

Old Damascus Travel Industry and Patrimony

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ABSTRACT

Damascus is the most established possessed city on the planet with a history going back over 9000 years. Old Damascus exists in the dividers of the recorded city of Damascus. Damascus is described by its hundreds of years old structures and heavenly places, which are images of religions. Damascus' engineering is remarkable in its Damascene style, its recorded markets, its excellent houses of worship and it's amazing mosque, which is a symbol of design.

In any case, old Damascus experiences a few issues that influence its authentic appearance and the travel industry division experiences shortcoming because of absence of consideration and care of verifiable landmarks and the travel industry advancement in extent to its recorded significance. The most significant of these issues will be examined in this paper and will give a few intends to build up the travel industry segment to help animate the travel industry in Damascus to return as it was the Pearl of the East.

Keywords: Old Damascus; Ancient markets; Historical monuments; Tourism; Architecture hotel; Business; Travel

INTRODUCTION

The appearance and development of tourism planning has been linked to the appearance of tourism as a cultural phenomenon - in terms of behavioural and socio-economic phenomena on the other hand. Contemporary tourism has gained great importance since it has not received human activity in any of the earlier eras. However, heavy tourism activities have brought about economic, social, cultural and urban consequences and have had a significant impact on the lives of communities and peoples, drawing attention to the need to organize, monitor, guide and evaluate such activities. To reach desired goals quickly and maturely. Considering that Old Damascus has unique, archaeological and natural tourist resources, it is necessary to identify them, thus increasing national income through the entry of foreign exchange, as well as its contribution to creating new jobs to raise the standard of living.

The research problems/issues

The main issue is the shortcoming of the travel industry segment in old Damascus, realizing that any interest in the travel industry is the quickest method to accomplish the goals of advancement plans. Notwithstanding all the travel industry potential controlled by old Damascus, the vacationer movement experiences numerous issues and troubles. So it must be examined and attempt to discover fitting answers for advance the travel industry and create it to wind up one of the fundamental mainstays of the nation's economies

and a significant wellspring of the travel industry assets, regardless of whether interior or remote the travel industry.

Research importance

The importance of research in the following subjects:

1. The importance of ancient tourism in Damascus, which is the oldest capital inhabited of the world by a long history, where there are abundant archaeological sites.
2. The importance of tourism as an economic activity and important social function reflected in the city in a positive way, where the tourism sector plays an important role in the direct impact on the GDP of the state and thus improve the standard of living.

Research goals

1. Getting to know the most important tourist attractions in Old Damascus.
2. What are the problems of tourism in the city.
3. Recommend the most important suggestions that will help to develop tourism.

RESEARCH METHODS

Tourism will be explored through a number of scientific methods, including statistical methods and mapping to highlight some attitudes, developments and trends.

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Received: May 18, 2019; **Accepted:** June 25, 2019; **Published:** July 02, 2019

Citation: Alabrash Z (2019) Old Damascus Travel Industry and Patrimony. J Hotel Bus Manage 8:195. doi: 10.35248/2169-0286.19.8.195

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The concept of tourism planning

The idea of the travel industry arranging was not especially clear until after the Second World War, where universal travel had developed quickly, and the quantity of vacationers expanded, just as the assorted variety of the travel industry, in addition to traveller regions expanded and had various capacities and attributes. All these have prompted increment the enthusiasm for the travel industry exercises, and there has been a need to control and drive these exercises so as to decrease the negative effect on society and the impacts of nature, and to accomplish the greatest monetary advantage.

The travel industry arranging is characterized as a realistic image of things to come assessed the travel industry movement in a specific nation over a predetermined timeframe. This requires a stock of the travel industry assets in the nation so as to characterize the objectives of the travel industry plan and accomplish fast and normal the travel industry advancement through the readiness and execution of a rational program described by the incorporation of parts of the travel industry action and traveller regions in the nation [1-5].

Factors affecting tourism in Old Damascus

Damascus is the oldest inhabited capital in the world, with a history of over 9,000 years.

