

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Visitors' Experience at Historical Sites in the City of Amman: A Case Study

Ghaida Adel Irmeili* | Ayça Yeşim Çağlayan

¹Department of Landscape Architecture,
Istanbul University Cerrah paşa, Turkey

Correspondence

*Corresponding Author.

Email: ghaida_ai@yahoo.com

Abstract

Historical sites are a deep cultural heritage element that expresses the city's identity and its ancient life. Most cities have a long-civilized history, and the aspects of modern cities rely on it. However, some historical sites remained clear within the components of modern cities, so they became distinctive landmarks and points of attraction for local visitors and tourists, even becoming essential places for recreation and changing the routine of contemporary life. The moving from a historical site to the elements of a modern city needs a deliberate natural planning gradation. The landscape and gardens were the most appropriate for this transition in some places, acting as a natural separator between these two time periods and attractive places for visitors. This research presents the importance and impact of historical and archaeological sites on the inhabitants of the modern city, the behaviors and experiences of visitors as they move from busy city life and modern-day technology to ancient, nostalgic places. And how the parks and surrounding areas of the archaeological site helped integrate modern civil society with the image of the old city. Through a case study in Amman / Jordan, "The Roman Amphitheater and Amman citadel, a special questionnaire was conducted to find out the visitors' opinions, feelings, and behaviors of infamous sites in Amman. As a result of the study and questionnaire and specific questions, the historical sites have a significant emotional, psychological, and even spatial position for visitors to cities. They prefer them to the rest of the town.

KEYWORDS:

Amman Citadel, historical sites, modern city, surrounding landscape, visitor's behavior.

1 | INTRODUCTION

Historical urban areas are the memory of a city, and the overall landscape they constitute displays the typical scene of a town in a particular historical period. Thus, they are of value for protection. In some cities, the transformation of old urban parts has led to the complete disappearance of historical blocks. Historical urban areas are part of the history and memory of a city, and history would be discontinuous without them. They are excellent representatives of the style of a town and the essential elements of the urban landscape. Any lone building in these areas is not qualified for special protection as a relic protection unit, and thus it is often ignored. However, when buildings are seen together, they constitute a landscape that displays the typical scene of a city in a particular historical period, giving them a higher value (Wang, 2012). The community feels and represents many values associated with historic fabrics, i.e., sociocultural, spiritual/religious, economic, and aesthetic (Dastgerdi. et al., 2019).

Therefore, these historical areas give a particular impression to the city and additional elements that distinguish it from the rest of the towns and focus on its planning and urban fabric. Such sites maintain the spirit of originality and identity of the city no matter how advanced its urban planning. These sites increase their moral and aesthetic value if it is appropriately integrated with the elements of the modern city, and residents and tourists have an opportunity to interact and visit these sites. A total of 878 sites, 679 cultural, 174 natural sites, and 25 mixed (WHC, 2008a) throughout the world have been designated as World Heritage Sites by UNESCO since the adoption of the Convention Concerning the Protection of World Natural and Cultural Heritage in 1972 (Shen, 2009). Designated sites are open to visitors to strengthen international and national heritage identities in the public mind (Drost, 1996). It is a fact that the private sector, the host country, and the World Heritage Committee have made promotional and informational policies to draw vast numbers of visitors and increase the international visibility of destinations (Cook, 1990).

Jordan is a young state that occupies an ancient land that bears the traces of many civilizations. Separated from ancient Palestine by the Jordan River, the region played a prominent role in biblical history. The ancient biblical kingdoms of Moab, Gilead, and Edom lie within its borders, as does the famed red stone city of Petra, the capital of the Nabatean kingdom and the Roman province of Arabia Petraea.

The capital and largest city in the country is Amman—named for the Ammonites, who made the city their capital in the 13th century BCE. Amman was later a great city of Middle Eastern antiquity, Philadelphia, of the Roman Decapolis, and now serves as one of the region's principal commercial and transportation centers and one of the Arab world's major cultural capitals (Irvine. et al., 2021).

