

## Optimization of Tourism Development in Egypt by Examining the Tourism Development Experience in UAE

Hala Nabil Hilaly

Faculty of Tourism and Hotels - Alexandria University

### Introduction

The tourism industry is playing an increasingly significant role in the country's national economy. 'Tourism in Egypt is a significant contributor to GDP and employment, with direct shares of 3.5% and 12.6% respectively (Information and Decision Support Centre, 2007).

Egypt's tourism sector has regained momentum and has been able to realize a satisfactory performance over the last few years in terms of volume, value-added and foreign revenues.

Certain developing countries of the world have achieved exceptional tourism development and continue to do so. United Arab of Emirates, an emerging tourist country, establishes itself as a relatively popular destination with a high tourism growth (EIU, 2003b). It is now considered one of the most important tourist destinations in the Middle East. Dubai's tourism development has witnessed a strong increase. The manner in which it has done so is described in terms of the factors facilitating destination development if present or inhibiting it when found wanted.

Although, having an incomparable array of natural and cultural assets, as well as a long history of tourism, the first global tourism competition index issued in March 2007 places Egypt as the 58<sup>th</sup> country within the 134 countries worldwide, and in the 7<sup>th</sup> place within the Arab countries. The UAE preceded Egypt concerning the competition index in which the UAE was the 18<sup>th</sup> worldwide (Information and Support Decision Centre, 2007).

Both UAE and Egypt are located in the Middle East. They have several common circumstances; both are Arab countries, Islam is the official religion, close culture, etc..... Therefore, Dubai represents an interesting and useful example of a successful experience in tourism development and subsequently merits an examination. This study describes the experience of development of this destination and its underlying dynamics within the context of factors that are critical to destination development, and barriers obstructing such a process. The analysis of this experience will be useful to access and subsequently optimize the Egyptian tourism development experience.

### Destination development

Different factors in the tourism destination affect tourism development significantly. Critical influences relate to accessibility (Prideaux, 2000), attraction and amenity standards (Gunn, 2004), awareness and positive images (Johns and Mattson, 2005) associated with promotion and marketing (Buhalis, 2000), a supportive government (Weaver and Lawton, 2002) and a peaceful and stable environment (Poirier, 1997).

The relative significance of each dimension is a matter for debate and partly depends on the tourist market and characteristics of the destinations. The contribution of attractions should perhaps be highlighted as the 'energizing power unit of the tourist system' (Gunn, 2004), although conceptions are constantly changing with the emergence of new styles that are less geographically dependent and essentially artificial (Fyall et al, 2003).

The aim of this research is to optimize the Egyptian tourism development experience through describing Dubai's tourism development experience and its underlying dynamics within the context of factors that are critical to destination development and weaknesses obstructing such a process. The analysis of this experience will be useful to access this experience and subsequently focus on the barriers and challenges of tourism development in Egypt.

This study will be described as follows: the first section presents an overview of tourism in the Middle East, UAE and Egypt. Section 2 will describe factors critical to destination development. Challenges for the future will be discussed in section 3. In section 4, differentiation between tourism in Egypt and UAE will be provided, Choice of policies and strategies will be described in section 5. Finally, section 6 will conclude.

#### 1- An overview of tourism in the Middle East, the UAE and Egypt

The Middle East is defined by the world tourism organization (WTO) as comprising Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Oman, Palestine, Qatar,

Saudi Arabia, Syria, the UAE and Yemen, with Israel placed in the east Mediterranean Europe category (WTO, 2005). Worldwide, in 2006, the Middle East travel and tourism economy was ranked the ninth in terms of absolute size (US\$150 billion) and is expected to grow to US\$280 billion by 2020 (WTTC, 2007; Hussain 2007a). The region recorded only 4.6% of the world's total arrivals and 3.4% of receipts in 2004 (WTO, 2005). These figures confirm the view that it is one of the least developed tourism regions in the world (Sharpley, 2002, p.221), with proposed reasons such as infrastructure's inadequacy and lack of planning and marketing (Mintel, 2002) as well as political instability. In addition to some restrictive entry procedures imposed by some countries, deeming hedonistic westernized international tourism unacceptable and incompatible with the Islamic region and traditions (Burton, 1995; Henderson, 2003). Global futures and foresight expect the investment in tourism and infrastructure for the Middle East to be about US\$3 trillion by 2020, with current investments standing at US\$1 trillion which is much higher than what considered global expenditure (Hussain, 2007a).

More specifically, the region is not normally associated with the leisure/holiday tourism market. That is, with the exception of Egypt, which in 1999 accounted for over a quarter of the region's arrivals, tourism to and within the Middle East has been dominated by business travel (Wahab, 2000). Nevertheless, recent years have witnessed efforts by a number of Middle East countries to develop non-business tourism in order to diversify their economies.

The region is not a uniform entity and there are variations in stances on and stages of tourism development as well as divergences with regard to domestic, regional and international tourism flows. Saudi Arabia has traditionally drawn the largest share of Middle East arrivals, 24.4% in 2004, although its predominance is due to mass pilgrimage travel by Muslims. Egypt, as one of the principal destinations, has a long history of tourism, founded on a well known cultural heritage, and cannot easily be compared with

emerging destinations offering modern urban centers and desert environments. Bahrain also represents one of the principal destinations in the Middle East, with 3 million tourists in 2003 (WTO, 2005b). Jordan received over 1.3 million tourists, although mostly from other Middle East countries, accounting for 7.6% of the regional total. However, tourism has become the main stay of the Jordanian economy, contributing up to 26% of GDP, whereas for other countries, such as Libya, Yemen, Syria and Saudi Arabia, tourism is much less economically significant. Some countries in the region have a larger supply of cultural and natural attractions (e.g. Yemen, Syria, Iraq and Libya) and, hence greater opportunities for tourism development. However, for political, cultural or economic reasons, these countries have been less willing or able to exploit their potential although they have a greater economic need to develop tourism (Henderson, 2006).

Conversely, the Arabian Gulf countries possess fewer attractions and, perhaps, are not conventionally viewed as possessing tourism potential or, indeed, needing tourism as an economic sector. However, they have increasingly sought to diversify and strengthen their economies.

The driving force behind economic diversification in the Gulf States has been the fluctuations in global oil prices and the uncertain future for their petroleum-based economies. These countries moved towards diversification, privatization, deregulation and liberalization of foreign investment rules. These policies have been beneficial to the tourism industry, which is also recognized as a worthwhile option by non-oil producers. Lebanon, for example, notwithstanding former and recurring troubles, is turning to tourism to assist economic recovery (Reuters, 2004).

