



The role of media in tourism development : the Qatari experience as a model.

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Received: 06/07/2025

Accepted: 16/09/2025

Published: 30/09/2025

 [10.53284/2120-012-003-008](https://doi.org/10.53284/2120-012-003-008)

Abstract :

Development media is viewed as a type of specialized media that focuses on promoting social, economic, political and cultural development in contemporary societies and countries, by spreading positive awareness and providing information that contributes to improving the lives of individuals and groups, as well as exporting good ideas about countries and creating positive stereotypes among the masses. Therefore, it is used in the fields of tourism and services in general, as countries interested in these economies and industries include it in their development plans as part of their efforts to achieve sustainable development.

Among the countries that have followed this approach, we find, for example, the State of Qatar, which has been interested in the tourism sector as an important economic resource, and has always worked to improve its image through the media, especially during the organization of the 2022 World Cup competitions, and has succeeded in doing so with great success.

Keywords : Media, development, development media, tourism media. Tourism development.

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1. Introduction :

The media plays an important role in achieving social and economic development, through disseminating information and increasing awareness of important social and economic issues, by presenting reports, news and analyses that are published through various media, both popular and new, and focusing on social and economic challenges and problems, and ways to address them or reduce their damage, as well as enhancing civil and democratic participation by providing platforms for public debate that guarantee freedom of thought and expression, serious dialogue, and rational and constructive debate on issues of public interest, and across various public spaces, physical and virtual. We also do not forget its strategic role in economic development, by promoting investment and attracting capital by improving the image of the state, highlighting attractive and available investment opportunities, as well as promoting entrepreneurial thinking, entrepreneurship and the culture of innovation, and this is done by presenting success stories of emerging projects and providing useful information and resources for those who are about to establish their own businesses, which creates balance, communication, interaction, circulation and exchange between members of society and various parties concerned with socio-economic development, and helps marginalized groups and remote communities to access information, resources and opportunities available to them to promote social change by shedding light on the unfavorable conditions that many underdeveloped countries suffer from, and deprive them of opportunities for development. Through the media, society can be motivated to move and change, by raising awareness and stimulating rational discussion and constructive community dialogue, in parallel with serving the state in various economic fields, especially the field of economy in general and services and tourism in particular, which is what Qatar has done in recent years, which contributed to improving its global image, and pushing its tourism sector and the economy in general towards progress.

All of the above is just an introduction to talking about the Qatari tourism media experience, as a developmental media experience, which contributed to enhancing tourism in Qatar and developing it economically, and brought it admiration, respect and appreciation.. from various peoples of the world, so it became an active tourist destination, due to the decisive role of the media in shedding light on its natural beauty, and its authentic and diverse cultural heritage.

So, how was the media used to develop tourism and the economy in the State of Qatar, and improve its stereotypical image among the peoples of the world ?



2. Developmental Media and Tourism Media :

The concept of tourism media is considered one of the common concepts in the fields of « communication » sciences and « tourism studies ». Interest in it has increased with the development of media, its diversity, complexity, spread, and its ability to influence people. As well as the development of tourism as an economic activity that produces wealth for nations, peoples, institutions, and individuals. Therefore, its concepts have multiplied and its definitions have varied, all of which focus on its functions and its developmental and socio-economic importance.

Mohammed Mounir Hijab defines it as : « All aspects of planned and fruitful communication activity, practiced by specialized media professionals, with the aim of providing the public with facts, news and correct information, about issues and problems related to tourism, in an objective manner, through various means of communication, and with all technical methods of persuasion and influence, in order to develop tourism awareness among the public on the one hand, and attract the largest number of tourists on the other hand ». (M Hijab, 2002)

Through this definition, we extract several characteristics of tourism media, the most important of which are :

- It is a specialized communication and media activity.
- It is practiced by specialized media professionals, and through the media.
- It has advertising and promotional objectives, as well as educational, media and educational objectives.