1.1 | The Important of Historical Sites in City Planning and Society

According to the Impermanence at Work organization, 2019, many reasons make Heritage and Historical Places Still Play an Important Role in Society. The first role that indicates the Historic Sites Give Identity to A Place; When the city preserves its archaeological and historical sites, it will give it a unique spirit, shape, and place that residents and visitors will use to change their busy lifestyle. Visiting historical places lets people know about the history of our country and know about the people who used to live in the past, which is very important for them to know. The other role mentioned tourism and how Heritage Places Add Value to Tourism; Travelers visit a location to see historical sites. They want to experience what they've read. They might visit different attractions, but they will often include heritage locations. Visiting a heritage place can take you back to a past era. You can learn how things were at that time. Some will even have attractions where you can "experience" living during a particular period. These can be theme parks with the old west ambiance. Some will have relics you can buy. Discovering Culture through Heritage Places; The best way to learn about a place is through its culture. There are heritage places with slide shows or plaques about that place. You can browse through them to see how things looked before. Some have pictures to show too. Performances in historical theaters become more appealing because of the architectural details. Old, ancient cultures can also bring a new perspective to visitors. They can develop a deep respect for a place or a tradition through immersion trips. For example, they can learn how to respect other cultures after their visit. In terms of sustainability and environment, the last role mentioned in the Heritage Places help for a Greener Earth; Our ancestors built these places many years ago. It's a form of recycling to preserve these buildings. That is already practicing ecological thinking. Maintaining existing structures is often better than building new facilities when people can still use the old ones, which can help reduce the waste from new construction. It can also save energy because the manufacturing of building materials will decrease. There is less use of tools and equipment which can help the environment. Most of all, there's less fuel consumption from transporting construction materials.

1.2 | Historical Site Management and Visitors

Historic site management includes the management of the built environment and the historic natural environment. Historic site management and interpretation have values-based approaches to leadership, historical memory, and the growth of heritage tourism. As it pertains to visitor impact, management generally centers around maintaining the safety and security of a site, minimizing damage for site sustainability, and maintaining visitor experience. Overuse is one of the primary factors in visitor-induced damage, and as such, conflicts arise in site management when heritage management principles come up against sustainable visitation (Bartlett, 2019). Literature related to historic site management and interpretation also draws from several aspects of environmental psychology. These principles suggest that socially constructed environments can influence the way visitors interact with space (Tilden, 2009; Falk and Dierking, 1992; Bitgood, 2006). Specifically, designed interpretation influences emotional and psychical connections (Tilden 2009). Human behavior research perhaps more fully aids in understanding

theories for how visitors interact with a site and the built environment. Theories from environmental psychology suggest that surroundings can influence how visitors behave in a space and help explain why some depreciative behavior may occur (Kaplan et al. 1998). The management of historical sites is about improving the visitor's experience by preserving and restoring the area and making it convenient for the visitors' experience. It is related to the control of the site as a whole and the relationship of the historical site with its surroundings, urban planning influences, and the effects of visitors' use of these sites.

1.2.1 | Historical Site Visitors

Historic sites and heritage sites are often maintained for public members to visit. Visitors may come out of a sense of nostalgia for bygone eras, wishing to learn about their cultural heritage, or general interest in learning about the site's historical context. (William, 1985). Many sites offer guided tours for visitors, conducted by site staff who have been trained to provide an interpretation of life at the time the site represents. A site may also have a visitor center with more modern architecture and facilities, which serves as a gateway between the outside world and the historic site and allows visitors to learn some of the historical aspects of the site without excessively exposing locations that may require delicate treatment. To aid potential visitors find historic sites or because they can serve as landmarks (Abramoff, 2002). Visitors to historical places are divided into two parts: residents residing in the neighborhood or the same city or from another city. Tourists coming from another country could be from a neighboring country or a far (foreign) country.

Jordan, Amman "the study area" receives many local visitors and tourists from all countries near and far, so its historical areas constantly receive different numbers and different categories of visitors. According to the Jordanian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, the number of visitors to historical and archaeological sites is constantly increasing, especially when attention is paid to the aesthetics of the area and the increase in services there.