The outlook of tourism depends heavily on the degree of peace and security actually existing. Inbound extra regional tourists have been discouraged by political instability and fears of global terrorism (Aziz, 1995; Kelly, 1998; EIU, 2003a). In addition to severe and rude procedures from foreign destinations towards Arab tourists mainly after September eleventh and the bad image of Arabs and Muslims in Foreign countries were expected to cause an ongoing trend towards an intra-Arab travel.

UAE lies in the heart of the Middle East and is one of the world's fastest growing economies with a per capita income of US\$31,000 (IMD, 2005). According to the global tourism competitiveness reports by the World Economic Forum, UAE ranks 18<sup>th</sup> the whole world and number one in the Arab world, (Information and Decision Support Centre, 2007 and Rahman, 2007a, b). It is known as the 4<sup>th</sup> best for conventions and 3<sup>rd</sup> best for business, but still does not feature in the top ten country brands (Future brands, 2006).

The UAE has witnessed great efforts to build tourism infrastructure and market its attractions (EIU, 1993). However, tourism development has not been uniform across the UAE, and although for political and economic purposes the UAE is considered a single-nation state, there is no planning, co-ordination and marketing of tourism at the national level. Thus, it has been left up to the individual emirates to develop their own tourism sectors and, as a result, some of the emirates are, in effect, competing with each other for a share of similar markets (Sharpley, 2002).

Dubai is one of the seven autonomous sheikhdoms making up the federation. Other members are Abu Dhabi, Sharjah, Ras-Elkhaima, Ajman, Fujairah and Umm al-Qaiwain. These vary considerably in size and population, but all have undergone modernization and urbanization (Clements, 1998). Dubai and Abu Dhabi are the main economic contributors out of the seven emirates that make up the UAE. Non-oil revenues contribute to 63% of the GDP (UAE Interact,

2007a). Dubai occupies a land area of 3900 km<sup>2</sup> and is the second largest emirate after Abu Dhabi. Both have international airports, as does Sharjah, and several tourist attractions like beaches, cities, oases, mountain and desert landscapes and peoples, ancient civilizations and nature reserves (UAE, 2005).

Abu Dhabi's economic growth and development has been underpinned by the production and export of oil and petroleum based products. Nevertheless, in common with other oil-producing states in the region, Abu Dhabi has, over the past decade, been seeking to diversify its economy in order to reduce its dependence on oil. Most recently, attention has been focused on developing tourism. Abu Dhabi possesses a variety of natural and cultural attractions, along with infrastructure, good communications and a relatively small yet high quality accommodation sector, which collectively represent a solid foundation for the development of tourism. Furthermore, it is safe, clean and relatively liberal and enjoys political stability. Thus, it would appear that, at first sight, Abu Dhabi is well placed to exploit the opportunities offered by tourism. Nevertheless, Dubai will remain the dominant tourism destination in the Gulf region; indeed, it is the only emirate to collect and provide tourism statistics to the WTO and, as such, is synonymous with the tourism in the UAE (Sharpley, 2002).

Abu Dhabi contributes 59% to the GDP of UAE (56% is oil dependent) while Dubai contributes 29% (5% is oil dependent). Dubai contributes over 80% of the non oil assets (Middle East Monitor, 2007). Tourism currently contributes 18% to Dubai's GDP directly and 29% indirectly (Al Hakeem, 2007).

Dubai is considered one of the fastest growing destinations worldwide (EIU, 2003b). It attracted 5.8 million tourists in 2003 (WTO, 2005b). In 2006, 6.5 million people visited the Emirates excluding visitors staying with friends and relatives (Rahman, 2007b). Guests at hotels and hotel apartments in 2002 were primarily from other Gulf Cooperation Council members (34%), South Asia (25%), other Arab states (16%), Europe (15%) and Africa (9%) (DTCM, 2004a). According to DTCM's (2007) One Stop Information Center, though hotel occupancy has increased from 66.8% (in 1999) to 82% (in 2007); the average length of stay for hotel guests have not increased significantly (2.5 nights in 1999 to 2.7 nights in 2007), hence, Dubai is not considered a long-stop vacation. But earnings from tourism exceeded US\$1 billion and surpassed oil revenues that year to directly and indirectly account for 17% and 28% of GDP respectively. Business, conference and exhibition travel are lucrative markets, but leisure was the main motive for 75% of visits to Dubai in 2003 (DTCM, 2004a).

Egypt has witnessed a significant growth in tourist arrivals. The total number of arrivals reached more than 9 million tourists in 2006 (Ministry of Tourism, 2007). The average tourist nights have increased from 8.9 nights in the period (January- March 2007) to 10 nights during the same period in 2008. This fits with the tourism development plan which targets to increase the average tourist nights and subsequently increase the average expenditure through diversifying the tourism product and the effective exploitation of the tourism attractions. The total tourism revenues reach 8.18 billion \$ in financial year 2006/2007 with an increase of 13% compared with 2005/2006 (Ministry of Tourism, 2008). The total tourism revenues reach 2.6 billion US\$ in the period (January- March 2008) (Central Bank of Egypt, 2008). These figures make tourism a fundamental source of income for hard currency in Egypt.

Although Egypt precedes UAE in terms of total number of arrivals and length of stay, but we cannot compare these

numbers absolutely. Considering these numbers proportionally with the population's size, and the attraction's variety and quantity, UAE performance will surpass Egypt performance and the comparison will not be to the advantage of Egypt.

## 2- Factors critical to destination development (strengths and opportunities)

It is evident that Egypt and UAE are ranked the top tourism countries in the Middle East and they are in a position to develop tourism, although a number of challenges must be overcome if opportunities are to be fully exploited. The following section will describe strengths and opportunities found in both destinations. The description focuses more on Dubai to examine its experience in order to put our hands on its key of success.

**2-1- Stability** Stability in economics, social and political domains is essential for tourism as severe disturbance and volatility will deter many tourists, investors and the industry of tour operators and travel agents. Income from oil in UAE provides all the emirates with a standard of living and degree of security. From the political side, there has been an uninterrupted period of political order and continuity, alongside economic prosperity, if little democracy as other Arab countries (Henderson, 2006).

Dubai is second in political and financial power to Abu Dhabi and exercises a degree of independence and autonomy in economic policy making (EIU, 2005a). Dubai acts as a regional depot and promotes itself as the commercial and the financial nexus of the gulf. The relatively free market economy now incorporates trade and services (Ministry of Planning, 2002).

Dubai is seen as a comparatively liberal and cosmopolitan society, with little threat of civil unrest and low crime rates, and expatriates make up about 82% of the 1.4 million population. 85% of the population is employed (Dubai Healthcare City, 2007). It is a Muslim state yet the practice of other religions besides Islam is permitted and there is a degree of openness to outside influences rarely observable in much of the Middle East (BBC, 2004 and FCO, 2004).