Tourism media depends on several means. It is a media specialized in the field of tourism, and aims to deliver messages to its audiences, through various means of communication, the most important of which are the mass media, as well as the new media currently widespread. In this regard, researcher « Philip Kotler » confirms : « Various recorded artistic works such as drama, cinema and documentaries contribute to the development of tourism as a marketing and advertising tool in the field of the tourism industry. Therefore, countries and governments must encourage it and provide various facilities and subsidies to make it successful, especially the government tourism institution ». (P kolter, 2003)

The concept of development first appeared in economics, where it was used to denote everything that helps a society gain the ability to continuously develop itself at a rate that ensures increasing improvement in the quality of life of all its members, meaning increasing the ability of society to respond to the basic and increasing needs of its members, in a way that ensures increasing the degrees of satisfaction of those needs, through the continuous rationalization of the exploitation of available economic



resources. Then the concept of development moved to the field of politics since the sixties of the twentieth century, as a field concerned with developing non-European countries towards democracy. (A Al-Tayeb, 2014, p22)

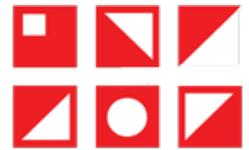
Speaking of development in general, and tourism as an important economic field, and the relationship of all of this to the media, we note that the activity of tourism media falls within the general concept of development media, because it plays a socio-economic role, aiming to educate the masses about development issues such as poverty, education, health, environment, economy, consumption, knowledge... as well as tourism and services.

Theoretically, one researcher believes that there are several theories in media and communication sciences that contributed to establishing the concept of development media, and he mentions them as follows : (A Al-Abd, N Al-Abd, 2008, pp 33-34)

- Daniel Lerner's theory : Modernization model
- Wilbur Schramm's theory
- Rogers' theory : Diffusion of innovations
- Dependency theory
- Structural model theory

These important media and communication theories, through their interaction with society, economy, technology and knowledge, still impose themselves to this day, despite the great dynamism witnessed by the global economy on the one hand, and the major transformations in media activity in terms of means and content on the other hand. In the field, development media is manifested in the following :

- Television and radio programs that discuss topics such as poverty problems, the need to spread education, combating corruption, etc.
- Newspaper articles that shed light on development challenges in society, by competent people, thinkers, scientists, specialized writers, and academic researchers.
- Scientific forums and media seminars : They bring together experts and decision-makers to discuss development issues in general.
- Awareness campaigns aimed at changing negative behaviors related to the economy, health, education and the environment, we say this while thinking about bad curricula, negative consumer behaviors, and dangerous industrial activities.
- The constant presence of governments and private individuals, as well as the media and educated social actors, within the virtual public space, to discuss development issues in a way that serves countries and societies.



These theoretical approaches and field activities contributed to the general characteristics of development media, as well as the components that must be available in it, which we summarize as follows :

- Credibility : The content provided by development media to the public must be accurate and objective, and its sources must be reliable and qualified.
- Integration : Development media must address various developmental aspects in an integrated manner (economy, politics, culture, society, etc.).
- Interactivity : Due to the transition of media from traditional mass media to new media, development media must now encourage public participation in opinion on important economic and developmental issues by opening serious discussions across various available media spaces.
- Sustainability : Development media must focus on long-term solutions, rather than temporary solutions.
- Focus on marginalized groups : Paying attention to the groups of society that suffer from poverty, illiteracy and unemployment, and working to improve their conditions.

Development media targets several things, which we summarize as follows :

- Awareness and education : This is done by spreading knowledge about various development issues and how to deal with them.
- Shedding light on solutions and measures that can be taken to address various development and economic problems.
- Stimulating community participation by encouraging individuals to participate in the development process, especially civil society, educational and learning institutions, and all social development institutions.
- Promoting dialogue about development challenges in the world today and ways to address them, especially during economic, environmental, security crises, etc.
- Positively influencing public policies by contributing to the formulation of development policies, by providing information and research that helps decision-makers.
- Pressuring governments and institutions to deal with development issues seriously, as development media is an effective oversight tool, whose function is accountability and enhancing transparency, by publishing information about development projects, and evaluating the quality of their impact on the economy.
- Improving living conditions : This is done by providing information that helps individuals improve their quality of life, by spreading education, supporting health, and encouraging the spirit of innovation and entrepreneurship.