As an example of the number of visitors, as Table 1 shows, the study area (the Roman arena, the Citadel, and the Hashemite Square), which will be explained later, the number of visitors in it is gradually increasing every year due to its strategic location in the center of the capital Amman and the interest of the Greater Amman Municipality in this sites. These data were obtained from the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities.

TABLE 1 The number of visitors to the Roman theater and the Citadel in Amman –Jordan.

Year	Number of Jordanian visitors	Number of tourists
2015	19950	15500
2016	23800	15500
2018	130000	176450
2019	103750	235300
2020*	33250*	44100 *

**Numbers decreased due to public lockdowns due to Coronavirus (Covid 19).*

Today's travelers as consumers have reached a stage that goes beyond tourism in which their travel motivation is not about wanting to experience an idealized version of foreign culture but rather to become exposed and immersed in the native country's language, art, cultural heritage, and patterns of life (Hudson, 2009).

1.2.2 | Visitor Behavior

Many factors influence visitor behaviors that shape their motivation to travel and destination choice. Destination image and evaluative factors such as trip quality, perceived value, and satisfaction directly influence visitor behaviors. Chen and Tsai (2007) found that destination image appears to have essential effects on tourist behavioral intentions such as intention to revisit and willingness to recommend, both directly and indirectly. Kim and Lee (2000) show that differences in cultural characteristics of visitors play a role in creating distinctive differences in tourist motivation and tourist behavior. In terms of understanding heritage tourists, Poria, Reichel, and Biran (2006) found the link between the individual and the space, namely tourist perceptions of a site relative to their heritage. Hence when examining heritage tourist behavior, it is vital to observe visitation patterns to places where historical artifacts are presented.

2 | THE CASE STUDY (AMMAN /JORDAN)

Jordan, officially the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, is a country in Western Asia. It is situated in Asia, Africa, and Europe (Teller, 2002). Amman is the nation's capital, largest city, and economic, political, and cultural center. Jordan ranks high on the Human Development Index and has an upper-middle-income economy. The country is a major tourist destination, attracting medical tourism due to its well-developed health sector (El-Said. Et al., 2001). Several civilizations have settled in Jordan, such as the Nabataean Kingdom, the Byzantine Empire, the Roman Empire, the Islamic period, and modernity. And all these civilizations left clear historical and archaeological areas to this day. Some of them did not survive earthquakes and weather factors, and some of them remained in good condition and became essential destinations for visitors.

Many cities contain important historical areas such as Amman, Petra, Jerash, Irbid...etc. But what distinguishes the capital, Amman, is that the recorded area merged with the modern planning of Amman. Hence, the downtown area of Amman, which contains the historical site as Figure 1 shows two of them, became the most famous city center, and from it began the urban expansion in the city of Amman. Maps was obtained from Google Earth in November 2021.



FIGURE 1 shows the location of the historical sites.

The area contains two historical sites opposite each other; according to the picture, site No. 1 is the Roman Amphitheater with its paved courtyard and garden, a newly added building with corridors and shaded seating areas. Site No. 2 is the Citadel area, containing several pieces and Roman archaeological buildings, the Jordan Museum of Antiquities, a Byzantine church, and antiquities from the Umayyad period.



FIGURE 2 Roman amphitheater from Amman Citadel

Around this historical site, there is a tremendous urban expansion in Amman. The local population preferred to settle in these areas in the early days of Amman, which led to the presence of modern buildings and streets completely near the historic site. Visitors prefer to sit and walk in both areas for recreation and watching the monuments, visit the Historical Museum, or sit in the garden adjacent to the Roman Amphitheater.

Usually, cultural activities and concerts are held in the Roman amphitheater area (Figure 2), and there are many visitors during the summer and holidays. In the Amman Citadel area, as Figure 3 shows, several paved paths are prepared for pedestrians to walk between the remains of the ancient buildings and reach them, sometimes surrounded by trees, landscapes, bridges, or archaeological stones.



