

The Role of Public Libraries in Promoting Tourist Attractions: The Case of the Public Reading Library of the Wilaya of Batna, Algeria

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Abstract

Today, public libraries are symbols of cultural awareness and intellectual development for nations. They are fundamental pillars for scientific and cultural progress, reflecting a country's history, lifestyle, and cultural patterns, while promoting and introducing them. As a result, public libraries have become one of the most important tourist attractions in any country. Thus, this study examines the role of public libraries in promoting tourist areas. The study explores the nature of public libraries, their services, and types. It focuses on the Public Reading Library of the wilaya of Batna in Algeria, and relies on a descriptive methodology as it is the most appropriate for this research. The findings reveal the significant role the library plays in introducing the region's history, culture, and major tourist attractions through a diverse documentary collection and a range of scientific and cultural activities.

Keywords: Public Libraries; Tourism Information; Batna Public Library; Tourism Promotion

Introduction

In all their varieties, libraries are an important source of knowledge and culture. Throughout the ages, libraries have played a crucial role in advancing intellectual and scientific activities. In our modern life, the success of a library is measured by its ability to provide services to members of society, foster their skills and capabilities, and educate them. This is particularly true for public libraries, which serve as a cornerstone for scientific and cultural progress. They reflect the history, lifestyle, civilization, cultural heritage, and achievements of various peoples in different fields of knowledge. Libraries are spaces where abilities are enhanced, and knowledge is expanded.

Given the importance of libraries and their cultural role in society, public libraries have strived to become centers of culture and research, cultivating an informed and educated generation capable of taking responsibility and contributing to the advancement of their country in various fields. They provide free services to all parts of society, helping them gain knowledge and learning, while also enabling researchers and scholars to access resources. Public libraries also collaborate with other academic and social institutions, such as museums, theaters, and tourism organizations, to offer comprehensive services to the entire community. They serve an educational function, especially for continuous self-education and combating illiteracy. Moreover, libraries work to raise public awareness, provide entertainment, and offer ways to spend leisure time. By doing so, they align their services with the specific needs and characteristics of their visitors.

Statement of the Problem

Public libraries are among the most prominent social institutions that aim to develop knowledge across various parts of society without discrimination. The public library is considered a “library of democracy,” where its services are directed to everyone without exception. It is a dynamic and renewing force, aimed at serving education and culture. Today, the public library is no longer just an additional tool but has become an essential element that is indispensable to all parts of society. Its functions are mainly centered on achieving the satisfaction of its patrons from the entire community, not just the direct beneficiaries.

Therefore, a weekly, monthly, and yearly plan must be established, based on the interests and needs of these beneficiaries by studying their scientific and intellectual requirements and constantly identifying their desires and tendencies. In essence, it is an open school without conditions or restrictions, where individuals continue to learn and benefit throughout their lives from various cultural, scientific, recreational, and academic activities offered to everyone.

The library organizes cultural activities in various forms, including educational, recreational, and even touristic activities, with the aim of attracting the largest number of people. Public libraries constantly strive to offer diverse community services to be closer to all social groups, focusing even more on enhancing and developing their cultural and touristic roles by introducing different touristic areas. Tourism is the civilized means for cultural exchange between people, communities, and touristic countries.

Among the public libraries in Algeria that seek to provide this service is the Public Reading Library of the wilaya of Batna. In this field, Algeria strives to use various methods and techniques to promote tourism and attract a larger number of tourists. It relies on libraries of different kinds, especially public libraries, by directing the large number of visitors to well-known public libraries. These libraries aim to introduce readers to touristic products and potentials, making them a touristic space and a point of access to other touristic destinations.

Hence, this study sheds light on the Public Reading Library of the wilaya of Batna and its role in promoting touristic areas within the wilaya. As such, the study aims to answer the following research questions:

- What are the most important tourist areas in the wilaya of Batna?
- Does the Public Reading Library of Batna play a role in promoting and introducing tourist sites?
- What are the methods and tools used to promote these tourist areas?
- Is there a collection of information sources and databases related to the cultural heritage of the Aures region, such as local customs, traditions, folk stories, *etc.*?
- Is there cooperation with the authorities responsible for tourism in the wilaya of Batna?
- What are the challenges that hinder the utilization and development of this service?