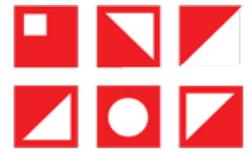


Apart from its characteristics, components and objectives, development media faces many challenges, including :

- Lack of resources : Media institutions specialized in development fields may face a lack of funding, which is an obstacle to practicing their media activity comfortably.
- Lack of objectivity and political bias : Some media outlets may be exposed to pressures that affect the objectivity of their content and force them to be biased towards certain stakeholders, whether individuals, institutions, entities or countries.
- Weak ability to reach the public : This is especially true in poor areas, where the public is unable to access development media for several reasons (technical, geographical, material, etc.).
- Technology and the digital divide : The digital divide plays a role in hindering the access of development media to target groups in weak countries compared to technologically and economically advanced countries.

Finally, development media in our current time is considered an appropriate strategic means to confront serious global challenges such as poverty, famine, illiteracy, epidemics, global health crises, climate change, migration problems, unemployment problems, global economic crises, financial crises, the digital gap between countries, etc. It is a powerful tool to promote sustainable development and achieve positive change in societies, but it is required to work on providing objective, accurate, comprehensive and unbiased information, the aim of which is to spread and enhance awareness, and enable public participation in this.

The relationship between development media and tourism media is evident in the nature of the relationship between tourism and media, which appears strong and interconnected. Media plays an important role in promoting tourist destinations and marketing the services provided by institutions and establishments working in the tourism industry. This is evident in news reports, newspaper articles, television programs, reports, portraits, commercial advertisements, service advertisements, dealing with social media influencers, digital content via social media, news websites, blogs, digital applications, etc., all of which enhance awareness of the attractiveness of tourist places and encourage visits to these destinations. In return, tourism helps enhance the media industry by providing attractive and renewed content, and provides an opportunity for the media to cover new experiences and learn about different cultures. In short, they work together to achieve sustainable social and economic development for countries, peoples, institutions and individuals.



3. Integration between media as a science and activity, and tourism as a socio-economic phenomenon :

The media is witnessing a major development in its means and techniques, and radical transformations in its content and effects, as a result of its progress in the field of technology, the multiplicity of its roles, and the diversity of its means as a mass and interactive communication style alike. The most important thing that distinguishes our current « changing and accelerating » world, as described by the philosopher and social critic « Edgar Morin », is the dominance of new media on the global media scene in general and the Arab world in particular. We say this while focusing on social networking sites and networks and various digital means of applications and platforms.. and others. It is also characterized by the spread of mass media from newspapers, magazines, televisions and radios, despite the decline in their role and importance as a result of the fierce competition from new media, but they remain as mass media, with their importance, follow-up, influence and spread. All this information media momentum has allowed the masses to access information quickly and easily, due to interactivity, immediacy, digitization and asynchrony, and has allowed institutions and countries to invest it in development in many social and economic fields.

Tourism is considered one of the most important sources of economic and social development for countries at the present time, like other sectors such as energy, industry, agriculture, renewable energy, etc., which is why interest in it is increasing today. From an economic perspective, it has received a large share of the attention of economists and businessmen investors, due to its huge revenues for countries and institutions. From a social perspective, it has received the attention of researchers and those interested in the social and cultural affairs of societies and nations, especially social development institutions and civil society movements, due to its effective role in developing society and raising the level of culture of its individuals. The same is true from a scientific and academic perspective, as it has become a scientific and research field in its own right, benefiting from various human and social sciences, as well as economics, management and administration sciences, etc. (I Benazza, 2023/2024, p15)

There is no doubt that tourism as a dynamic and strategic activity on the one hand, and media as an important academic specialization and sensitive professional activity on the other hand, meet in many positive matters, which makes the nature and specificity of the relationship between them pragmatic and productive.

