

## The extent to which the tourism activity contributes to achieving economic development in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

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### Abstract:

Tourism is an important human activity, and a major contributor to the economy in many countries, and just as tourism has economic goals, it also performs a cultural and religious message, and it may be for scientific, sports, therapeutic or other motives, and the benefits that benefit from tourism are not hidden. This is why there was competition between countries for the sake of obtaining the largest number of tourists, hence the topic of tourist attraction, as it is one of the most important topics related to tourism and its connection with the economic development of countries

**Key words:** Attractions, Tourism, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

## Introduction

It is known that tourism is important at this time for individuals, institutions and countries, as tourism is one of the most important human activities and a major source of the economy.

In tourism, there are many benefits to the various bodies that do it, starting with the tourist who aims to accomplish certain goals through his tourism. He may wish to achieve a religious matter such as visiting holy places, or cultural, such as attending festivals and viewing monuments, or an athlete such as attending Olympic sessions or scientific, such as participating in conferences and others. The tourist may have a missionary message, so tourism is one of the ways to introduce Islam and Muslims, and to spread the message of Islam.

There are important elements associated with tourism that is related to tourist attractions, and the countries are different with what God has blessed them with in terms of attracting tourists, however there may be attractive methods that some countries perform so that they outnumber the number of tourists over another country that has more natural tourist potentials than it, and researchers in tourism divide Elements of tourist attractions fall into two types: natural attractions, such as: the natural environment, such as mountains, rivers, waterfalls, seas, deserts, climate, etc., and the second type: human factors, such as: customs, traditions, arts, laws, legislation, lifestyles, ancient monuments, modern architecture, handicrafts, crafts, etc., and the security, economic and social situation. And the cultural (cultural environment), including the religious factor for Westerners, as they see religion as a human-made social phenomenon, as it is one of the human factors in their view.

This research came in an introduction, four demands and a conclusion. The first requirement was to define the terms included in the title of the research, and the second requirement was in the components of tourist attraction and the third requirement in the reality of tourism in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

## The study Problem

Tourism is one of the most important human activities, and as it is considered a basic source of economy in many countries, just as tourism has economic motives, it also carries cultural and religious goals, so the communication that takes place through tourism between societies and cultures is one of the ways to learn about Islam, Islamic societies, and inform The true message of Islam, for it is in this regard one of the means of calling for a nation, its culture and religion.

## Research Hypotheses.

1. What are the most important foundations and components of the tourist attraction?
2. What is the current state of tourism in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and how is it related to economic development?

## Objectives

This study aims to achieve a set of objectives, including:

1. A statement of the most important foundations and constituents of tourist attractions.
2. Explain the current state of tourism in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the extent of its link to economic development

## Search terms

Attraction as a language: The word “attraction” in the language contains several meanings, including: extension, including: diverting a thing from its position, amputation, and contention. And it came in Ibn Faris' al-Muqayyasat al-linguistic dictionary: Attracting: Jim, Zhaal, and Baa are one origin,

indicating that a thing is cut off. The Door; Because if her milk decreases, it is as if she drew it to herself.

Tourism: Researchers differed in the phenomenon of contemporary tourism in its definition, due to the difference in the angle from which each researcher views tourism. , And other various axes

From the previous definition it is clear that tourism should include four basic points:

1. Tourism involves moving people from one location to another outside their local community.
2. Tourist destinations provide a range of activities, experiences and facilities.
3. The tourism industry includes a number of sub-economic activities.

Together, these activities generate significant income for the national economy through foreign hard currencies that enter the visited tourist country through tourists.

4. The different needs and motives of the tourist require satisfaction, and for these the needs and motives create a social impact.

Hence, the close link between tourism and attraction is evident, as they are two of the four elements on which tourism is based related to tourist attractions.

### **Attractions**

The researchers did not find what they read from the references written in tourism on a definition of tourist attractions, but they found definitions of terms close to tourist attractions related to it, through which it is possible to reach a definition of the concept of tourist attractions, and these terms:

The power of attractions

### **Tourist attractions**

Tourist Attraction: Through the foregoing, tourist attractions can be defined as: they are the internal motives and incentives that motivate a person to visit a specific tourist site, whether it is a natural or human site,

And the elements of tourist attractions can be defined as the elements and characteristics available in the tourism product and the existing physical and social environment. It contains that product, which prompts and motivates a person to visit a specific tourist site, and for this it can be called temptations as well.