Damascus was founded by the Assyrians. Over time, it was conquered by the Romans, the Byzantines and the Ottomans. The Arabs dominated Damascus in 636 under the reign of Caliph Omar. It became the capital of the Umayyad Empire in 661, which extended from China in the east to Poitiers in south-eastern France in the west.

The history of Damascus and Syria is associated to changes in Arab domination in the region. Various political groups and families of major economic power fought the city until 1400. For 400 years, the Syrians were under Ottoman domination.

Damascus has been the capital of several civilizations in its long history. The country's modern history begins in 1946, when Syria became independent [6].

It was annexed to the World Heritage list in 1979, it includes more than 100 important archaeological sites.

The essence of Damascus is tied between its ancient walls, built from stone in the Roman age, between the Roman columns and the stone arches, the Citadel of Damascus is the only fortress in Syria that was built at the level of the other buildings of the city, and not on a highland.

When the city built in the Roman era, the wall was provided with seven gates, of which Bab Touma, Bab Kisan and Bab Sharqi which are the liveliest and most famous gates of the old city, in addition Damascus includes old palaces, the most important of them are the Azem Palace and the Palace of Culture. The city is renowned for the ancient baths and the Khans that formed a centre for the transfer of civilizations, cultures and commodity exchange [7-9].

Definition of Damascus from the administrative point of view

Damascus is the capital of Syria. It occupied an important position in the field of science, culture, politics, art and literature in the

third millennium BC, was the capital of many civilizations and became the capital of the Islamic Umayyad state in 661. Damascus had a population of 6.2 million, according to statistics, in 2004.

The inhabitants of Damascus are formed mostly by Arabs, followed by Kurds, Turks, Armenians, Assyrians, and Circassians.

Part of Damascus is located on the slopes of Mount Qasioun, the largest section of Damascus, including the ancient city, is located on the southern Bank of the Barada River [10].

Definition of Damascus in the field of tourism

Damascus has some of modern five star international hotels, dozens of hotels of varying degrees, different types of restaurants and cafes in the city, as well as huge tourist facilities in Damascus and in Al Ghouta. There are also many resorts in the mountains such as the resorts of Wadi Barada, Zabadani and Bloudan where there are many hotels and resorts, in addition to the old Damascus markets and commercial complexes in New Damascus.

These were from an infrastructure point of view, either from elements of attractions in Damascus:

Mount Qassioun: It overlooks Damascus from the north, in Qassioun there are many guest houses and cafes spread around it that overlook the city.

Hillock: It is at the west entrance of Damascus, formed by keys between two mountains, passing through the river Barada and its branches. At the foot of the mountains and around the river there are many cafes and restaurants spread along both sides of the international road leading to Beirut and Zabadani.

Damascus is also considered one of the most important Islamic centers of Arab culture in the Arab world, where Damascus has the first Arabic language complex in the Arab world, science centers, historical schools, National Museum, Damascus University from 1923, the Zahiria library and the Syrian opera.

Damascus was also the capital of Arab culture for 2008 because there are cultural elements of civilization such as:

- Sheikh Mohiudin Mosque, built in 1518.
- The Honorable Sanctuaries in the Bab Saghir Cemetery (small gate).
- Alttakia Sulaimaniya is west of Old Damascus, which was built by Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent in 1554, which is a school and market for manual occupations.
- The National Museum, which was built in 1919 and has four museums
 1. Museum of Prehistory.
 2. Eastern Museum.
 3. Classic museum.
 4. Arabic and Islamic Museum.

The National Museum is considered to be a museum of Syrian civilization throughout history, the museum contains structures dating back to the epochs of ancient stone, plus the archaeological stone of the first alphabet of Ugarit history, and the synagogue dating from 244 and is considered one of the most important religious temples discovered in Dura-Europos also contains the effects of the Mary Kingdom, and the effects of Heer West and East Palace [11-15].