FIGURE 3 Corridors in the Amman Citadel area designated for visitors and pedestrians

In general, the landscaping on the site (Figure 4) is distributed naturally between the buildings and on the edges of the yards, and it consists of trees, climbing plants, and shrubs. Visitors use these landscapes and trees for sitting around and relaxing. When resting from walking, they give a pleasant atmosphere, provide shade when the weather is hot, and provide a beautiful scene mixed with squares and archaeological columns.



FIGURE 4 Landscape in the Amman Citadel area between the squares

3 | MATERIAL AND METHOD

The research presents a selected case study for the historical site and its visitors. The Study utilized a survey as the primary methodology of this study. The study population consists of the local Jordanian population inside and outside Amman and Arab and foreign tourists. The target sample was 150 local and foreign visitors who had the experience of visiting the historical site in Amman. The surveys were conducted subjectively among local visitors and through social media and e-mail. The original English-language questionnaires were translated into Arabic for local visitors and mainly into English to meet the needs of foreign visitors. Work on the questionnaire took five weeks to complete.

The Limits of The Study:

This study was carried out from April to June 2021. The questionnaire was conducted during May/June 2021; the answers and the count of the number of visits were based on the period for the summer and fall of 2019 (before the public lockdown period of the Coronavirus "Covid 19"). The questionnaire was answered by 150 people (Cluster Sampling) in the study area and neighboring areas. The questionnaire consists of 16 different questions that measure quantity and quality. The questions were answered by 150 people: 80 female and 70 male. Percentage of survey participants is shown in Figure 5 .

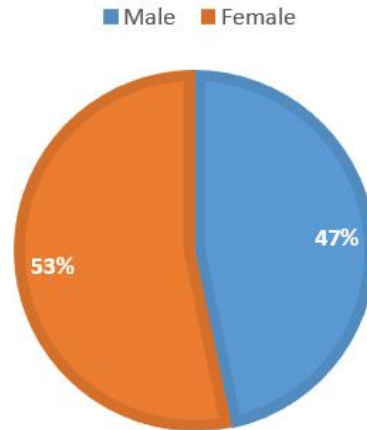


FIGURE 5 Percentage of survey Participants.

Most of the people who participated in the survey were Jordanians, who were present in the study area and its neighboring regions, except a percentage of Arab and foreign tourists. The most significant portion of respondents to the questionnaire are employees (46.7%), followed by university students (32.7%). This indicates that the employees find comfort and relaxation in this area after spending a tiring day at work or in this place on their day off.

4 | RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

To know the repercussions of the visits to the historical sites and to obtain information about visitors, through questions for a specific group of visitors, the research find the following results and are shown in Table 2 .

TABLE 2 Summary of studies included in the review

Socio-Demographic Structure	Findings
The Number of Visiting Times (Frequency)	<p>the questions " How many times have you visited this area" and "If you have the time and the ability to visit a place in the city, you will choose what? "</p> <p>46.7% of the visitors visited the Roman Amphitheatre and Amman citadel monthly, which is a percentage that can be improved and developed in case there is increased interest in this area by the competent authorities, and 59.3% would prefer to return to visit an archaeological and historical site as well if they had the time and the ability. Also, the number of visitors that visited the site for the first time is 34%</p>