### **What are the foundations and components of tourist attractions?**

The temptations and ingredients are attractive factors to participate in the tourist experience, and the temptations are a multi-element product or a combination of a group of incentives or factors that have the power to influence the decision-making in choosing a tourist in the destination of the tourist destination, and they form the basis that must be available in the destination tourist destination regardless of its size and the job It is famous for it and divides these constituents into natural constituents created by God Almighty, and human constituents made by man.

### **First, the natural ingredients:**

Natural resources are the main factor in the establishment of tourism, as it is the main foundation stone that enters the productive process of the tourism industry, and it is a tourism product made by the Creator, the Almighty, that man has no role in creating it, such as the diversity of the earth's surface shapes in mountain areas, plains, valleys, lakes, coasts, mineral waters and rivers And waterfalls, in addition to the diversity of plant and animal life, which constitutes a qualitative addition to the tourist scene to become more exciting in the formation and revitalization of the tourist phenomenon, and the weather conditions and the state of climate and weather in terms of the tourist

destination are considered as suitable tourist incentives for trips on holidays and medium and long vacations.

As these phenomena affect the quantity of tourism, and its impact extends on the quality of the tourism demand

Natural resources play a major role in the tourism development process, and play a fundamental role in providing basic services to tourists and meeting their various needs that they intend to visit the tourist site.

One of the important elements of tourist attraction, as it plays a major role in determining the climatic, plant and animal characteristics of the tourist region, and there is no doubt that the effect of geographical location in the attraction also depends on the extent to which the tourist region enjoys the availability of transportation, which requires a suitable geographical nature to provide the necessary infrastructure for this purpose The good geographical location of some Countries help the tourism industry to become popular due to its easy connection with the outside world, especially if its locations are close to the main tourist demand areas

Second, the human fundamentals

It includes social and cultural life, customs, traditions, folklore, handicrafts, religious rituals, colors of local foods and all kinds of arts, patterns of life in its diversity, monuments and services that are represented in the water, electricity and sanitation network and attractions that depend on the presence of national events and festivals, such as the Janadriya Festival in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The human potential can be divided

1. Services are one of the most important factors for tourism development, and are considered a basic necessity for any tourism project

Tourism infrastructures include: such as water, electricity, communications, health services, roads, airports, air and land, and sea transportation, and transportation and transportation are considered a basic necessity for the development and service of tourism, in order to link all archaeological sites and facilities with paved means of transportation, so that tourists can access them.

And it includes the superstructures and the superstructure includes: the establishments prepared for residence, such as hotels, furnished apartments, camps, tourist information offices, travel and mail agents, restaurants, cafes, entertainment and entertainment centers, etc., and these differ from one country to another according to the level of the country's progress.

It also includes the various industrial and commercial sectors, banks and urban areas, the facilities offered at the price level, the advertising capacity of various media to attract tourists, security, stability, health care, good treatment, and the ability to highlight all aspects and peculiarities of interest to tourists of various desires.

During a short period of its life, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was able to achieve a great development in the field of providing the necessary infrastructure for any economic or social activity, without which the tourism activity could not grow and develop anywhere, and these services include road networks that link the various parts of the Kingdom.

Addition To the establishment of modern means of transportation, the establishment of international and domestic airports, the establishment and processing of ports, the establishment of a modern advanced network for internal and international communications, the spread of health services, the diversity of areas of municipal services, electric energy, the establishment of parks and parks, in addition to the role of the private sector in building hotels, furnished apartments, tourist resorts and restaurants, where he played This development in the field of infrastructure is to support the tourism potentials in

the Kingdom and to show tourist attractions by encouraging investment in the field of tourism, attracting foreign investment to the Kingdom, and the Kingdom's sense of the importance of tourism and the role that it can play in the economies of the Kingdom, as tourism revenues have achieved third place in the economies of the Kingdom. After petroleum and petrochemical industries.

## 2. The skill trained

It consists in preparing the scientific and technical frameworks necessary for the development of the tourism sector, such as establishing tourism and hotel colleges, opening scientific programs in universities to graduate the human cadres necessary for the development of tourism and establishing bodies concerned with supervising the tourism sector, as is the case in the General Authority for Tourism and Heritage in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which was established in 1429. And the institutions based on the tourism sector, and through the enactment of legislation, laws and general organizational structures, and the development of shopping plans and tourism promotion programs

## 3. Handmade products

These industries enjoy their beauty and accuracy, such as the manufacture of rugs, daggers, swords, silverware and textile industries, and there are special markets for these industries in various countries.