Study Hypotheses:

Based on the previously mentioned questions, the study develops the following hypotheses:

- The wilaya of Batna has significant tourism potential, including natural, cultural, and historical elements.
- The Public Reading Library of Batna provides a range of services to various segments of society, including the promotion of tourist sites in the wilaya.
- There are several challenges that hinder the development and use of this service, including a lack of coordination with the authorities responsible for tourism in the wilaya.

The Importance of the Study

Given the significant role that public libraries play in society and the various services they provide to all its segments, the importance of this study

lies in focusing on these services, particularly their role in promoting tourist areas and identifying the main methods they use in this regard. This is a new initiative addressing an emerging up-to-date research topic, which seeks to explore how open the library is to its external environment. Moreover, the importance of the study is reflected in its attempt to showcase the tourism potential of the wilaya of Batna as the capital of the Aures region.

Study Objectives:

The study aims to achieve a set of objectives, which are as follows:

- Identifying the tourism potential of the wilaya of Batna and uncovering the concepts related to tourism.
- Addressing the importance of information institutions, particularly public libraries, and their role in promoting tourist areas as a new initiative that contributes to expanding tourism in the wilaya of Batna and promoting it.
- Attempting to explore the future prospects that public libraries seek to achieve through the cultural activities they offer, which help promote Batna's tourist areas.
- Understanding the key methods and tools used by the public reading library in the wilaya of Batna to promote these tourist areas.
- Identifying the main challenges that hinder the full utilization and development of these services, including the lack of coordination with the authorities responsible for tourism at the provincial level.

Study Methodology:

The study employs the descriptive method because it is the closest approach for describing and analyzing data. This method combines both analysis and interpretation, serving as a way to describe and quantitatively visualize the phenomenon under study through data collection, classification, analysis, and detailed examination.

Sample of the Study:

The sample is considered a part of the research population or audience, which includes all the elements of the phenomenon being studied by the researcher along with all individuals or elements relevant to the research problem. It is defined as a part of the original research population chosen by the researcher using various methods, representing the original population and achieving the research objectives, thus sparing the researcher from the challenges of studying the entire population. For this study, the appropriate

sample is a purposive sample, used when the researcher wants to study a pre-defined community. It includes the employees of the Main Public Library of Batna – Mohamed Hamouda Ben Sai, 14 employees.

Scope of the Study:

- **Geographical Scope:** The geographical scope is the spatial area designated for our study. This research is conducted at the Main Public Library of Batna – Mohamed Hamouda Ben Sai (Hamla 01) in Batna.
- **Temporal Scope:** This refers to the time duration for completing this research, starting from the topic selection and data collection phase to the receipt of forms, data processing, and analysis. This study lasted approximately four months, from February 2024 to May 2024.
- **Human Scope:** The human scope represents the subjects to whom data collection methods will be applied within the chosen geographical area. In this study, the human scope includes the employees of the Main Public Library of Batna – Mohamed Hamouda Ben Sai (Hamla 01) in Batna.

The Public Library: Concept and Characteristics

According to the encyclopedic dictionary, a public library is a collection of books and other materials preserved for reading, study, and consultation. (Al-Shami, 1986, p. 10). It is defined as a cultural institution that provides library and informational services to all members of the community in a specific area. (Hadi, 2001, p. 17).

The essential concept we derive is that a public library is a democratic cultural institution created by the state or local authorities. It is equipped with various types of information sources to aid in acquiring knowledge, self-education, and understanding information related to society and global events and developments. It offers all these services to citizens free of charge, regardless of gender, color, religion, beliefs, age, type, or educational and professional level. (Saleh, 2012, p. 88).

Based on the previous definitions, the following characteristics of a public library can be identified:

- It must be accessible to the general public without any discrimination or differentiation.

- It should provide opportunities for children to engage in activities and support their intellectual and cultural development, considering them as the future generation. (Malika, 2012, p. 63)
- It should be established and supervised by the state.

The Importance of Public Libraries:

- Public libraries play a leading role in spreading cultural awareness among individuals by providing access to books, magazines, and references that help society gain knowledge, understanding, and experience. They enable researchers and students to access sources of thought and culture.
- Public libraries offer culture to the community by classifying, preparing, and organizing materials in a way that suits different intellectual levels and categories.
- They address social and cultural issues by presenting them and providing opportunities for various community groups to contribute to solving these problems through seminars and lectures.