Services contribute 74% to Dubai's GDP (Balakrishnan, 2007). Therefore, one of the areas Dubai strategic plan focuses on its people management. Services currently account for 85% of the employment of nationals who are less than 2% of the workforce. A key driver is Emiratisation where the emphasis is to balance demographics and responsibility, reinforce culture and knowledge management through a quota system for nationals.

Dubai embraces the latest technology and is currently integrating services of all 24 government officials (Balakrishnan, 2008).

Egypt now witnesses a relatively stable economic and political environment compared with previous periods after successful efforts that have been given to control terrorism.

Egypt has lately become an attractive investment option, due to the encouraging policies adopted by the government and the improvement of the investment environment in general. The real domestic product growth rate reached 7.5% in January-March 2008, and the executive investment increased by 38.9 % to reach 57.1 billion Egyptian pounds compared with the same period in 2007. Moreover, tourism investments in 2006/2007 amounted to LE 13 billion, of which 83.5% were private sector investments. Although macroeconomic indicators have been relatively positive in the last years, income distribution has been poor. On the other hand, the average income per person became 10058.5 L.E. (about 1828US\$) in 2006/2007 and is expected to be 11741 L.E. (about 2134US\$) in 2007/2008. However, the annual inflation rate increased by 19.7% in May 2008 versus 10% in

the same month in 2007 (Ministry of Economic Development, 2008).

**2-2- Government tourism policy** Governments have a crucial part to play in initiating and sustaining development. The UAE government intervened and began to spend on infrastructure (Balasubramanian, 1992 and 1993), especially in Abu Dhabi and Dubai.

The federation policy encouraged economic diversification due to fall in oil production as it is estimated that oil will exhaust itself in 20 years (Middle East Monitor, 2007). This fact is realized in the government vision as outlined in the 2015 strategic plan. Dubai started to invest substantially in tourism which was soon the pole of the economy (Crookston, 1998).

Tourism was located at the center of the diversification programmed alongside construction, telecommunications, media, real estate and financial trading. There was thus a strong shift towards services (EIU, 2005a). Projects have been completed in a rapid pace (Balakrishnan, 2008).

The department of Tourism and Commercial Marketing (DTCM) was established in 1989 and is responsible for tourism planning, development and marketing. External consultants and internal advisors have been employed in preparing the guiding strategies and the department has a vision of Dubai as the 'leading tourism destination and commercial hub in the world'. Its mission encompasses tourism sustainability and economic growth, industry partnerships, unique experiences for visitors and innovation in promotion (DTCM, 2004c). The intention is to host 15 million international tourists by 2010 and 40 million by 2015 (DTCM, 2004d). The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) predict the UAE travel and tourism will grow at 5% (2007-2016), which is higher than the Middle East average of 4.4% and the world average of 4%. UAE travel and tourism industry attracts one in every 8.5 jobs whereas the world average is one in every 11.5 jobs (Rahman, 2007b). The rapid pace of development in Dubai was initially fueled by oil but today this forms less than 6% of the overall GDP (Molavi, 2007).

The first and foremost advantage for Dubai is its leadership which is strong and endowed with great vision. They have constantly taken advantage of the strategic location and been proactive to global change.

Dubai as of 2005 had a GDP of US\$37 billion with a per capita income of US\$31,000. The 2015 vision is to increase GDP to US\$108 billion and GDP per capita to US\$44,000. However, the economic welfare of residents need not equate to nationals who form a shrinking minority. The median income of its average expatriate citizen is less than US\$700 (Gulf News, 2007a).

Moreover, Dubai has been able to attract foreign direct investments (FDI) through incentives like no tax, free zones and the revised property ownership laws. The World Competitive Yearbook ranks Dubai 5<sup>th</sup> in terms of positive image abroad with respect to encouraging business development (IMF, 2005).

With the booming economy, inflation is an issue as the Dirham is pegged to the Dollar. As of May 2007, the US dollar was devaluing compared to the Euro. This was in favor of European investors (Baik, 2007).

The Egyptian government gives interest to the infrastructure and the human development where 85.5% of the general investments are directed to support these factors specially providing clean drinking water and enhancing human development efforts (education, health ...). The Egyptian share in the capital for the investment companies has increased from 71% in the period (January- March 2007) to 75% in the same period in 2008. Conversely, the Arab share has decreased in the period (January- March 2008)

compared with the same period in 2007. The direct foreign investment flow continues to increase to reach 4.8 billion dollar in the period (October- December 2007), and this reflects the enhancement of the investment climate in Egypt (The General Investment and Free Zone Authority, 2008). The executive investments in the tourism sector have increased significantly in 2005/2006 with a proportion of 25% compared with year 2004/2005. The tourism share is 39.2% from the services' export for Egypt in 2006/2007 (Information and Decision Support Centre, 2008). The number of companies working in the information technology and communication sector reached 2435 companies till March 2008 (Ministry of Communication and Information Technology, 2008).

Egypt starts a program to raise the Egyptian tourism within the period (2006-2011). The government is targeting 14 million foreign arrivals by 2011/2012 and to attract investments with a value of 8 billion LE from the private sector (Ministry of Tourism, 2008). To achieve this target, the government is massively expanding its tourism facilities, as well as modernizing its supporting infrastructure. The Egyptians authorities also aim to attract private investment to the area to fund the expansion plans, offering overseas investors a potentially lucrative entry route into a growing tourist sector.

### 2-3- Accessibility

Dubai is very strategically placed. It lies at the confluence of the Middle East, Asia, Western Africa and Central/Eastern Europe. It aims to be an air transport hub for the Middle East and the Far East and authorities are building an appropriate communications infrastructure. The airport has 28.7 million passengers transiting per annum according to the Airports Council's International Report (Rahman, 2007a). A US\$4.1 billion upgrading is underway which will enable the airport to handle 40 million passengers by 2010 and 100 million by 2025 (Mathews, 2003). A new international airport being built will handle 120 million passengers and 12 million tons of cargo (Balakrishnan, 2008). The Emirates airline has seen significant growth. Today, Emirates is the 4<sup>th</sup> largest airline in the world (in terms of passenger traffic) (Emirates airline, 2007). Dubai's open sky policies and facilities have encouraged over 112 airlines to connect via Dubai to more than 165 destinations (Emirates airline, 2007). Its association with FIFA as the principal sponsor has helped change the image of Dubai. Emirates airline is perceived as a global carrier (Anastasiou, 2007). Dubai also markets itself as a cruising hub (Peisley, 2000).