## 4. Provide a security component

Security is considered one of the most important elements for the growth and development of tourism in any country in the world, as there is a direct relationship between security and tourism, so the more security is available, tourism develops and flourishes, and vice versa, the more the tourist feels that there is no security for him in a country he refuses to visit him even if it is available there Other constituents, tourism is considered to be overly sensitive



to political, social and economic conditions in addition to being affected by regional and international conditions represented by regional wars and disputes.

These aspects play their role in the tourist attraction, as it is an attraction factor for the tourist who wishes to learn about the customs and traditions of peoples, their arts, traditional industries and their cultural and artistic manifestations such as artistic festivals, scientific conferences, sports courses, seminars, monuments, and others

What is the current state of tourism in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia?

Tourism in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is an emerging economic activity and a strong competition among other economic activities, and its importance lies in the fact that it contributes to providing many job opportunities for Saudi youth, preserving the cultural and natural heritage in the Kingdom, increasing citizens' awareness and introducing them to their country better, and developing the infrastructure The infrastructure in the various regions of the Kingdom, as well as providing pioneering opportunities for business and service for those with low capital, reduces the leakage of national income abroad, and diversifies the sources of the national economy

The authorities supervising tourism activities were numerous, between the public and private sectors, so the Ministry of Education and Knowledge supervised the antiquities and museums sector, and the Ministry of Trade supervised accommodation services such as hotels and hotel apartments, and the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs undertook the establishment of parks, public parks and beaches beautification.

The Civil Aviation Authority supervises travel and tourism agencies. As for the private sector, its role was limited to the Saudi Hotels and Tourism Facilities Company, and the establishment of some recreational motorized game complexes. In 2000 AD, the sixth development plan was issued, which clearly

indicated the importance of tourism and its developmental role at the regional and national levels.

In light of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's interest in tourism, the Cabinet Resolution No.

(9) And its date 12/1/1421 AH, and the judge established the Supreme Commission for Tourism to confirm the adoption of the tourism sector as a cultural, social and economic sector, and to confirm that domestic tourism has become a national reality that requires the responsible authorities to plan for its development and development, based on the following distinct tourism components:

1. The blessing of security and safety that characterizes the Kingdom.
2. The originality of the Saudi hospitable society.
3. Geo location.
4. The vast area of the Kingdom and its disparate terrain with a varied climate and stunning views.
5. Availability of important archaeological and historical sites, and distinction of the national cultural heritage.
6. Availability of modern services and infrastructure necessary for the tourism industry

In addition to that, the religious aspect that characterizes the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the privacy it enjoys in that is one of the most important of these ingredients at all.

Then Cabinet Resolution No. (78) was issued on 3/16/1429 AH corresponding to March 24, 2008, to become the General Authority for Tourism and Antiquities, after annexing the Antiquities and Museums Sector to it. On Monday 12 Ramadan 1436 corresponding to June 29 2015, the Council of

Ministers decided Approval of amending the name of the General Authority for Tourism and Antiquities to) the General Authority for Tourism and National Heritage.

In view of the increasing importance of tourism and the attention given by the Saudi state to it, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia ranked sixty-fourth in the world and fifth in the Arab world in terms of competitiveness in the field of tourism, which is based on a set of indicators that are complementary infrastructure, travel and tourism policies, appropriate conditions, infrastructure, and natural resources, Based on the analysis of the Tourism and Travel Competitiveness Report for Arab Countries in 2015, the Kingdom ranked 69th in the world in the field of cultural and natural resources, ranking 83 in natural resources, and 55 in cultural resources.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia ranked 51 globally in the infrastructure index, as this index included three variables: Air transport infrastructure, and ranked 40 globally

Land and maritime transport infrastructure, where it ranked 60th, and finally the tourism services infrastructure, which ranked 67th in the world.

The Arab Tourism Organization also announced that the cities of Jubail and Abha have won the capitals of Arab tourism for two years

2016-2017, in which the number of tourists is expected to increase by 30%.

The tourism accommodation sector in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has achieved impressive leaps since 1429 in terms of the number of tourism facilities, the volume of investment, the sector's development and organization, and job opportunities for Saudis. In 2004 the number of hotels and furnished housing units was 2,139 establishments.

At the end of 2015, this number reached 5868 establishments, while the number of hotel rooms increased from 104 083 to 281 863 rooms at the end of

2015, and the number of furnished apartments' rooms increased from 51,768 in 2004 to 165040 rooms in 2015.

The number of international hotel companies increased from 5 companies to 25 companies, and the number of employees in the sector doubled to 113,048 employees, 28% of whom are Saudis.

