdings Berhad, 2020). Similarly, the construction of premium resorts such as the Datai Langkawi and Tanjong Jara Resort has redefined luxury accommodations in the region, offering world-class amenities like private villas, infinity pools, and personalized butler services (Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board, 2021).

Moreover, the growth of luxury tourism has catalysed investments in complementary services, including luxury transportation (e.g., private limousines and yachts) and exclusive cultural experiences (e.g., private heritage tours and gourmet food trails). These advancements have not only enriched the visitor experience but also generated a multiplier effect, benefiting local businesses and communities (WTTC, 2021).

The Malaysian government has further supported infrastructure development through initiatives like the National Tourism Policy 2020–2030, which underscores the importance of high-quality infrastructure to attract luxury tourists and ensure sustainable long-term growth (Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture Malaysia, 2020).

4. Global Competitiveness

By integrating luxury tourism into its tourism product mix, Malaysia has enhanced its global competitiveness and brand image as a premium destination. The country's luxury tourism offerings, such as luxury rainforest retreats, private island experiences, and world-class hospitality, have been widely recognized in international travel awards and rankings. For example, Malaysia has consistently been recognized as a top destination in prestigious awards such as the World's Best Awards by the Luxury Travel Guide Awards, underscoring its rising prominence as a luxury destination (Travel&Leisure, 2021; Luxury Travel Guide, 2020). These accolades have bolstered Malaysia's brand image, drawing affluent travellers and expanding its share of the global luxury tourism market. Additionally, Malaysia's strategic marketing efforts, including the "Malaysia, Truly Asia" campaign, have been tailored to showcase its luxury offerings, targeting high-net-worth individuals through digital platforms and international travel expos. Events like the Malaysia Luxury Travel Fair have become pivotal in promoting the country's premium tourism products to a global audience (Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board, 2021). The focus on luxury tourism has also enhanced Malaysia's standing in the World Economic Forum's Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index, where it has consistently excelled in categories such as natural resources, cultural heritage, and tourism infrastructure (World Economic Forum, 2019). By establishing itself

as a luxury destination, Malaysia has not only attracted high-spending visitors but also reinforced its overall competitiveness in the global tourism market.

V. Lessons for Algeria Luxury Tourism

Algeria, the largest country in Africa, is endowed with a wealth of natural and cultural resources that position it as a potential leader in the global tourism industry. From the vast expanse of the Sahara Desert to the stunning Mediterranean coastline, and from the ancient Roman ruins of Timgad to Tassili n'Ajjer, Algeria offers a diverse range of tourism products.

Despite this potential, Algeria's tourism industry remains underdeveloped, contributing only 4.2% to GDP and attracting a modest 2.7 million international tourists in 2019 (WTTC, 2020). The "Schéma Directeur d'Aménagement Territorial (SDAT)", Algeria's national territorial development plan, recognizes the importance of tourism as a driver of economic diversification and regional development. The SDAT highlights the importance of developing tourism infrastructure, fostering sustainable tourism practices, and strengthening Algeria's competitiveness as a global tourist destination. By leveraging its natural and cultural assets and learning from Malaysia's success in luxury tourism, Algeria tourism can unlock its untapped potential and position itself as a competitive luxury destination. This section outlines key lessons and actionable strategies for Algeria.

1. Promoting natural and cultural assets of Algeria

Malaysia has successfully integrated its natural and cultural assets into its luxury tourism product mix. For example, Langkawi's pristine beaches and rainforests have been transformed into luxury eco-tourism destinations. Algeria's diverse landscapes and cultural heritage provide a strong foundation for developing luxury tourism offerings. The Sahara Desert, one of the most iconic landscapes in the world, offers opportunities for exclusive experiences such as luxury desert camps, private camel treks, and stargazing tours. The Mediterranean coastline is ideal for high-end coastal resorts and yacht services. Additionally, UNESCO World Heritage Sites such as Tassili n'Ajjer and the Roman ruins of Timgad can be integrated into luxury cultural tourism experiences.

2. Investing in Infrastructure Development

One of the primary challenges facing Algeria's tourism industry is the lack of high-quality infrastructure, including luxury accommodations, transportation, and amenities. To attract affluent travellers, Algeria must prioritize infrastructure development and establish a seamless luxury tourism ecosystem. Drawing inspiration from Malaysia's success, where investments in luxury

infrastructure—such as the Langkawi International Airport and premium resorts like the Four Seasons and St. Regis—have been pivotal in attracting high-end tourists, Algeria should adopt a similar approach. This includes upgrading airports in key tourist hubs like Algiers and Tamanrasset, as well as developing luxury resorts and hotels in strategic locations such as the Sahara Desert and the Mediterranean coast, potentially in collaboration with international luxury brands. Additionally, Algeria should invest in luxury transportation options, including private limousines, helicopters, and yachts, to elevate the overall visitor experience.

3. Strategic Marketing and Branding for luxury Tourism in Algeria

Effective marketing and branding are crucial to positioning Algeria as a luxury destination and attracting high-net-worth travellers. Currently, Algeria's tourism marketing efforts are limited, and the country lacks a strong global brand image in the luxury tourism market. Drawing lessons from Malaysia's highly successful "Malaysia, Truly Asia" campaign, which effectively promoted the country as a diverse and appealing destination, Algeria can adopt a similar approach. Malaysia's campaign was later tailored to emphasize its luxury offerings, targeting affluent travellers through digital platforms and international travel fairs. To achieve similar success, Algeria must first develop a comprehensive marketing strategy that highlights its unique natural and cultural assets as part of a luxury tourism narrative. Second, it should launch targeted campaigns in key source markets, such as Europe, the Middle East, and East Asia, leveraging digital marketing, social media, and partnerships with influencers. Finally, Algeria should actively participate in international travel fairs and luxury tourism expos to showcase its high-end tourism offerings and capture global attention.

4. Public-Private Partnerships

Public-private partnerships (PPPs) can play a pivotal role in advancing Algeria's luxury tourism sector by combining the expertise and resources of both the government and private sector. Malaysia's luxury tourism industry serves as a compelling example, where strong collaboration between the government and private entities has driven the development of luxury resorts and infrastructure through partnerships with international hotel chains and investors. Similarly, Algeria should foster partnerships between the government and international luxury brands to develop high-end resorts, hotels, and tourism infrastructure. This can be achieved by offering incentives for private sector investment, such as tax breaks, land grants, and streamlined regulatory processes. Additionally, establishing a dedicated tourism development authority to oversee PPPs and ensure the effective execution of luxury tourism projects would be a critical step forward.

VI. Conclusion

This article has examined the economic significance of luxury tourism within the broader tourism product mix, with a particular focus on Malaysia's successful integration of luxury tourism and the lessons it offers for Algeria. By analysing Malaysia's luxury tourism sector, the study has highlighted its contributions to revenue generation, job creation, infrastructure development, and global competitiveness. Algeria's diverse tourism assets, including the Sahara Desert, the Mediterranean coastline, and its rich heritage sites, provide a solid foundation for building a thriving luxury tourism sector. The findings of this study hold significant implications for policymakers, tourism planners, and industry stakeholders in Algeria. By prioritizing luxury tourism as part of a diversified tourism strategy, Algeria can attract high-spending tourists, generate employment opportunities, and stimulate economic growth.

In conclusion, luxury tourism presents a substantial opportunity for Algeria to diversify its tourism offerings, enhance its global competitiveness, and drive economic development.

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