3.1 Media Education in the Arab Region : Pros and Cons !

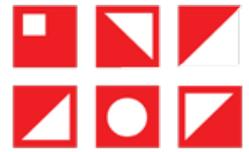


Talking about the academic education pattern for media and communication sciences in Arab contexts requires a lot of patience and caution, because we are forced to discuss this problem in light of the major transformations that the Arab world has witnessed in recent years economically, politically, security-wise and geostrategically.. which imposed differences in the reality and level of education in general between Arab countries, as well as the specificities of the political system and the economic and social level in each country, which play an influential role in that.

In 2016, UNESCO issued a report that focused on the State of Jordan, without excluding the rest of the poor Arab countries, and it was emphasized that the level of journalism and media education in most Arab countries is low, as a result of a shortage in the number of specialized professors, as well as a shortage in the level of competence in this important scientific specialization. (UNESCO, 2016)

Indeed, most Arab countries suffer from weakness in the field of media and communication, whether in terms of the level of academic education, or in terms of practicing the profession of journalism and the conditions of media activity. We say this with all caution, as we exclude a small number of Arab countries that have witnessed remarkable progress in scientific research and technological development, thanks to their good economic conditions, which has had a positive impact on the conditions of education in general and media and communication education in particular, in parallel with the development that has occurred in these sciences globally in the last two decades. All of this has imposed on journalism and media education institutions in our Arab world an important discussion on how to achieve quality in the field of journalism in light of the major transformations that it is witnessing, transformations that have led to radical changes in the communication and media process, and a flexible transition from traditional vertical communication (mass) to the new horizontal communication (interactive).

There is no doubt that teaching journalism and media in the Arab world is an important field that aims to develop knowledge and skills in the field of media and journalism and all related activities, in several aspects and challenges, such as establishing academic programs and educational institutions in various Arab countries. From the Atlantic Ocean to the Arabian Gulf, there are many universities and educational institutions in which students study programs in media and communication sciences. These programs include the study of theoretical concepts and practical skills that qualify students to practice the profession of journalism and media effectively. Attention is paid to both theoretical and field orientations, as students learn the basic concepts in the field of media and are trained to use the tools and techniques necessary to work in this field, with the aim of professionalizing the arts of journalism, such as



media writing skills, journalistic editing, photography, presentation, and animation, as well as working on various media platforms.

However, many Arab countries suffer from a great lack of capabilities, which makes their education of their students based only on the theoretical aspect, unlike other Arab countries that keep pace with contemporary challenges and technical challenges with rapid technological progress. We notice that educational institutions in these relatively advanced countries keep pace with technical developments in the field, meaning that teaching journalism and media is adapted to modern media developments such as social media, digital media and artificial intelligence, with constant encouragement for students through competitions and grants. In addition, these countries attract specialized competencies from researchers and scientists, who leave other Arab countries due to harsh socio-economic conditions, and head to Doha, Sharjah, Riyadh, Muscat or Kuwait.. where they find suitable conditions for decent living and productive scientific research. However, despite the positives we mentioned, as well as the negatives, related to the reality of journalism and media education in the Arab region, it remains necessary to emphasize the existence of great opportunities to develop this field, through educational institutions adopting updated educational programs that are in line with modern developments in the media industry, while harnessing the appropriate material and human capabilities for that, and the necessity of having the will to serve the media sector in countries that suffer from educational and media backwardness alike, while paying attention to academic research and studies produced in this field, valuing them, and encouraging them, which we must admit are still very few compared to what exists in developed countries, and in this regard one researcher confirms : « Despite the increasing interest in media and communication in daily and public life in the Arab world, the contribution represented by scientific research and the position of media colleges in universities is still less, and scientific research in the field of journalism and media is still limited, and also not exploited ». (N El-ayadhi, 2016)

3.2 The role of media and journalistic education in development :

There is a strong relationship between education and the economy, as well as between media and journalistic education and social and economic development in today's world. Media sciences, from an epistemological perspective, relied in their beginnings on several fields of knowledge such as sociology, psychology, economics and linguistics, and benefited from their studies, theoretical paradigms and research methods, until the establishment of media and communication science, as an independent field of knowledge, aiming to understand the impact and interaction of media and journalism with humans, society, culture, economy, etc.