The importance of ancient Damascus

Old Damascus is the name of the old city of Damascus, which

is the oldest inhabited city in the world and the oldest capital in history. Old Damascus is located within the walls of the historic city of Damascus, and Damascus is characterized by its centuries-old buildings and holy places of the mosque and churches that are considered symbols of religions.

The architecture of Damascus is unique in style in a famous way, widespread in old Damascus, where the damaschine houses are characterized by an inner courtyard that is surrounded by large rooms, and the houses are made up of one or two floors, overlooking to the inner courtyard.

Old Damascus includes many of the ancient neighborhoods and markets, mosques, churches and the Roman wall, where the ancient city of Damascus includes most of the monuments of Damascus, dating back thousands of years, even though they represent only 5 % of the capital city of Damascus [16,17].

Historical monuments and tourist elements attractions of the old Damascus

Old Damascus gates

There are seven gates built in the Roman antique era (Figure 1).

Bab Kisan gate: Bab Kisan and St. Paul's Church is one of the seven Roman gates of the old city of Damascus. Known today as St. Paul's Gate, the latter escaping his persecutors (Romans and Jews) through this gate after converting to Christianity in Damascus. St. Paul moved to Europe from Damascus and spread the Christian religion to Europe (sculpture and graphic illustration for the departure of St. Paul from Damascus located within Bab Kisan and St. Paul's Church).

The gate was converted into a church named after St. Paul, which was built using the original gems of the gate (Figure 2).

Gate of Touma: It was called Bab Touma, this name related to St. Thomas, one of the twelve apostles of Christ, Bab Touma is located in the north-east of the old city of Damascus, built for the first time in the Roman era and King Nasser Daoud rebuilt in 1228. Bab Touma is a model of Ayyubid military installations (Figure 3).

Gate of Bab Sharqi (East): The name Bab Sharqi was launched on

this large gate because of its location in the eastern part of the old city. Among the seven gates of the old city of Damascus. It was built during the reign of Emperor Roman Septimus at the beginning of the 3rd century AD, where it was the only gate of the old city, including three parallel gates [18].

In the middle of the 7th century AD, the Arab armies led by Khalid bin Walid entered the city of Damascus through this gate without a struggle, the mission of order being to establish the Umayyad dynasty. Also St. Paul entered Damascus through this gate a few centuries ago, to convert the population to Christianity, at the same time when Christianity began to spread throughout the ancient world (Figure 4) [19].

Gate of Bab Al Salam: It is one of the seven gates of the old city of Damascus. The gate is located in the north of the old town, and was restored during the Ayyubid period (Figure 5).

Gate of Bab Al Sageer: It is one of the seven gates of the old city of Damascus, the Gate is located in the south-western area of the wall in the old city (Figure 6).

Gate of Bab Al-Faradis: It is one of the seven gates of the old city, and is located in the northern part of the old city, (Al-Faradis means orchards) (Figure 7).

Gate of Bab Al-Jabiya: It is located in the western part of the old city, one of the most original seven gates, built by the Romans (Figure 8).

Old Damascus palaces

Azem palace: It is one of the most important tourist attractions in Damascus, and the most beautiful Islamic buildings. The area of the palace is 5500 m². It was built by Asaad Pasha Azim, Emperor of Damascus during Ottoman rule in 1749, near the Umayyad Mosque, and was built by the most skilled craftsmen and workers in Damascus. The construction lasted for three years and was used in its construction the Damascene architecture style and Islamic architecture (Figure 9).

Maktab Anbar (palace of culture): Maktab Anbar is an archaeological landmark located in the old city area and is one of



Figure 1: Old Damascus.



Figure 2: Gate of Kisan (Damascus 2011).



Figure 3: Gate of Bab Touma (Damascus 2011).



Figure 4: Gate of Bab Sharqi (east) (Damascus 2011).