Accessibility can extend to issues of costs of visiting. Value for money may be as important as prices. Dubai has marketed itself in western markets as an exotic, but safe, beach tourism location with diversions of shopping and assorted cultural and natural heritage attractions. Thus, it has many longer established competitors such as Australia, the Caribbean, Malaysia, the Maldives, Mauritius, the Seychelles, South Africa, the Canary Islands, Thailand and Turkey. A comparative study concludes that a standard package holiday in Dubai is priced slightly below average; but that the Canary Islands, Egypt, India, Jordan, Malaysia, Morocco, Qatar, Thailand, Tunisia and Turkey are more price competitive (DTCM, 2004a).

Egypt possesses 20 airports (Ministry of Civil Aviation, 2006). Cairo international airport is the primary hub for Star Alliance member Egypt Air. It's the second busiest airport in Africa. It handled just over 125000 aircraft departures in 2007. 58 airlines use Cairo international airport (including charter airlines) and 10 cargo airlines. With the assimilation of Egypt Air into Star Alliance in July 2008 the airport has

the potential to be a major hub. In 2007, the airport served 12,577,524 passengers (+16.7% vs. 2006). A luxury 350 rooms five star hotel is planned to be open in 2010 as a part of the terminal (with a direct connection to the building). Expanding the Cairo metro to serve the airport (an advanced stage of planning) is expected to be operated by 2010. Furthermore, an automated inter-terminal train transport system connecting all three passenger terminals is planned to be operated (Cairo International Airport, 2008). However, in spite of this interest and efforts, the airport's services and the congestion are still a dissatisfactory factor for tourists visiting Egypt.

The information and communication technology sector have witnessed different developments such as "Egypt connectively", "while in Egypt still connected" and "E-payment network developments" (Ministry of Communication and Information Technology, 2008).

Concerning Cost-of visit, Egypt prices are incompatible as it is considered a cheap destination compared with other destinations.

### 2-4- Amenities

The most important amenity demanded by all tourists is accommodation and, again, hotel construction in Dubai has been officially encouraged. There are approximately 285 hotels and 135 service apartment blocks according to DTCM in 2006 (Rahman, 2007a). Hospitality development has been facilitated by a relaxation of rules on land leasing and ownership and a large number of star properties will be opening within the next few years, amongst them a 'hydropolis hotel' built to a depth of 20m underwater (DTCM, 2005).

Much of the commercial interest has been in the luxury segment and the striking Burj AlArab beach side hotel which is something of a tourist icon of Dubai. Another well publicized project is the Palm, two palm-shaped man made islands, which have required financing of over US\$3 billion. They added 120 Km to Dubai's shoreline and house 48 hotels, 2000 residential plots and additional amenities. An equally expensive development is that of The World, a collection of 250 themed artificial islands fashioned after the five continents, which will comprise accommodation and leisure services (Hotels, 2004). Nakheel (a part of Dubai world), is one of the world's largest privately held real estate developers. It takes credit for planning over 1,000 km of coastline through its palm trilogy, world and waterfront projects and will develop over 2 billion square feet of land (Balakrishnan, 2008). It is expected to contribute 25% to Dubai's tourism GDP (Nakheel Advertisement, 2007). Plans for the Burj Dubai (Dubai tower), touted as the highest ever building, were also made public in 2003 and one of its hotels will be the Dubai Armani Hotel, a partnership between the fashion designer and a Dubai property developer (The Financial Times, 2004). The accommodation in Dubai is luxurious and unique. They represent a principal attraction.

In Egypt, the number of hotels and the tourism resorts reached 1309 hotel establishments in 2006 and 585 hotel establishments are under construction. There had been a significant growth in the number of travel agencies with a rate of 58.6% from 841 companies in 1997 to 1334 companies in 2006. The occupancy rates was unstable in the period 1997-2006 where in 2000 the occupancy rate reaches 73% although the lowest occupancy rate was in 1998 as it reached 45%. The last few years had witnessed a decreasing direction in the occupancy rate as it decreased with 5 % in 2006 compared with 2005 (Ministry of Tourism, 2006).

### 2-5- Attractions

As mentioned, Dubai's attractions center on its 64 km coastline and resort hotels, which boast facilities for sailing, water skiing, windsurfing, diving, fishing, golfing on grass or sand courses and bird watching. Future sports attractions range from cricket, football, formula one racing. Moreover, the development of the 'Sports City' makes it an ideal venue for future Olympics. The desert represents another type of attraction for tourists. Falconry and camel racing are other amusements. The city has extensive shopping opportunities, with retailing a prominent component of new mixed developments, and a few sites of built heritage (Henderson, 2006).

The great interest of officials and developers is in accommodation projects and attractions such as the US\$5 billion Dubailand theme park. Dubailand will also host the bawadi- a hotel stripes similar to Las Vegas and the world's largest Ski Dome which will attract an additional 200000 visitors per day (Hussain, 2007b). In another illustration, Ski Dubai opened in 2005 within the Mall of Emirates, reportedly is the largest shopping space outside of the USA, and sells skiing and snow related pursuits in a 'winter wonderland' of sub-zero temperatures (The Observer, 2005). Many of Dubai's attractions are superlatives

**Table 1: Some of Dubai's superlatives**

Media proclaimed 7 stars hotel	Burj Al Arab
The World's highest hotel	The Burj al Alum
The World's largest hotel	Asia-Asia
The World's first underwater hotel	Hydropolis
World tallest building	The Burj
The World's largest waterfront development	Dubai Waterfront
The World's largest mall	Mall of Arabia
The World's largest amusement park	Dubailand of which Universal studios is a part
The world's largest airport	Jebel Ali at Dubai World Central
World's first purpose- built sport city	Dubai Sport city
Region's largest logistic hub	Dubai World Central

(Source: Balakrishnen, (2008))

According to the 2006 Global Retailer Development Index, UAE ranks 16<sup>th</sup> with respect to Gross Leasable Area (GLA). Average daily private consumption spending in UAE is at US\$26.8 making it the highest in the Arab world where others spend an average of US\$3.50 on consumer items (Kawach, 2004). People spend over US\$700 billion per annum in the Dubai Duty Free alone, which is the largest in terms of turnover next to Heathrow (London) and Incheon (Korea) (Retail ME, 2006a, b). In 2006, the average spent of Dubai visitors amounted to AED 6,429 per day (Ditcham, 2007).

With the intention of broadening Dubai's attractions base, the DTCM's Environmental Tourism Task Force is exploring ecotourism possibilities. The 6.2 km<sup>2</sup> Ras Al-Khor Wildlife Sanctuary at the head of the Dubai Creek marks the beginning of the programme and other sanctuaries are to be designated (Gulf News, 2004c).

Medical tourism exceeds US\$56 billion worldwide in 2006 and is growing at 15% pa according to a report by the Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Al Deen, 2007). Within the UAE it is expected to generate AED 7 billion by 2010. The focus is to attract 6 million of the 600 million tourists with special needs and get residents to use medical facilities within the Emirate rather than going abroad. Education is another area of tourism. The government announced an AED 37 billion fund for education and knowledge development in the region (Zawya, 2007).