The volume of tourism income for domestic tourism in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 2014 reached 17.5 billion, and this number increased to 19.21 billion in 2015, an increase of 9.8%. Tourist nights in the Kingdom reached 9.2 million in 2014, while in 2015 it reached 52 million, an increase of 6 %.

Tourist trips in 2014 amounted to 13.6 million trips, and in 2015 they reached 15.5 million trips, an increase of 6%.

### **Tourism in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia varies to:**

By virtue of the large area occupied by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, it is distinguished by the diversity of the tourism components, including geographical, historical and natural, due to the availability of archaeological sites, religious places, deserts, and cultural and social legacies necessary for the growth and prosperity of this phenomenon at the level of neighboring countries, and perhaps what Saudi Arabia has witnessed for nearly two decades of increasing interest

The tourism sector is clear evidence of the government agencies 'interest in tourism activity in the Kingdom, which has undoubtedly become an important axis of social and economic activity that enjoys official interests and positive participation from the private sector and citizens.

### **Among the tourism patterns in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia:**

#### **1- Religious tourism**

Religious tourism is one of the oldest types of tourism, and is represented in visiting religious sites, and traveling for the sake of preaching Islam, or in order to do charitable work.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is distinguished by its embrace of the two holiest spots among Muslims, namely: Makkah al-Mukarramah and Madinah, and in it the two greatest mosques in Islam are the Grand Mosque and the Prophet's Mosque which the Prophet, peace be upon him, urged to allocate them with the Al-Aqsa Mosque to visit and in Makkah Al-Mukarramah Muslims perform the Hajj, which is an obligatory duty and corner One of the pillars of Islam.

This makes it imperative for every Muslim in the world to visit the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia even once in his life, and many Muslims visit Mecca repeatedly to perform Hajj and Umrah, and to pray in the Grand Mosque and to observe i'tikaaf there. Religious tourist attractions are a great source of income for the Kingdom, as the presence of holy places An important and permanent reason throughout the year for the arrival of large numbers of Muslims to the Kingdom, and this requires the necessary preparation to receive these large numbers, which makes the material return from religious tourism great

Trips for the purposes of religious tourism have achieved at the level of tourism in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and within the scope of inbound religious tourism spending amounted to 15 billion Saudi riyals, with a large proportion of the total spending, and within the scope of the number of national tourism trips, trips for religious purposes have achieved record numbers compared to non-religious trips.

It is expected to increase with the expansion of the Two Holy Mosques and with the increasing number of Muslims

## **2. Cultural tourism**

Cultural heritage can be considered the basic component of tourism activity and one of the most important tourism products that depend on cultural heritage, represented by historical archaeological sites in addition to cultural resources related to peoples' lives, such as museums, monuments, urban heritage, handicrafts, cultural heritage festivals and popular meals

Among the most important archaeological tourist groups in the Kingdom are the Lihayan monuments in the Al-Ula region

### **Madain Saleh**

The Okhdood, the Shubra Historical Palace, the Okaz Market area, the ancient dams of the Taif region, the antiquities of the Tabuk region, Mada'in Saleh, and the Shaza Palace in the Asir region,

Which is one of the oldest archaeological sites.

These civilizations that lived on the lands of the country are distinguished, including a group dating back to before Christ, the most famous of which are regions: Madain Saleh Al-Hajar in the northwest, and Najran in the south, in addition to what God loved this good land with the presence of the Two Holy Mosques on its blessed land, which made it a destination for Muslims from various parts Earth.

### **Summer and winter tourism**

As tourists frequent the high mountainous areas due to the moderate weather in them, represented by the Taif Mountains, Al-Baha, Asir, Abha and Hail, the northern regions of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and sea tourism, and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia also enjoys extensive tourism opportunities for winter tourism, represented on the coasts of the southern Red Sea or in the southern islands As Farasan Island, which has ideal temperatures in the winter

### **4. Coastal tourism**

The Saudi coasts overlooking the Red Sea and the eastern coasts overlooking the Arabian Gulf have many natural phenomena and landmarks that can be exploited in creating tourist opportunities, either by setting up tourist facilities such as setting up hotels or by practicing many hobbies such as fishing, diving, surfing, cruises, kayaking, paragliding, beach games and bird watching.

And other areas that could be exploited in developing those areas and thus creating job opportunities that contribute to the elimination of unemployment

### **5. Island tourism**

6. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is rich in a large number of islands located either in the Red Sea or in the Arabian Gulf, where the number reached 1,300 islands. They are mines for tourism investment for several reasons, including the disparity in the size of the islands, and they are uninhabited, their proximity to the coasts, and the occurrence of some islands Over multiple latitudes, and rich in rare marine and amphibious life.