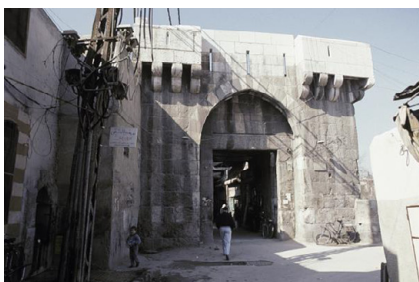


Figure 5: Gate of Bab Sharqi (east) (Damascus 2011).

the most beautiful houses in Damascus that have not undergone any change due to natural and human factors. Currently it is the seat of the Committee for the Protection of the Old City of Damascus. It is located to the east of Umayyad Mosque in Damascus, which was originally a house built on the Damascus style (a traditional Arabian house), and was built by a wealthy Jew named Youssef Anbar in 1872. Then the Ottoman Empire purchased it and completed the construction of the house, it was considered as a royal office, then it was turned into a boys' school. In 1976, the



Figure 6: Gate of Al Sageer (Damascus 2011).

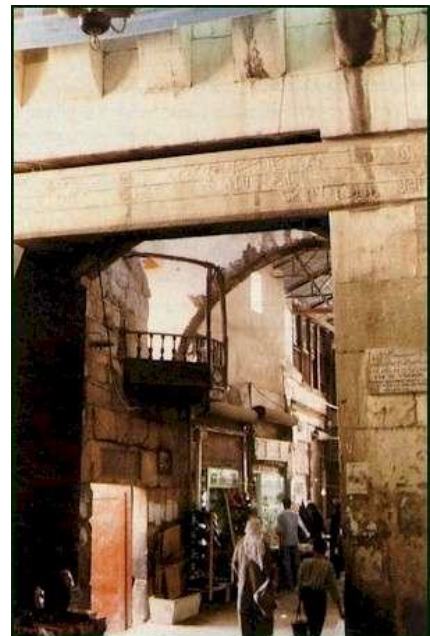


Figure 7: Gate of Al-Faradis (Damascus 2011).



Figure 8: Gate of al-Jabiya (Damascus 2011).



Figure 9: Azem Palace (Damascus 2014).



Figure 10: Maktab Anbar (Palace of Culture) (Damascus 2014).

Ministry of Culture restored the building and opened it under the name of the Palace of Arab Culture. Since 1988, it has become the headquarters of the Old Damascus Department. Now it has a library, museum and manual workshops. The area of the palace is 3825 m². It was divided into four sections, each section has its own courtyard. It has forty rooms and two floors. It is considered a masterpiece and a very beautiful model of the Damascene House (Figure 10).

Markets in Old Damascus

Al-Hamidiyah market: Hamidiyah Market is a large complex of covered streets, with many small shops, and is the most famous market in Damascus, and the most important, being renowned as the Market of the East. It is a commercial and industrial city in the middle of ancient Damascus, and has been described by historians as a splendid spacious building and calling it the heart of ancient Damascus. The researchers described it as the most beautiful pearl of the markets, being completely covered with an iron roof full of small holes, allowing the sun to enter during the day. The market is paved with stone (black basalt), the length of the market is 600 meters and its width is 15 meters, and its height is 8 meters.

The market is located near the Citadel of Damascus and has many ancient mosques and historic buildings, it contains many shops of any type on two floors, and it starts with a branch of several markets (21 markets), such as - Asrougip market (horse saddles) - Al-Buzuriyah market Souq (which specializes in food, cereals, dry seeds, oils and spices)- Gold Market- Alasronah Market- Silk Market- Bridal Market- and others [20-24].

In the Hamidiyah Market there are Damascene Syrian ice-cream shops or specialized salons, famous and well-known in all countries, that the ice cream Damascene (Arab ice cream) that has been manufactured here in unique and distinctive style for more than a hundred years, the most famous and the oldest salons (the Damascene Ice Cream) is well-known (Bakdash Shop) is known since the end of the 19th century and is visited by thousands of visitors a day (Figure 11).

Hamidiyah Market ends at the gate of Jupiter's Temple, and its



Figure 11: Souq al-Hamidiya (Damascus 2014).