They work to ensure that different community groups, especially children, enjoy their leisure time and feel happy. This is achieved by training them to visit the library and use books to gain experiences that will help them in their future academic and professional endeavors. (Tawfiq, 2014, p. 188)

In conclusion, the public library is considered one of the fruits of modern democracy, and it serves as a practical testament to democracy's belief that education is a continuous process that accompanies human life. The library plays a fundamental role in serving and enhancing the community, as a responsible citizen can only positively contribute to the progress of their society if they possess a certain level of culture and knowledge. This culture is provided by the public library as a tool for continuous, informal self-education.

Public Library Services

Public library services encompass all the facilities provided by the library to users for using books and other library materials. The internet is the best means of providing library services, along with information databases. (Nafea, 2011, p. 25).

Library services are everything from which an individual obtains information that meets their needs and satisfies their interests. Managers should

pay attention to various information sources so they can understand and anticipate potential problems. (Al-Khatib, 2009, p. 69).

There have been many definitions of library services in specialized scientific literature. "Melvil Dewey" defined it in its simplest form as providing the best reading of the greatest number of references at the lowest cost. He considered library services as providing the maximum amount of references and library materials to users through the most effective and easiest means with minimal time, effort, and cost. (Greer, 2013, p. 137).

Definition of Tourism and Its Main Components

Linguistic Concept of Tourism:

The term "tourism" refers to traveling or wandering, meaning to move across the land or to traverse it. (Djemai, 2019, p. 275).

Technical Definition:

A large number of experts, researchers, and tourism enthusiasts have defined tourism in various ways, reflecting differing perspectives. The first definition was provided by the German researcher "John Perfordler" in 1905. He defined tourism as a phenomenon of our era arising from the increasing need for rest, a change of environment, the experience of natural beauty, the joy and pleasure of staying in areas with unique characteristics, and also from the growth of communication, especially among different human groups, which resulted from the expansion of trade and industry. (Hijab, 2002, p. 21).

Based on the above, a comprehensive definition of tourism can be given as follows: Tourism is the act of moving from one place to another and from one time to another ("global tourism") or traveling within one's own country ("domestic tourism"). The duration should not be less than 24 hours and should not be for permanent residence. The purposes of tourism may include culture, business, religion, sports, etc.

Definition of Tourism Media:

Tourism media refers to the various communication activities carried out by both media organizations, such as newspapers, magazines, television, and radio, as well as non-media entities, including government and private

organizations. These activities aim to promote the tourism industry through cultural exchange, religious understanding, and the dissemination of education and information. (Mohammad, 2016, p. 46)

Tourism media is a form of media that involves "all forms of planned and continuous communication activities undertaken by media professionals and specialists to provide the public with accurate facts, news, and information about tourism-related issues, topics, problems, and developments in an objective manner and without distortion. This is achieved through different communication channels and methods, employing various persuasive and influential techniques to increase public awareness of tourism and encourage individuals to travel, whether within their own country or abroad. (Nassima, Cultural Tourism and Heritage Valorization through Television Programs in Algeria, 2010, p. 140).

Importance of Tourism:

Economic Impact: Tourism is considered one of the economic activities that generates income from various elements of production within the tourism sector. International tourism revenues grew at an average rate of 9% annually from 1988 to 1997. In 1997, the World Tourism Organization reported 680 million tourists worldwide, generating approximately \$443 billion in revenue, making tourism the leading industry globally. From a production perspective, tourism contributes about 1.5% to global GDP. (World Tourism Organization, 2013, p. 18).

Exploring the impact of tourism on the economy requires a detailed look at its contribution to the global GDP. This contribution is not only a direct reflection of tourist spending but also an indicator of how tourism stimulates the economy through job creation, infrastructure investment, and a boost to related industries. In 2019, the travel and tourism industry accounted for 10.4% of global GDP – that's \$10 trillion! In 2022, the industry reached 7.6% of GDP. (Truyols, 2024).

- **National Identity and Cultural Exchange:** Tourism enhances the sense of national belonging through cultural and civilizational exchange.
- **Social Interaction:** It fosters interaction and contact between the residents of the visited tourism areas and the tourists, whether they are

from the same country or other nationalities, leading to social exchange.

- **Dialogue and Understanding:** Tourism promotes dialogue and understanding between different peoples and helps spread the principles of global peace.
- **Cultural and Intellectual Exchange:** Tourism serves as a medium for intellectual communication and the exchange of culture, customs, and traditions between people, creating an environment conducive to mutual understanding and tolerance. It also acts as a tool for knowledge exchange. (Abdelkader, 2012, p. 25).