Events are presented and packaged as attractions, many of these are organized during the hottest summer months, which are the peak season. Such events put Dubai in the media spotlight globally and are a tool with which to combat seasonality and convey nations of a superior quality destination in the case of prestigious sporting context. Among these events are the Dubai Summer Surprise and the Dubai Shopping Festival which attracted more than 3.6 million tourist in 2006 contributing 8% to the overall GDP (Gulf News, 2007c).

The meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions (MICE), as a segment of business tourism is expanding rapidly from both a demand and supply perspective (Dwyer and Forsyth, 1997). Although statistics are limited, the evidence suggests that ever increasing numbers of cities globally are

investing in conference facilities, with growth particularly evident in the Asia Pacific fuelled by economic growth in that region (Mugbil, 1997). Furthermore, the conference and exhibition market represents an opportunity to increase occupancy in hotels during low tourism seasons. Egypt faces stiff competition in this market from Dubai (which hosts over 50 exhibitions annually) and other centers in the region (Dew, 2000), and it has been observed that considerable oversupply of MICE facilities occurred recently. Therefore, for Egypt not only will greater promotion efforts be required to attract clients, but also more integration will be required between, for example, the General Exhibition Corporation (authority), the Egyptian Chamber of Commerce, hoteliers and other stakeholders in order to promote and provide a wider range of facilities and events under the MICE umbrella.

Egypt possesses a rich array of natural and cultural assets; it has unique attractions which characterize it compared with other destinations. The cultural/heritage attractions vary from Pharaonic, Greco-Roman, Coptic, Islamic, recent and contemporary attractions. Egypt enjoys fascinating beaches extending for 3000km. The Mediterranean coast and the red sea coast offer facilities for sailing, water skiing, parasailing, windsurfing, diving and fishing. The environment attractions (oases, protected areas, deserts, lakes...) are potential of successful environment and therapeutic tourism. Thus it is a well known destination which possesses a long history of tourism. It cannot be easily compared with emerging destinations offering modern urban centers. Moreover, Egypt also enjoys good weather all year around. It is a year round destination (Destinations in Egypt, 2008).

New tourism niche areas such as sports tourism, health and therapeutic tourism, shopping tourism, safari and residential tourism have evolved as a result of ongoing efforts to upgrade the quality of the sector.

Recent development in tourism includes several Mega-touristic projects such as Cairo festival cities, Mediterranean projects such as Marassi, Almaza bay resort and Porto Marina and Red sea projects such as Gamsha bay, Serrenia, Port Ghalib, Madinat Makadi and Porto Sokhna. These Mega projects will ameliorate recreational tourism by offering various and different attractions (Am Cham Egypt, 2008).

## 2-7- Promotion

Promotion in Dubai is coordinated by the DTCM, working with a network of 14 overseas offices, and has intensified over the past 5 years. The rise in international tour operators and travel agents from the world's leading generators selling Dubai, from 258 in 1996 to 2265 in 2002, is quoted to demonstrate the success of its campaigns (DTCM, 2004a).

Dubai's attractions and amenities, as well as conventional image of sun and sand place are facets of the destination brand communicated in a marketing exercise (Gulf News, 2002 and DTCM, 2000). Although Islamic and Arab culture is clear, Dubai's tolerance and cosmopolitanism are stressed.

It is estimated that in order to promote the "Dubai" brand, the Department of Tourism and Commerce unofficial marketing budgets are to exceed US\$32 million. However, if the projected spend of quasi-government organizations are added, the amount will exceed US\$275 billion for the year 2010 (UAE Interact, 2007b).

Egypt has witnessed recently an integrated marketing strategy as the global advertising campaign, domestic advertising campaign as well as EU program for tourism advertising and marketing. It gives interests to promote different types of tourism in Egypt to attract a wider range of tourists. The importance of using recent tourism marketing tools is stressed by officials. These tools must focus on the technological changes occurred in the principal tourism markets (Elezaby, 2008b).

Different tools are used to promote Egyptian tourism as an example, the Exhibition for the dawn monuments which had been established in Paris helps to promote the Egyptian tourist product (Elmasry- Elyoum, 2007).

The budget of Egypt marketing budget is limited compared with that of UAE. The cost of the Egyptian tourism promotion campaign "within the Arab world" is US\$3 million (Elezaby, 2008a).

### 3- Challenges for the future

Several obstacles are facing Egypt's and Dubai's tourism development, yet must be scaled if the momentum is to be maintained and targets reached. There are even some doubts about whether such attainment is desirable given possible adverse impacts, which could represent further hurdles to sustainable long term growth. Some challenges for the future will be discussed in the following sections followed by summary and analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT analysis) of the tourism development in both countries.

#### 3-1- Stability and government tourism policy

History of the Middle East region has always been distorted and September eleventh 2001 made things worse. Moreover, the instability in Iraq could have also negatively affected tourism in Egypt and Dubai.

As we mentioned before Dubai is a commercial center and therefore it could be affected by any sudden change in both the international and regional economies. It is not actual destination circumstances that are of relevance, but popular perceptions of these concerns about tourist security and the terrorist risk have mounted globally after September eleventh 2001. The UAE has not been yet a victim of attack by Islamic extremists, but still there is always a risk to be attacked by terrorism which will cause damage in tourism and economics. Conversely, Egypt has suffered from the terrorist attacks although it was safe in the last few years but the risk to be attacked again by terrorism is still probable.

Although, Dubai tourism is regional which may be less influenced by these threats than western tourism, this is not the case for Egypt; yet the regional tourism represents a significant proportion in tourism in Egypt, but the great

proportion of tourists are from European countries which are very sensitive to any threats.

In Dubai, there is a great governmental interest in tourism. However, there are opportunity costs and financial risks associated with the approach it has adopted and economists might criticize the amount of capital spending on such unpredictable industry as tourism. The net profit from tourism should be calculated to assess the economic benefit of this industry.

Tourism is also partly responsible for the unprecedented construction underway in Dubai and real estate has been substantial investment, leading to some fears of an economic 'bubble' and the repercussions should it burst (DTCM, 2005).

A big caution area for Dubai is the rapid pace of development which may not give sufficient time to learn from mistakes as problems arise when development is rushed with little considerations for the environment (May, 1991).