Continue on the next page

TABLE 2 Summary of studies included in the review

Socio-Demographic Structure	Findings
Visitor Groups Types	It has been observed that the percentage of visitors who come with their friends is 41.3% and with their families 36%, which confirms that the archaeological and historical areas located in the middle of the cities are suitable places for friends' gatherings or to spend family time. And it is considered a critical positive point because people are always looking for a place to comfort their partners and families and at the same time of moral value.
Visitors Location	The most significant percentage, 40% of the survey participants, is those who live in Amman, and 26.7% are visitors from other cities. Visitors come to the historical site by car, which is the most significant proportion of 50%, while 35.3% of the respondents use public transportation. This indicates that the region is a primary target for a visit, and they intend to visit it specifically from Amman and other cities.
Visitors' Preferences and The Duration of Their Visit	Most of the visitors, 73.3%, prefer to visit the museum and sit at the Roman theater and like to see the antiquities, and the same percentage of visitors sit in this historical place from 2-4 hours of the day. And the favorite activity of 60% of the visitors is visiting the museum and seeing the exhibits and monuments. 56% of the visitors, when asked about the historical sites and the modern city sites, preferred to pay attention to the historical and archaeological areas and merge them with the elements of the contemporary city.
Visitors' Feelings and Aspirations	What do visitors feel when seeing the historic site? This is an important question; History reflects the city's status and importance. Many towns have gained fame and significance due to elements of historical and archaeological value in them. The ancient building technology attracted visitors' attention to the Roman amphitheater area, which is expected due to the massive size of the Roman amphitheater and the accuracy of its design and implementation, which is comparable to many modern buildings.

Other findings of the study are as follows:

- The historical, archaeological areas express the identity of the place and the culture of the previous peoples who lived in the same place and the ancient building technology; they must be preserved and integrated with the elements of the modern city without affecting them because they are protected areas and the most appropriate way to gradually integrate them is to have landscapes around them, so that they are designed in a way that suits the nature of the region's history and modernity.
- According to the statistics and opinions of visitors in cities, the historical, archaeological areas have become an essential destination for visitors in our current time. They are an important destination for tourism, so attention must be paid to their suitability for users and focus on preserving them and providing appropriate services.
- Young people are the group that visits the most archaeological and historical sites (according to the questionnaire). Therefore, activities and services that attract this social group must be devised.
- Good and thoughtful urban planning for urban areas surrounding historical places is necessary; pedestrians, accessibility, street furniture, corridors and bridges, streets, covering services, sidewalks, and public transport must be taken into account.
- It is noticeable that the number of visitors from neighboring areas who came to the site walking is minimal if we compare it with other numbers; this is due to the lack of interest in pedestrian paths around the area; the streets are reserved for cars only around the place and lack of interest in the sidewalks, as this was observed through field visits to the site and its surroundings, and seeing these problems in reality.

- The study area contains several elements such as the Roman theater, the square, the museum, and the garden, and there are nearby restaurants and cafes.
- the visitors chose to sit in a park or an archaeological place, and they did not prefer shopping or sitting in a café or closed restaurant. This percentage draws attention to interest in the neighboring gardens; as the adjacent park is an open area and green, the vegetation cover is minimal. This merging must be done in a deliberate planning and urban manner. The difference between the period in the two regions must be combined with natural elements; in terms of logic, these two areas can be linked through landscapes. Landscapes are an excellent way to connect the historical, archaeological area with the details of the modern city,
 - because of the preference of many people to have green areas and landscapes in modern city planning.
 - landscaping does not cause a general change to the infrastructure of the archaeological area (as is known, it is a protected area) in the city.
 - the vegetation and the landscape protect the area from allowing random construction around the monuments.
 - it is also a beautiful and innovative design method to transport visitors from the city's modernity to a historic area across the landscape.

In addition, the historic area needs better permanent maintenance and the provision of elements to better suit people with special needs, according to the opinion of the majority of the respondents.

5 | IMPLICATION AND RECOMMENDATION

According to the responses to the questionnaire and visitors' opinions. Findings of this study support the importance of historical sites and their integration with modern urban planning for cities through the experience of visitors and city dwellers.

Also, in light of the modernity adopted by some cities, these sites have become the primary identifier for cities, their identity, and civilization. They are required and preferred tourist destinations for visitors. The recommendations of this study in the first place are to preserve the identity of these places, which has a psychological and spiritual impact on the visitors. These places give an excellent opportunity to develop the city's landscape by integrating history and modernity through the landscape. They are favorable elements for users and provide all recreation requirements, including aesthetic features, seating areas, and places that support the environment. The role of architects, planners, and landscape architects in Jordan's public and private sectors is to integrate historical sites and modern places into city planning to provide a successful and distinctive experience for visitors when moving between the elements of the city and making it an unforgettable experience.

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