Media Used in Promoting Tourism:

Tourism today is characterized by its international and low-risk nature, which has led to an increase in the continuous movement of tourists around the world. Tourism has become a significant and substantial sector for the economies of countries. It encourages citizens to travel, enhance their knowledge and culture, enjoy their time, and relieve the stress caused by work and economic and social relationships. (Mohammad, 2016, p. 47). Countries also compete with each other to highlight the attractions of their lands from all perspectives, aiming to attract tourist funds and invest them in their own countries. It is a profitable and clean industry, making it a major economic sector for most countries.

Tourism Lectures: These are delivered through audio lectures via radio broadcasts or other modern means like social media to discuss tourism programs. It is essential to select competent speakers and engaging techniques to capture attention. (Schreiber, 2024).

Tourism Seminars: These are used as an effective method to inform and advertise tourism programs through debates among a group of tourism specialists. The more current and relevant the seminar topic is, the more engaging and attractive it will be for the audience of tourists. (Souza, 2024).

Tourism Conferences: These serve as an advertising and media tool for successful tourism promotion by organizing promotional conferences to introduce regions or countries, as well as new tourism programs, natural conditions, and plans and goals of the activity. Radio representatives and tourism news program editors cover these tourism programs and broadcast news segments about them, which attract and excite tourists. (columpa, 2019, p. 23).

Tourism Radio Programs and Advertisements: Radio, both visual and audio, is used as a highly influential and successful medium to address the tourist audience, impact them, and motivate them to engage with tourism programs.

Tourism Magazines and Journals: These are also used as a means of tourism media and advertising, with many being of particular interest to professionals in the tourism sector: (Csapó-Horváth, 2021, p. 236).

- **Books and Tourism Guides**
- **Promotional Brochures**
- **Tourism Signs and Posters**

Television and Cinematic Films: These are among the most popular and widespread media in modern times. They also have a significant impact on behavior. Through television media, various tourism advertisements can be broadcast.

The Internet and Social Media Networks: By using modern devices connected to the internet, such as smartphones, tablets, and computers, information about tourist destinations, hotels, theater programs, cinema, and more can be provided.

Sports Competitions: Sports competitions, especially the Olympics and international championships, represent an important means of tourism advertising and media. (Rizvandi, 2020, p. 47).

Field framework of the study

The Main Public Reading Library of the Wilaya of Batna: (Technical Data Sheet for the Main Public Reading Library of Batna., 2023).

The public reading library is a public institution with an administrative nature. It enjoys legal personality and financial independence, and it may have branches established by joint ministerial decisions between the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Culture, and the authority in charge of public service. Its primary tasks include providing books in various formats to promote and encourage public reading. Its internal organization is defined by a joint decision between the Minister of Culture, the Minister of Finance, and the public service authority.

Public reading libraries were established by Executive Decree No. 07-275 dated Ramadan 6, 1428, corresponding to September 18, 2007. This was

later followed by Executive Decree No. 12-234 dated Rajab 3, 1433, corresponding to May 24, 2012. This decree aimed to change the name of public reading libraries under the supervision of the Minister of Culture and organized by the above-mentioned Executive Decree No. 07-275 to the Main Public Reading Libraries and to define their legal framework.

The Main Public Reading Library of the Wilaya of Batna was established by Executive Decree No. 13-180 dated Jumada al-Thani 24, 1434, corresponding to May 5, 2013, which includes the creation of main public reading libraries. In accordance with Article 4 of Executive Decree No. 12-234 mentioned above, main public reading libraries were established in the following provincial centers: Naama, Tamanrasset, Souk Ahras, Tindouf, and Batna.

Public reading libraries are considered a fundamental pillar for scientific progress and cultural advancement, as well as a reflection of the civilizational and intellectual level of nations and peoples. They highlight the cultural heritage left by the intellectual efforts of scholars, thinkers, and creators. Undoubtedly, these libraries have played a prominent role throughout the ages in nurturing and enlightening minds. This has been proven by their contribution to developing individuals' intellectual capacities, promoting civilizational values and cultural awareness, and educating and nurturing generations. They have long contributed to erasing the effects of ignorance and illiteracy and building functionally integrated and intellectually harmonious societies, guiding their members toward steps on the path to development and progress.