Ecotourism promotion could seriously harm wildlife and vegetation. Population growth and tourism industry operations are augmenting pressure on the coastline escalating erosion and pollution and more tourists will exacerbate stresses on urban, coastal and desert areas. The original vistas of sandy beaches and open view of the sea have been dramatically modified. Legislation has been passed in an endeavor to safeguard protected zones (Gulf News, 2004d), but its effectiveness has yet to be tested (Pos et al., 2000). Moreover, there is the atmospheric pollution and the congestion in traffic which may be worth when all real estate properties will be occupied (EIU, 2005b). The airport is close to the city center which makes it a source of noise and aircraft engine emissions are deleterious to air quality. Such environmental degeneration renders transport planning more urgent (Henderson, 2006).

Another potential challenge is that 82% of Dubai's population is expatriates. Nationals control sizeable assets and have a huge unemployment rate. With a service dependent economy, people play a very important role in the perception of service satisfaction. A majority of the cheap labor is male and they live without their families; this makes for much skewed demographics. Therefore maintaining security when tourists will outnumber residents by 4:1 is an area of worry (Balakrishnan, 2008).

Moreover, balancing the Arab traditional laws with international are another challenge facing both destinations especially Dubai as locals are not used to being opened to other cultures.

As a result of Dubai's success- each emirate has been replicating the real estate and free trade zone formula which reduces differentiation and causes confusion as the distances between emirates is small. It is estimated that in this region over US\$1,200 billion worth of real estate projects are under development with US\$600 billion in UAE, 50% of which is Dubai's (Hussain, 2007a,b).

The financial crisis which started in August 2008 has a serious impact on the economic growth of almost all the countries of the world. Although, the forecasts of the magnitude and duration of the crisis may vary, its impact on the incoming tourism is sure. The financial crisis will affect the GDP of most of the generating countries which will directly influence the decisions of their citizens for outbound tourism. This crisis will also have an impact on the devaluation of the currencies. Moreover, the decrease in oil prices may also affect tourism as it will cause a decrease in the income of the oil producing countries which constitute a principal market for international tourism of both Egypt and Dubai.

For all destination countries the international tourism markets are beyond their own boundaries. Therefore, the real and potential tourism demand outside relies not only on the



social and economic development of the tourist generating countries (demand side), on the entire world political and economic situation, but also on the political and economic relationship between the tourist generating countries and the receiving countries. This point stresses the importance of economic and political cooperation and agreements between destinations and the tourist generating countries (Zhang et al., 2000).

The great challenge for Egypt is to encourage and be able to attract foreign direct investment. Egypt is still a developing country with limited budget; therefore it needs great amount of foreign exchange to import foreign technology, equipments and materials, and to introduce personnel and management for the country's modernization. Moreover, it needs budgets to be able to accomplish many of the planned projects needed to enhance the infrastructure and tourism development.

### 3-2- Accessibility and amenities

Aircraft technology and the introduction of planes that can fly extended journeys without refueling stops constitute a threat for Dubai as an anticipating boom in inbound air traffic. Moreover, other airports are competing with Dubai as a transit for long haul travel between Asia and Europe. The stopover tourism market too has its drawbacks owing to the brevity of visits and effort has to be expended on prolonging the duration of stay in order to maximize earnings.

Another problem faces Dubai as a cruising hub, partly because of the home market's small size. As a result of the hot weather, the terminal is not utilized during the summer. It tends to be excluded from itineraries. Negative images of the wider Gulf region and management worries about having to cancel programmes because of unrest have also deterred American and European companies from sailing in its waters and berthing ships in Dubai (Peisly, 2000).

Concerning the accommodation, the hotel overbuilding and the dependence on supply-induced demand have been criticized. The occupancy rate was 81.1% in 2004 (EIU, 2005c), but hotel overbuilding may cause a decrease in occupancy rates if the expected number of arrivals fail to reach the expected levels (Greene and O'Loughlin, 1999). The interest is in the luxury hotels segment which may lead to the neglect to tourists with more modest budgets, whose spending in other areas is important. Publicity overseas about the projects made reference to earlier may also reinforce notions of Dubai as an expensive destination and price competitiveness in general becomes a matter of concern, with evidence of some current dissatisfaction over prices and value of money (DTCM, 2004a).

In spite of the government's increasing efforts to enhance services, infrastructure, and human resources, still Egypt suffers shortage in infrastructure and service facilities as well as transportation means. It also suffers from unreliable product quality.

Another challenge is the contradictions between mature tourists and premature market's mechanism. Egypt's international tourism is still not able to shake of the shackles of the system in terms of organizations and methods of operations and management.

### 3-3- Attractions and promotion

Dubai's cultural and natural heritage attractions are limited compared with other destinations. Certain existing and planned leisure facilities such as shopping complexes and theme parks have a sterility and homogeneity, of which tourists may tire once the novelty has abated. Moreover, the ubiquitous building sites are an unattractive feature of the cityscape and the fierce summer heat is debilitating and restricts activity (Balakrishnan, 2008).

In the long run, the development of other man-made attractions in other destinations will lead to the loss of Dubai's differentiations. When building destination images, it is better

to build it on the promise of something more tangible and concrete than a passing title. Efforts should be oriented to improve and upgrade the natural tourist attractions to avoid simple imitation and duplication of attractions of the same kind. Moreover, there is no single logo or symbol representing Dubai (Balakrishnan, 2008). There is an official awareness of these weaknesses and DTCM is aiming to add variety to Dubai's attractions, encourage longer stays and offset the seasonality effects (DTCM, 2000).

However, Crookston (1998) warns of potential impediments to sympathetic conservation caused by an enthusiastic and intervening government that is accustomed to excessively spending on futuristic projects. Domestic architecture has given way to international style skyscrapers housing office blocks, hotels and retail malls, which largely ignore indigenous society and climate. Older parts of the town have been neglected, leading to a decay and eventual clearance (Bousaa, 2003).

There is lack of access to data. Companies are reluctant to give information as are their employees. Another caution area is the promises so heavily advertised on which the brand Dubai stands for are still being completed. This can cause disappointment in investors and tourists (Balakrishnan, 2008).

Egypt suffers also from the lack of knowledge of international markets, backward international marketing and promotion means as a result of limited marketing expenditure. This drawback may influence to some extent the image building of Egypt in the international tourism market (Elnagar, 2008).

Globalization has led its competitors into its own territory, leaving trades that were protected to compete directly with their counterparts. Some weak links of Egypt's tourist industry such as travel agencies may meet with great difficulties. As travel agencies in Egypt are not very strong, and most of the travel services are small in size, poor in management, and they cannot match their counterparts in the developed tourism countries in terms of technology, capital, personnel, networking and service quality (Deebes, 2002).

Many Egyptians see tourism as a quick way to earn a substantial living. Moreover, the exploitation and the harassment that faces tourists in their visit to Egypt is a major threat. This negative experience can erode any other incomparable attractions and positive factors in the tourist's experience.