### **7. Saharan Tourism**

Desert tourism depends on the availability of natural ingredients, represented by the manifestations of natural beauty in the habitats of wildlife, deserts, mountains, volcanoes, caves, valleys and sand, which may include desert tourism, as the Kingdom includes several deserts that can be used in tourism promotion, such as the influence desert that is used in the establishment of the Hail Rally every year.

And the Empty Quarter and Hana desert, which is a source of beautiful sand dunes, especially when it converges with the golden rays of the sun, mountain tourism, and nature reserve tourism represented by plant and animal ecological diversity and is home to many species of natural and wild life, cave tourism, migratory birds and farms observation

### **8. Medical tourism**

9. Medical tourism depends on the availability of modern medical equipment represented by hospitals, specialized medical centers and human competencies. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is well-known in the field of separating twins, as 29 separations were performed for twins from 17 countries during the period 1990-2009, while hospital tourism depends on the extent of Availability of natural resources the curative elements represented by the natural elements such as the pure atmosphere as in the regions of Jizan and Asir and the availability of mineral water and hot sulfur and cold spring water, as in the regions of Jizan and Al-Hasa, and burial in hot sands, and the mud of dormant volcanoes, in the areas of sand dunes and volcanic heat.

### **10. Sports tourism**

This type is famous in Saudi Arabia through the availability of natural conditions and the age structure of the population, organizational procedures, and sports equipment, as it organizes many sports and regional and international championships, and among the most famous international sporting events that are held in the Kingdom, the Hail Rally or the challenge of great influence, accompanied by many events as a market Crafts and Food Festival, as the number of tourists to this rally reached about 86,000 visitors in 2010

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, and after this comprehensive detail on the components of tourist attractions in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the most important findings and recommendations reached by this research can be presented, including:

1. The importance of the role that tourism plays in feeding the national income in hard currencies and its impact on the local community through the availability of job opportunities and reducing unemployment. That is why tourism in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was one of the important economic sectors, as the tourism sector in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia played an



important role in the economy NBK contributed more than 7.2% of the gross domestic product in 2011 (Al-Eqtisadiyah newspaper issue 12357 dated 9/27/2012), and the percentage of the Saudi workforce exceeded 26% of the total workers in the tourism sector, who occupy 670 thousand direct jobs. This employment accounts for 9.1% of the total workforce in the Kingdom in the private sector. In addition, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia reaped about \$ 76 billion from tourism in 2013, distributed between foreign and domestic tourists' spending (Sabq newspaper, 2013).

2. The clear interest by the government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia represented by the establishment of the Supreme Commission for Tourism, then its name was transferred to the General Authority for Tourism and Antiquities, and finally its name became the General Authority for Tourism and National Heritage in 2015, and the vision of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia 2030, which was approved by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, the King Salman bin Abdulaziz, on April 25, 2016, the march of the General Authority for Tourism and National Heritage, considering the tourism sectors and the elements of national heritage as one of the most important basic and most important alternatives for the economies that Saudi Arabia will depend on after oil.

3. The Kingdom's richness in the religious, natural and human tourism elements, and its extension over the area of this blessed state, and the diversity of its terrain and climate, all of this enhances the Kingdom's position on the tourist map, and makes it a destination for tourists in general, and Muslim tourists in particular, and these components are the blessing of security and safety that is distinguished They have the kingdom, and originality the Saudi hospitable society, the distinctiveness of the geographical location, the presence of the Two Holy Mosques, the diverse natural components, the availability of important archaeological and historical sites, the national cultural heritage, the availability of modern services and the necessary

infrastructure for the tourism industry, and the Kingdom is distinguished by the diversity of the main types of tourism and thus the ability to meet the wishes of tourists, whether tourists Foreigner or domestic tourist.

4. Encouraging local and foreign investors to exploit the tourism potentials in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which will benefit the investor in particular, and society in general, by overcoming obstacles to tourism investment, developing more flexible methods and means to face the problems, complications and procedures for tourism investment and proposing joint investment offices Tourist.

5. Continuing to develop and update laws and legislations related to supporting the tourism sector and their practical application.

6. Focusing on investment promotion in the field of tourism patterns available in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia that are not currently invested,

Such as medical tourism - desert - adventures and developing the quality and level of the tourism product through practical and actual coordination between the government sector and the private sector in the various fields of tourism, whether investments or marketing

7. Urging the private banking sector to finance tourism projects and provide the necessary facilities.

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