The importance of reading libraries stems from the natural human need for intellectual and scientific curiosity, which is now referred to as "information services." These services are systematic methods followed by information facilities to gather, process, and organize information to provide it when needed in the quickest and most efficient way possible. These services vary from one type of library to another, and even among libraries of the same type. Therefore, many factors influence the quality and level of library services, such as:

- The efficiency of those managing the libraries and the nature of their specialties and employment patterns.
- The general environment of the library and the nature of its users.
- The availability of sufficient resources (human, material, financial).
- Date of completion and supervising body: Completed in 2007 by the Directorate of Construction and Urbanization in the Wilaya of Batna.
- Location and area: This library is located in Hamla "1" and covers an area of more than 6,000 m². It has 5 contracted security guards.

- **Human resources:** The library has a significant number of employees, around 30, including specialists in financial management and human resources management, as well as light vehicle drivers and three cleaning staff members.
- **Nature of the library's collection:** Donations from the Ministry of Culture and a purchased collection of over 5,000 titles.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Natural Attractions and Tourist Sites in the Wilaya of Batna

The survey conducted among the library staff about their knowledge of Batna's natural and geographical tourist attractions, and the most famous sites in the wilaya of Batna, revealed that 100% of the staff are aware of the tourist spots within the wilaya. This is due to the fact that the library organizes annual visits to various tourist locations in Batna.

The responses from the library staff also highlight the diversity of archaeological and tourist sites available throughout the year. This is attributed to the library's efforts to promote cultural tourism, which positions it as a potential tourist destination. The library has focused on educating all its employees about the different tourist areas and fostering a tourism culture that encompasses both natural and cultural aspects.

Natural Tourist Attractions:

The wilaya of Batna is one of Algeria's most important wilayas with significant tourist potential. This study aims to identify the key tourist resources available or under development.

Technical Profile of the Wilaya of Batna:

Location: Batna is located in eastern Algeria, with the city of Batna as its capital. It is situated between the 4th and 7th degrees of eastern longitude and the 35th and 36th degrees of northern latitude. Major cities include Aïn Touta, Berriche, M'raoune, and Ores. It is bordered to the east by Khenchela and Oum El Bouaghi, to the northwest by Setif and M'sila, and to the south by Biskra. It is considered the cradle of the Algerian revolution and the capital of the Aures Mountains. (Sonia, 2023, p. 238).

- **Area:** the wilaya of Batna covers an area of 12,038.76 km².
- **Population:** 1,128,000 inhabitants (2008).

Historical and Cultural Tourist Sites:

- ❖ **Lambese Archaeological Site in Tazoult Municipality:** Located 11 km east of Batna City along the national road linking Timgad and Batna, this area holds significant historical and archaeological value with its treasures, including a theater, baths, temple, library, and an amphitheater for performances and gladiatorial games.
- ❖ **The Archaeological Site of Imedghassen:** This site represents the tomb of the Numidian king Massyl, an ancestor of King Massinissa, who lived around 3-4 BC. The tomb is conical in shape, with a height of 18.50 meters.
- ❖ **The Archaeological Site of Zena El-Bayda:** This Roman archaeological site is located in the municipality of Zenata El-Bayda, within the district of Ain Jasser, specifically along the national road connecting Batna and Sétif. Its Roman name was Diana Veteranorum, named after Queen Diana who ruled during that period.
- ❖ **The Site of Tebna in Berriche:** Roman ruins can be found on the opposite side of Wadi Bitaam, which covers the eastern region of the Zab, where there are no prominent landmarks. The site encompasses 10 hectares and includes walls built with large stones, which may have contributed to the Byzantine construction. This archaeological site was classified as a national heritage in 1950.
- ❖ **The Archaeological Site of Timgad:** This site is located 35 km from Batna and was classified as a World Heritage Site in 1982 by UNESCO. It was founded in AD 100 by the Roman Emperor Trajan. The main features of the Timgad area can be summarized as follows:
 - **El Goufi:** This region was the starting point for the Berber Chaoui tribes, who were constantly pursued by various invaders, including the Phoenicians and Romans who built cities and fortresses, followed by the Vandals, Byzantines, Arabs, and finally the French. Due to its stunning mountain ranges, beautiful natural landscapes, water springs, and valleys, this area has always been and remains the first and preferred destination for those who visit it. Besides, the remarkable blend of desert and mountainous nature compels one to marvel at the beauty of divine creation and human craftsmanship.
 - **Belezma National Park:** Belezma National Park is located 7 km northwest of Batna, covering an area of 26,250 hectares. It is situated in the mountainous region extending northwest of Batna. The park features steep and varied terrain formed by the geological folds of the Aures Mountains. The vegetation includes Atlas cedar forests covering

approximately 5,000 hectares, and it hosts rare national flora, including Atlas cedar forests on rocky terrain in the Chelala area, followed by unique plant species such as various types of arum and manure plants, in addition to high-altitude meadows containing lichen.