Figure 12: Souq Medhat Pasha (Damascus 2014).

columns, and finally to a large courtyard of the Umayyad Mosque, in the heart of the old city. The Market was built in its present form, during the reign of sultan Abdul Hamid I in 1780 and took its name Hamidiyah. Hamidiyah is renowned in ancient history, selling all types of goods of all types and colors on the market, the most important products of traditional industries are: copper products, arabesques and fabrics of all kinds of silk and cotton, embroidery and all kinds of garments, cosmetics, shoes and carpets, gold, antiques and gifts.

Medhat Pasha market: It is known as the long market and was built in 1878 during the Ottoman rule (Medhat Paşa, Prince of Damascus). The Medhat Pasha Market is located on its Roman Straight Street - mentioned in biblical scriptures. This street is located in the heart of Old Damascus and is parallel to the Hamidiyah market (Figure 12).

Damascus castle

Damascus castle is a castle dating back to the Middle Ages and one of the most important military art and Islamic artefacts in Syria during the Ayyubid period. It was included in the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1979. Damascus Castle is located in the northern corner of Damascus city, between the Al-Faradis Gate and the Al-Jabiya Gate, and it is a part of the old city of Damascus, being surrounded by a ditch of water about 20 meters deep.

The castle was built in 1076 by Atsez Ben Oouk; a Turkish military prince. The construction was completed by Prince Bin Alp Arslan; sultan of Damascus and founder of the Seljuks. In the year 1174, the castle fell into the hands of Saladin, the sultan of Egypt, resided and rebuilt and added other buildings. Al-Adil Abu Bakr Ebn Ayub (Saladin's brother) completed and reconstructed the castle between 1203 and 1216 in response to the catapult's evolution and eventual possibility of being conquered (Figure 13).

Great mosque (Umayyad mosque)

It is one of the largest, most beautiful and old mosques in the

world. Raised in 705 by Caliph Walid bin Abdul Malik, it lasted ten years to build (705-715). It has an area of 16 thousand m².

This mosque is the fourth most holy place of Islam, after Mecca, the Medina and the Stone of Dome. It is located in the historic part of town. It impresses through its extremely large interior courtyard with white marble. Inside there is a Christian church that houses St. John the Baptist's head, so here Muslims and Christians both worship.

There are three minarets in the mosque. The Eastern Minaret or the Minaret of Christ, the western minaret, and the main minaret or the minaret of the bride. The mosque has four main gates: north, south, east, and west gate (Figure 14).

Church of Mary (Cathedral of Mary)

It is one of the oldest and most beautiful Orthodox churches in Damascus, it was built in Byzantine style and can accommodate up to 600 people.

The church is located in the old town of Damascus north of Right street, it was built in the 2nd century and was rebuilt several times over the years. At first, it was a modest church. When Christian faith was recognized in the Roman Empire, thanks to Emperor Constantine the Great, this church in Damascus was rebuilt and it became famous (Figure 15).

Zahiriyah Library

Zahiriyah is a library, founded in 1277 by Sultan Baibars. It is located northwest of the Umayyad Mosque. It was an old house, and it was transformed into a school after the death of King Baibars in 1279, the building now includes a library, and receives students and scholars who learn about old manuscripts and books, it has over 13,000 classical Islamic manuscripts [25] (Figure 16).

Hammam Nour al-Din

It is one of the oldest and most famous baths in Damascus, it is located in the middle of Al-Buzuriyah Souq, it was built by King



Figure 13: Damascus Castle (2011).

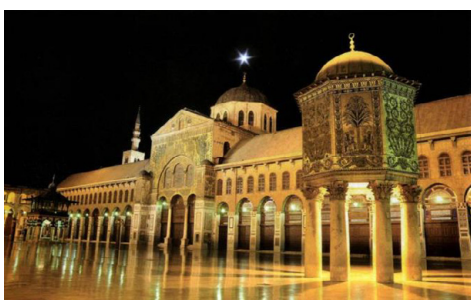


Figure 14: Umayyad Mosque (Damascus 2010).