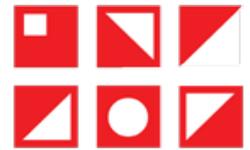


There is no doubt that many social sciences, such as sociology, social psychology, political science, economics, and linguistics, aim to understand societal interactions, social relations, and human behavior. These specializations can contribute significantly to understanding the social, political, economic, and developmental dimensions of the media and journalism in general, including their impact on cultural identity, social change, political problems, and economic issues. We say this as we think about what the Canadian communication scientist and founder of the theory of technical determinism, Marshall McLuhan, called the integrated system of media education that contributes to establishing (media culture). (M Makluhan, 1967)

By relying on social sciences, media and journalism sciences can benefit from the research methodologies and analytical tools provided by these disciplines. For example, social surveys, interviews, questionnaires, opinion polls, linguistic methods, text and speech analysis, etc., are widely used to understand media content and study behavior and interaction with journalistic content and content. These are all sociological empirical methods that media and communication research in Arab contexts greatly benefit from, and they can solve many social, economic and political problems, and help achieve development.

We must emphasize that openness to social sciences enhances a deeper understanding of the relationship between journalism, media and society. It contributes to the development of knowledge and critical discussion in this effective academic field, and helps improve it cognitively from theoretical and methodological perspectives, and developmentally from economic and social perspectives. Therefore, the discussion has been focused for about a decade on the future of media and communication institutes and colleges in the world, and methods of teaching journalism and mass communication. After extensive discussions, it was agreed and unanimously agreed that this type of education should receive great attention at the present time, according to the main elements listed by researchers in order : (E Newton, 2016)

- Linking journalism and media education to collective values
- Innovation in digital tools and technologies
- Producing more open, cooperative and participatory media content.
- Expanding journalism education, and increasing the teaching of media, information and digital literacy to all university students.
- Developing multiple and interconnected programs that link, for example, journalism, computer science, digital media, and entrepreneurship.



- Training students to build successful economic models in the fields of media and communication.
- Moving from theoretical education to field vocational training, and dealing with new digital tools.

We hope that all of these elements will be available and generalized at the level of curricula, courses, educational and academic programs for media and communication sciences in Arab countries, if they want to join the advanced countries economically and developmentally, just as the State of Qatar did in the fields of developmental media, the services and tourism sector, and economic and social development in general.

4. The Qatari tourism media experience : Successful development media.

The Qatari tourism media experience relied on using various media, marketing all the country's components, and introducing people to the tourist attractions available in Qatar, by relying on mass media and new media, through tourism marketing mechanisms such as promotional advertisements for tourist destinations, with a focus on historical landmarks, ancient museums, picturesque gardens, beautiful beaches, luxurious stadiums, and attractive investment opportunities. It also relied on television programs and cultural, dramatic, cinematic, and documentary industries, by producing television programs and documentaries about the country's tangible and intangible heritage, and its diverse culture, and these programs contributed to increasing awareness and interest in Qatar as a tourist destination.