The Role of the Public Reading Library of Batna in Promoting Tourist Areas within the Wilaya:

Public libraries in Algeria are key factors in changing the mindset of society or parts of it, particularly among the educated class. Libraries continuously work to provide individuals with various types and forms of information. They achieve this by offering cultural and artistic development opportunities, helping individuals shape and support their social, national, and cultural identity, and enhancing their appreciation of cultural heritage, local and foreign arts, scientific achievements, and global innovations.

From the survey responses, it is evident that 100% of respondents confirmed the effective role of public libraries in promoting tourism, particularly the main public reading library in Batna. This is due to its role as a community information institution that works to preserve valuable documentary heritage and local culture. This, in turn, strengthens the Batna community's interest in libraries and their services. It is often said, "If national and university libraries are a measure of the extent of knowledge in a country, then public libraries are a measure of its culture and awareness." Therefore, the public library of Batna should focus on collecting and preserving local cultural heritage and introducing it through documentation and dissemination in collaboration with all cultural, academic, and educational institutions at the provincial or national level, especially tangible and intangible heritage. This effort aims to promote and introduce local heritage to increase the number of tourists in the wilaya. This is part of the library's monthly and annual plans and contributes to enhancing self-respect, national spirit, and pride in national belonging. In addition to gathering and processing information, it also contributes to sustainable local development and helps individuals become aware of the various tourist areas within the wilaya.

Methods and Programs Used by the Public Library in Promoting Tourist Areas:

In response to whether there are specific programs or methods employed by the Public Reading Library of Batna to promote tourism within the wilaya, it was observed that 100% of the sample respondents confirmed that the main public reading library offers a range of services contributing to this role, directed at all segments of the community. Among these services are programs designed

to introduce the cultural, geographical, historical, and tourist diversity of the Aures region. This indicates that the library places significant importance on these programs, as they generate interest among visitors in learning about various activities or tourism programs offered by the library.

The library employs various methods throughout the year to fulfill this role. It provides the Batna community with diverse programs, such as the Book Forum, which contributes to daily, weekly, and monthly awareness of local culture and thought. It also hosts popular festivals—religious and other significant national events—that enhance local culture, such as Independence Day celebrations, folklore events featuring local songs and dances, and artistic works. These can enhance the tourist content of the wilaya. Additionally, the library organizes national forums, meetings, study sessions, and public discussions related to Aures Amazigh heritage and local history. It annually organizes and participates in celebrations for the Amazigh New Year through various exhibitions, intellectual seminars, lectures, and local and national meetings.

Moreover, the idea of mobile libraries and the Station Library Initiative was introduced: a branch of the Public Reading Library was inaugurated at the passenger transport station. This pioneering national initiative encourages reading in various spaces. It represents a partnership and coordination with the public station's management and the provincial branch of the Algerian Writers' Union to promote national cultural and historical heritage in general and specifically the local Aures heritage.

The Documentary Collection of the Library Related to Local Tourism Culture

The goal of possessing diverse intellectual collections and library materials, both traditional and electronic, is to provide scientific resources for local residents and researchers to explore the region's unique, historical, and cultural heritage. The focus is on local history collections that document government, industry, trade, education, entertainment, and historically significant figures within the region, as well as the history of its religious, cultural, and social organizations. These materials also assist researchers and university students in tracing ancestral lineages, ethnic and tribal histories, and family backgrounds.

The collection areas should include the following: records that narrate the history and development of the place, as well as photographs of sites, places, and heritage elements that are important parts of the collection; materials that document and provide context for understanding the lives of historically

significant figures associated with the place, which directly contribute to promoting the place and its history and heritage, playing a direct role in its tourism promotion. Given this importance, we aimed to determine whether the Public Reading Library of Batna is aware of the role that intellectual collections play in contributing to local tourism promotion.