Figure 15: Church of Mary (Damascus 2011).



Figure 16: Al Zahriya Library (Damascus 2010).



Figure 17: Hammam Nour al Din (Damascus 2014).

Nur al-Din in the 12th century. It is currently the only bath that receives foreign tourists in ancient Damascus due to historical significance and oriental aesthetic and traditional architecture (Figure 17).

Khan Asaad Pasha Azem

It is located in the middle of Al-Buzuriyah Souq in ancient Damascus. It was built by Sultan Asaad Pasha Azem in 1753. It has an area of 2500 m² and consists of two floors.

Recently it belongs to the Syrian Antiquities Directorate, it has been renovated to be used as a market for popular industries, where exhibitions are organized for tourists (Figure 18).

Bimaristan Al Nouri

It is located in the heart of Old Damascus, southwest of the Umayyad Mosque, and it is one of the three famous Bamarisians in Damascus. It was built by King Nur al-Din in 1154 and it was a hospital for the poor people, then turned to become one of the most famous hospitals and medicine and pharmacy schools in the Islamic country where senior doctors learned there such as Ibn Sina and Zahrawi.

In 1900 it turned into girls school in the era of sultan Abdul Hamid, and in 1939 it turned into a commercial school until finally it was

renovated in 1976 and became the Arabic Medicine and Science Museum (Figure 19).

Hejaz railway station

It made a connection between Damascus and Medina, and it was founded in Ottoman rule by sultan Abdul Hamid II with the purpose of serving Muslim pilgrims and correlating between different regions of the Ottoman Empire. It was destroyed in 1916 during the First World War. It was later rebuilt, and it is now a museum of books (Figure 20).

Addressing the negative issues affecting tourism in old Damascus

Because of the historic and cultural importance of the ancient Damascus architectural heritage, it has been added in the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1979, but unfortunately, author has observed some of the Problems which need to address immediately for future aspects in the old Damascus that affecting heritage, including:

1. Overlap in land use, when mixing residential, commercial, craft and industrial uses.
2. Violation of remarkable archaeological commercial buildings and architecture, contrary to the function of the original building, as well as the addition of foreign elements and accessories to original the building, or the division and fragmentation of the building for

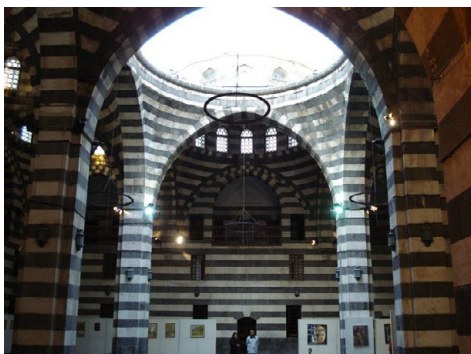


Figure 18: Khan Asaad Pasha Al-Azem (Damascus 2010).



Figure 19: Bimaristan Al Nouri (Damascus 2010).



Figure 20: Hejaz Railway Station (Damascus 2011).

commercial purposes for small shops that lose its importance; leads to a distortion of the basic design or model.

3. The suffocating traffic crisis in many parts of the historic building, such as Medhat Pasha Street and Alamin Street, caused by the malfunctioning traffic management and traffic required for commercial activities, operating a number of heritage houses, also the lack of private parking. All of this had a negative impact on architectural heritage and caused disability in investment and contamination.

4. Distortion of the traditional architectural style in many buildings due to negligence and lack of a sense of its importance, in addition to the lack of complete repair and restoration services, as well as the heterogeneity of neighbouring old and modern buildings in terms of characteristics and materials and the architectural height, and this does not refer to the clarity of the transition area, as a reality between the historical centre and the centre of the contemporary city.