What is also interesting is the efficiency of Qatari development media, due to its reliance on skilled and specialized competencies in the field of communication sciences and journalism, which were attracted from various Arab and Western countries. This is a very important aspect that is neglected by many other countries that failed to exploit their competencies and did not care about development media. This is exactly what one researcher talked about : « In the past decades, the path of development of media professionalism led to going beyond specialized knowledge in the field of media, to any other university degree with some training and education, and this path has spread more in developing countries for several reasons, affecting the level of media activity ». (T dicson, 2000)

The State of Qatar also focused on the tourism conferences and events that were organized in Doha, using economic experts, competent academics, professional journalists, and celebrities in sports, art, cinema and literature, and using the media to

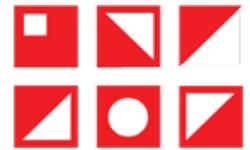


disseminate information about these events through detailed reports and media coverage. It also made good use of new media, through social networking sites, blogs, and news websites, to communicate with the peoples of the world, as well as sharing photos, stories and personal experiences of visitors, to show them what Qatar offers as a leading country in the tourism industry and encouraging investments, and as a beautiful and attractive tourist destination.

The Qatari tourism media experience has been very successful in introducing this small and emerging country, and enhancing people's respect for its authentic cultural heritage, ancient history, modern tourist attractions, and its remarkable success in organizing the cultural and sports events that it hosts. Success has enhanced Qatar's positive image in the minds of the peoples of the world, and this was evident in the Qatar World Cup 2022, which was a great challenge opportunity to achieve several gains, and the rulers of this country have succeeded with distinction. From an economic perspective, Qatar has achieved sustainable development gains, and the country will witness an increase in tourism revenues and local and foreign investments, as a result of the expected large increase in the number of tourists in the future. The sectors related to tourism, services, trade, transportation, security, health and infrastructure have also achieved significant growth. From a media perspective, Qatar has exploited the World Cup event as an opportunity to promote the country as a global tourist destination through extensive and professional media coverage of the World Cup. As much as the events and matches were the focus of the world's attention, Qatari culture and its tangible and intangible heritage were also the focus of the world's attention. Now, many people know the (Qatari Amama) that was embodied in the architecture of one of the stadiums that hosted the event, as well as the (Arab Khayma), Arab food, and Qatari fashions such as the (Qatari Bicht) that billions of people saw in the World Cup shot, when Elamir of Qatar made it dress the famous player "Lionel Messi" in the shot of him receiving the World Cup, it was a smart, strategic and professional shot.

In other words, the State of Qatar has used tourism media in an ideal way, because it has exploited all its positive functions, which one researcher calls "the strengths of tourism communication" which are manifested in: media importance, i.e. the circulation of tourism information, economic importance through stimulating the internal and external audience, social and cultural importance through spreading tourism culture internally, and a positive image externally. (I Benazza, 2017, pp 63-64)

Qatar also benefited from its historic World Cup by developing its infrastructure, making it modern and ready to accommodate various events and a large number of visitors daily. It will benefit from these improvements in the long term, and there is no



doubt that it is currently one of the best countries in the world in terms of infrastructure, such as transportation networks, roads, airports, hotels, sports centers, hospitals, universities and institutes, etc. It also enhanced interest in sports in this country and encouraged its activities. Qatar has a respected football sports championship that attracts the best talents from players, coaches, analysts and media professionals. It has also become a name in a number of other sports, and a distinguished presence in major sports events, such as the Olympic Games.

5. Conclusion:

The media has an important strategic role in developing tourism activity, the service sector and the economy in general. The Qatari experience has proven this through innovative marketing strategies, dynamic and effective communication using various media and communication tools currently available, and exploiting the most prominent and widespread sporting event in the world, which is the 2022 FIFA World Cup.

The success of the State of Qatar in establishing its position as a global tourist destination has also confirmed that the influence of the media goes beyond marketing and promotion; it also helps in shaping positive stereotypes, enhances visitor experiences, and provides basic information for travelers, as well as for investors in the field of tourism and the economy in general. We say this while noting that Qatar's use of media and communication platforms has also enhanced cooperation between the public and private sectors, which has led to its tourism development and sustainable economic growth.

Therefore, the Qatari model can be considered an ideal model for other countries that aim to enhance the tourism and services sectors, by taking advantage of the media as an effective strategy to develop their economy, as well as other cultural, social and economic sectors... that ensure long-term sustainability.

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