According to the results, all respondents (100%) affirmed that the Public Reading Library of Batna possesses a diverse documentary collection in various forms, covering topics related to Batna's Aures culture, including both intangible heritage and the introduction of tourist and geographical sites in Batna specifically, and Algeria in general. This indicates that the library places significant emphasis on promoting tourist areas within the wilaya.

The library attempts to collect, preserve, and disseminate the region's history as it is, essentially, the main local public institution and the mirror reflecting Aures culture and thought, and the primary interface for the wilaya of Batna. Therefore, it must adopt a collection development policy that aligns with this role by designing collections that focus on regional development and increasing visitor interest.

The subjects of these books include local and regional history, works by authors from Batna, and the following categories:

- **Local and Regional History and History of Batna:** Books detailing the local history and the history of the city of Batna.
- **Local Culture and Children's Books about the Region:** Travel guides and books on local culture.
- **Encyclopedias and Biological Dictionaries:** Biographical guides and encyclopedic works.
- **Manuscripts:** Include materials such as memoirs, personal journals, magazines, and a collection of letters. Local magazines or journals cover topics related to social, cultural, historical, or local political issues.
- **Newspapers:** Local newspapers are a vital component of any local history collection, whether original or digital. They are an excellent tool for libraries to introduce and promote the region.
- **Maps:** Maps of the region and local maps are very important for the library as they contribute to the development of the local history collection.

Relying on Tourist Guides and Collaboration with Relevant Authorities

The results show that 66.66% of the sample respondents confirmed the absence of tourist guides within the library, indicating a lack of communication or coordination with tourism authorities at the level of the wilaya of Batna. This may be attributed to other pressing roles, such as communication with educational and academic institutions, as well as a shortage of specialists in this field. Conversely, 33.33% acknowledged the presence of tourist guides, noting that some staff members confirmed the existence of maps of tourist areas in Batna that help visitors identify key tourist attractions and geographical locations.

General Results of the Study

1. The wilaya of Batna boasts diverse tourist areas and a rich local cultural heritage.
2. The main public reading library of Batna is one of the most significant institutions in the wilaya striving to promote tourist sites and local and regional heritage.
3. The main public reading library of Batna employs various traditional and modern methods to promote tourism and introduce local culture, including seminars, forums, mobile libraries, the internet, and social media platforms.
4. The library has a diverse documentary collection, including information sources and databases on the cultural heritage of the Aures region, covering local customs, traditions, and folklore, which contribute to showcasing local culture, its personalities, and history.
5. One of the main challenges hindering the library's effectiveness in promoting tourist sites is the lack of cooperation and coordination with tourism institutions at the provincial level.

Study Recommendations

Based on our review of various aspects of public reading libraries in Algeria, particularly the main public reading library of Batna, and the issues it faces, the following recommendations for improvement are suggested:

1. The public library should itself become a tourist attraction before playing a role in promoting tourist sites and documenting local heritage. This can be achieved by making the library building architecturally appealing and reflective of local culture.
2. Modern methods should be employed to showcase local heritage and promote it beyond the physical confines of the library.

3. Collaboration with tourism authorities in Algeria in general and the wilaya of Batna in particular should be established.
4. Creating a dedicated blog or website for the public library, which should be regularly updated and maintained. The website should include a section for visitor interaction and feedback, incorporating advanced features like video chat and integration with social media.
5. Subscribing to daily and weekly cultural newspapers that focus on promoting local Chaoui and Aures heritage.
6. Obtaining tourist guides from relevant authorities and working with local tourism offices and agencies. Encouraging investment in the tourism industry through promotion and awareness initiatives.

Conclusion:

With the technological advancements and the increasing role of public libraries, it has become essential for public libraries to broaden their functions and roles within society by reaching out to various community segments. This involves offering services beyond traditional ones. Among the global libraries pursuing this goal are the public reading libraries in Algeria. The study has explored the role of the main public reading library of the wilaya of Batna in introducing tourist areas and promoting both tangible and intangible cultural heritage within the wilaya.

The staff at the main public reading library of Batna have affirmed that the library plays a significant and prominent role in showcasing tourist areas in Batna. They are working to organize better services and projects to highlight the wilaya's key tourist attractions. One of the major challenges facing the Batna public reading library, as well as libraries nationwide, is moving beyond traditional service models and fostering cooperation, coordination, and partnerships with all national institutions across various activities to advance tourism, thought, and cultural awareness.

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