5. Distortion and optical pollution through the poor distribution of billboards on the walls of the archaeological buildings, and the lack of harmony of colour interfaces, as well as the presence of workshops and shops next to the exterior wall of old Damascus.

6. Deterioration of many housing estates due to negligence.

7. Promotional and advertising posters that fill the old wall without any checks by the competent authorities.

8. The existence of random sales outlets in old Damascus.

9. The problem of sanitation, and the spread of restaurants and hotels in Old Damascus, where the city has more than double of its capacity due to the crowding of traffic and the growing population there, as well as the original extensions of the old city are not designed for restaurants and hotels.

10. Lack of guiding plaques in old Damascus: where tourists cannot ride without a tourist guide because the old town lacking guide boards, as well as the lack of adequate maps of archaeological sites in the old town, or not being distributed thoughtfully.

11. The Anbar's Office (Palace of Culture): It is a special case, because this tourist place is not reasonable to be a government department (Old Damascus Directorate) affiliated to Damascus Province, but it must be affiliated to the Ministry of Tourism or Culture. In his case, the palace closes the gates at the end of the official working hours, and it is not allowed to enter by the visitors, it is only for customers and employees rather than tourists, in addition to his negligence, it is not in the tourist map of Old Damascus, and therefore, it is absent of any guide plates indicates to it [23,24].

SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The previous dilemmas faced by the old Damascus historic centres have led some of those responsible for maintaining and restoring distinct buildings and re-employing them. The author proposes to those who care about Damascus, especially (the municipality of the old city of Damascus, the Directorate of Antiquities and Museums, and the Ministry of Tourism) the most important proposals:

1. Adopt the strategy for the sustainable development of urban heritage in the historical centres of Damascus, through a combination of change (the dynamic side) and the preservation of historic buildings and heritage sites in order to be attractive to the population.

2. Support activities contributing to the development of historical centres and to improve the financial position as well as the creation of new career opportunities in the field of tourism.

3. Formulate an environmental action plan to reduce air pollution and noise, as well as use alternative energy, control of land-use planning and elimination of abusive occupations of the urban environment.

4. Development infrastructure networks to ease the traffic crisis on main streets as well as development the land use and maintain the traditional characteristics of each market.

5. Develop a Master Plan in old Damascus defines historical land use as well as tourism areas.

6. Develop an on going plan for the restoration of heritage buildings and provide financial facilities.

7. Development tourism legislation and support tourism sector in old Damascus, as well as the definition of the importance of tourist centres in old Damascus.

8. Investment the Anbar office to be a tourist and cultural landmark by transferring the old Damascus Department outside the old city, (preferably to be invested in the morning and evening by coordinating with foreign cultural centres, and with the Higher Institute of Foreign Languages, to teach foreign students the Arabic language in her halls, and to learn how to play Oud "it is an old oriental playing machine", and the evening is being exploited to revive Damascus concerts that are suited to the privacy of the place) [25,26].

9. Develop a plan to promote Old Damascus abroad including:

I. Distribute brochures to foreign guests to transfer them to their friends.

II. Decorating hotels with paintings of the most famous old landmarks in Damascus.

III. Promoting travel and tourist offices for Old Damascus.

IV. Participating foreign tourism exhibitions to familiarize tourists with the historical monuments of ancient Damascus.

CONCLUSION

The old city of Damascus is an undertaking of human development, and it is difficult to discuss every one of the subtleties and issues that are presented to them in one pursuit. The reason for this examination is to feature the positive angles and components of vacation spots, and to display the issues and negative marvels of the Old City.

The execution of these proposals will resuscitate the travel industry in the Old City, which fundamentally makes new employments in the region of the travel industry, it likewise prompts the success of the monetary action in the city because of the section of remote trade through vacationers, which will profit the number of inhabitants in the city, what's more it will improve the presence of the old city and wipe out all that contort the appearance and consistency of the old structures, and protect its magnificence that it delighted in old occasions. Along these lines, coordinated endeavors must be made to improve the travel industry circumstance in Old Damascus.

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