Today, more and more countries pay great attention to the development of tourism, seeing it as an important way to earn money and improve the international balance of payments. Therefore, they promote their countries by all means leading increasingly to fierce competition among all destinations. In fact, nowadays, tourism competition is not competition among the tourist enterprises, but more importantly, the competition of national power among destination countries (Zhang et al., 2000).

### 4- Differentiation analysis between Egypt and UAE

The first tourism competition index issued in March 2007 places Egypt in the 58<sup>th</sup> country within the 134 countries worldwide, and in the 7<sup>th</sup> place within the Arab countries. The UAE, Israel, Tunisia, Turkey and Morocco preceded Egypt concerning the competition index in which the UAE was the 18<sup>th</sup> worldwide, Tunisia the 32<sup>nd</sup> and Turkey and Morocco the 52<sup>nd</sup> and 57<sup>th</sup> respectively. The total tourism competition index for Egypt reached 4.2 points while the subsidiary tourism competition indices for each of the organizational framework, the business climate, the infrastructure and the human, cultural and natural resources reached 4.5, 3.5 and 4.7 points respectively (Information and Decision Support Centre, 2007). Concerning the business climate and tourism infrastructure, the order of Egypt was delayed as it was the 85<sup>th</sup>. As for the human, culture and natural resources working

in the tourism field, it occupied the 69<sup>th</sup> position. The low prices are considered to be one of the strongest points in Egypt to attract tourists, where it occupied the 5<sup>th</sup> position concerning price competitiveness.

The UAE showed superiority with respect to all the subsidiary indices as shown in table 2; the organizational

framework, the business climate and the infrastructure index as well as the human, cultural and natural resources. The following table shows the subsidiary and the total tourism competition index for some countries:

**Table2:** The subsidiary and the total tourism competition index for some countries.

The country	The total tourism competition index	The organizational framework index	the business climate and the infrastructure index	the human, cultural and natural resources index
UAE	18	18	19	24
Israel	32	36	33	35
Tunisia	34	12	47	37
Turkey	52	53	63	48
Morocco	57	47	72	52
Egypt	58	50	85	69
India	65	62	55	81
Algeria	93	89	93	97

(Source: *The international economic forum: the travel and tourism competitiveness report (2007)*).

This index used the data available in 2005-2006 from different countries. It consists of different subsidiary components which constitute the travel and tourism competitiveness. These components are:

The organizational framework:

- 1- Political rules and the regulations
- 2- Environmental organization
- 3- Safety and security
- 4- Health and cleanliness
- 5- Travel and tourism preference

The business climate and the infrastructure:

- 6- Air transportation infrastructure
- 7- Land transportation infrastructure
- 8- Tourism infrastructure

9- Information technology and communication infrastructure

10- Prices competitiveness

The human, natural and cultural resources relative to tourism:

- 11- Human capital
- 12- National perception of tourism
- 13- Natural and cultural resources

From the above discussion, many of the threats are common in both destinations although some of the weakness factors in Egypt have been surpassed in Dubai. In a very short period Dubai has accomplished stable paces in the development process. The following tables summarize all the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT analysis) of the tourism development for both experiences.

**Table 3:** SWOT analysis of tourism development in UAE

Strengths	Weakness
political stability and continuity, alongside economic prosperity	Huge opportunity costs and financial risk
modern infrastructure and communications	Instability in the Middle East
Favorable winter climate	Hot weather in summer
Different attractions (many of them, world's superlatives)	Limited supply of natural/cultural attractions
comparatively liberal and cosmopolitan society	Expensive and dissatisfaction over value of money
Clear government vision for the importance of tourism	negligence of tourists with more modest budgets
Encouraging business climate (to attract foreign direct investments)	huge unemployment rate between nationals which control sizeable assets
Safe, clean environment	Limited statistics
Luxurious hotels	Negative images of the wider Gulf region
Central location	Lack of manpower training
Sufficient (unofficial) marketing budgets	the brevity of visits
Established/growing conference and exhibition business	No single logo or symbol (a branding problem)
fun and leisure centre	Majority of the population are expatriates
ecotourism possibilities	
Medical tourism	
Effective promotion campaigns	
Opportunities	Threats
Improve co-ordination and quality of services	Tourism development in other states in the region
Promote to relevant markets, especially MICE (Meetings, Incentive, Conference, Exhibition)	Aircraft technology and other airports' competition
Exploit cultural/environment attractions in longer terms	Fears of an economic 'bubble' and the repercussions (burst)
Collect and disseminate tourism data	Negative environment effects
Encourage overall positive attitude towards tourism/tourists	Certain existing and planned leisure facilities are homogenous and short-lived
	Perception of Middle Eastern culture
	Inflation



Table 4: SWOT analysis of tourism development in Egypt

Strengths	Weakness
Huge supply of cultural unique attractions	Lack of manpower training, lack of quality control over tourism business
Central location between Europe, Asia and Africa	Instability in the Middle East
Favorable climate all the year	Lack of basic and tourism infrastructure
Cheap (Price Competitiveness)	Limited service industry
Attractive sun and beaches	Pollution and lack of cleanliness
Environmental attractions: deserts, oases, natural protected areas	Tourist exploitation and lack of awareness towards tourists
Massive expansion in tourism facilities and its supportive infrastructure	Poor roads networks and transportation means
Several touristic mega projects	Limited financial marketing expenditures
Great government interest	Traffic congestion and noise
	Standard of airport facilities and lack of public toilets
Opportunities	Threats
Encourage overall positive attitude towards tourism/tourists	Perception of Middle Eastern culture
Collect and disseminate tourism data	Negative environment effects
Promote to relevant markets, especially MICE (Meetings, Incentive, Conference, Exhibition)	Neglect behavior for some man-power of some tourism related services
Exploit medical and health tourism	Unawareness of nationals
Developing people with enormous social problems (education, health, awareness...)	Economic instability (Inflation, unemployment...)
Gain public and investor's confidence	Social gap between rich and poor
Decentralization and modernization of tourism administration	
Integration of the tourism sustainable development plan	
New tourism niche areas	

5- **Choice of policies and strategies** The practice of various countries in their tourism development proves that government policies towards tourism are the key of its tourism development. Therefore some policies and strategies should have priorities in execution such as:

- Governments must take responsibility for maintaining an economic environment conducive to attract business. This might be enhanced by private investment in employee's education and training and by enabling staff to visit a wide array of tourism locations so as to broaden their development experiences.
- Egypt must improve the efficiency of the service industry, upgrade service quality and cut service costs.
- Drive to expand the world's international tourism market by: 1) Knowing clearly the market demand so as to determine the target market and work out corresponding marketing strategies. 2) Sending information in time to the target market. Both tactics and techniques of marketing are equally important. Therefore, more input should be made, and more money should be spent on market study and effective promotion.
- Expand tourist's expenditure; the way of growth should be altered from quantity to efficiency. In addition, more efforts should be made to prolong the length of stay, expand opportunities or visitors to consume and encourage them to spend more money in the country.
- Special interest should be given to increase locals' awareness towards tourists and tourism benefits. This should be achieved not only by execution of projects such as "Tourism National Awareness Project", but also by enhancing the locals' economic and social circumstances.
- It is necessary to develop special interest tourism products such as convention and conference business travels and incentive tours.
- Offering more convenience and preferential treatments for tourists such as generalized preferential systems, the provision of proper shopping facilities for tourists as shopping is referred to as being one of the most enjoyable leisure time activities, and the development of specific souvenirs and gifts (Zhang et al.2000).
- Regional infrastructure needs to be carefully planned in order to extend and harness life cycles.
- It is apparent that successful tourism planning requires both the involvement and participation of residents in the destination areas. The rural interior needs must be developed to provide the "ideal" rural tourism product that allows tourists to stay with the local people, so breaking down local- tourist resentment. implementation of training programmes and development of products that support the local communities as well as development of eco and rural tourism (Eccles and Costa, 1996)are crucial.
- Sustainability needs to evolve through effective planning, where guidelines are set on the breadth, and the depth of development. Therefore, developing a product that sits in harmony with the local environment is very important. Furthermore, locals need to be educated about sustainability in the hope of training people to preserve the product that actually offers them a living.
- Developing niche areas is another strategy. In receiving tourism products one can note that these sometimes have a short life span resulting in a stream of new offerings into the market place.
- For the future of tourism, of major importance demographically is the growth of old travelers. The main implication arising from demographic change is likely to be the increased number of senior citizens in the developed countries of the world. Therefore, interest should be given to offer a product that matches with this potential market. Moreover, holidays have become realities, thus helping industry to extend its product's life cycle.
- Egypt should adhere to the general principal of giving priority to inbound tourism in order to earn more foreign exchange. Outbound tourism should be developed in a planned way. Egyptians should be encouraged to practice domestic travel first.

#### 6- Conclusion

Though Egypt has a long history in tourism and enjoys diverse, various and incomparable attractions, Dubai has surpassed it in terms of performance in tourism development putting into consideration the limited natural/heritage attractions in Dubai.

Concerning the destination marketing, Dubai outperforms Egypt as shown in the competition report. Effective promotion, substantial marketing expenditures and appropriate timing of campaigns are needed. Extensive market research should be done to attract potential markets such as China that will become a key source of outbound tourism by 2020, supplying 100 million travelers (WTO, 2007).

As we have seen despite the limited attractions in Dubai, they succeeded to create an attractive destination offering various types of attractions.

Human resources are fundamental factor to be developed. Education, training, economic and social development to manpower is essential. These interests should also be offered to the public to increase their awareness towards tourism which will make the trip to Egypt a more safe, secure and satisfactory trip as without public support few will be achieved.

Tourism related services such as transportation is another challenge for Egypt's tourism. Although Egyptian government is massively expanding its tourism facilities, as well as modernizing its supporting infrastructure, effective and extensive development projects should be executed. Efforts also should be given to enhance the image of Egypt internationally.

Serious efforts should be made to calculate the net profit of tourism in Egypt. This is why the Egyptian government should give interest to this sensitive point by applying tourism satellite accounts to assess the feasibility of such development's projects.

Realization of the official targets towards tourism needs constant efforts, not only from the tourism sectors but also from the whole society.

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## تعظيم التنمية السياحية في مصر عن طريق فحص تجربة التنمية السياحية في الإمارات العربية المتحدة

أصبح قطاع السياحة في مصر أحد القطاعات متزايدة الأهمية داخل منظومة الاقتصاد حيث أنه يساهم بحوالي 35% في الناتج المحلي الإجمالي و 12.6% في حجم العمالة.

وقد حققت مصر في الفترة الأخيرة تقدماً ملحوظاً في مجال التنمية السياحية حيث بلغ إجمالي عدد السائحين في عام 2007/2006، 9.79 مليون سائح.

كما حققت الإمارات العربية المتحدة طفرات هائلة في مجال التنمية السياحية واستطاعت في مدة محدودة أن يكون لها وضع مميز علي خريطة السياحة الدولية.

علي الرغم من تمتع مصر بقدر هائل من عوامل الجذب السياحي بمقارنة بالإمارات العربية المتحدة إلا أن مؤشر تنافسية السياحة الأول الصادر في مارس 2007 وضع مصر في المركز 58 عالمياً من بين 124 دولة بينما سبقتها الإمارات العربية المتحدة في الترتيب بالنسبة لمؤشر التنافسية حيث احتلت الإمارات المركز رقم 18.

و حيث أن كل من مصر والإمارات العربية المتحدة تشتركان في كثير من الظروف حيث أن كلاهما دولة عربية تقع في منطقة الشرق الأوسط، الإسلام هو الدين الرسمي لكلا الدولتين كما تتقاربان في الثقافة بدرجة ما. لذلك فإن الإمارات العربية المتحدة تمثل نموذجاً ناجحاً للتنمية السياحية يستحق التحليل والتقييم للاستفادة منه.

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلي تعظيم التنمية السياحية في مصر من خلال عرض تجربة التنمية السياحية في دبي وتحليل كل من العوامل المؤثرة في التنمية السياحية بها: كمقومات الجذب السياحي، طرق الوصول إليها من مختلف نقاط التصدير، التسهيلات وأنواع الخدمات المتاحة، التنشيط السياحي، الاستقرار والسياسة السياحية للدولة.

كما تستعرض المعوقات والتحديات التي تقابل التنمية السياحية في كل من الدولتين. يفيد هذا التحليل في تقييم هذه التجربة والوقوف عند نقاط الضعف والقوة فيها و بالتالي التركيز علي المعوقات التي تقابل للتنمية السياحية في مصر. يقوم البحث أيضا بتحليل الفرص والتحديات SWOT Analysis لكل من التنمية السياحية لكل من الدولتين.

وقد توصل البحث إلي ضرورة التسويق السياحي الفعال ورصد الاعتمادات الكافية للبحوث والدراسات التسويقية كما أكد علي أهمية توقيت الحملات التثقيفية. هذا علاوة علي ضرورة تنمية العنصر البشري من خلال التنمية الاقتصادية والاجتماعية بصفة عامة مع التركيز علي التسليم والتدريب.

ومن ناحية أخرى يعتبر تطوير المرافق العامة والبنية التحتية وبعض الخدمات مثل النقل من أهم التحديات أمام التنمية السياحية في مصر وذلك يحتاج إلي إهتمامات مالية ضخمة مما يدعو إلي ضرورة استمرار تشجيع الدولة للاستثمار في هذه المجالات.