



Religious tourism and the factors and opportunities that motivate tourists to pursue religious tourism-Iraq as a sample

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Abstract:

Religious tourism is considered one of the most important industries in science, and it is considered to have a significant impact on the world in economic terms. Therefore, the concepts of religious tourism and how they have developed over time were discussed here, as well as the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on religious tourism, as well as the opportunities provided by religious tourism from Where the development of the economies of countries that are considered religious tourism destinations and the factors that affect the tourist in religious tourism, as well as the factors that motivate the tourist to religious tourism, and Iraq was taken as a sample because it is considered one of the countries with great religious tourist attraction, and a statistical study was conducted on The number of tourists who flock to the city of Karbala because it is considered one of the important tourist cities in Iraq, where the results concluded that the number of Muslim tourists in particular is a large number and has a clear economic impact, especially its impact on the development of the Iraqi economy because it is the sample that was addressed here where it can and from Through the stimuli and factors discussed here, the increase in this number of tourists in a way that positively affects the Iraqi economy in particular and the global economy in general.

Keywords: Religious tourism, tourism activity, Iraq

Introduction:

Tourism has diversified over long periods to occupy an important factor in the development and building of the world economy, especially the factor that was and is still influential in the tourism sectors, especially the religious tourism sector is the factor of tourism activity and with the availability of this factor and the availability of ways in which this activity can be increased Tourism Religious tourism becomes one of the main factors in the development of the world economy. Still, the important question that must be answered is:

How does religious tourism affect the global economy? What are the limits of tourism activity in this sector? How can religious tourism be developed in countries considered religious tourism destinations?



Methodology:

The first topic

The development of the concept of religious tourism:

The concepts of religious tourism have developed significantly in the post-Hajj period, as they include the meaning of the destination. Recent explorations and research have extended to know the visitor's motives, which helps to consider their identities, such as individual religious affiliations and religiosity, and thus allocate the tourist destination to accommodate this type of visitor (Kim, 2020). Religious tourism and the tourism economy have also become important factors, mainly in global economic trade, known as the basic factors in economic development. Therefore, religious tourism is considered one of the most important tourism sectors that directly impacts the global economy (Nori, 2017). Religious tourism is also one of the important factors in the formation of economic, cultural and social relations, as the interest in this sector may lead to the generation of interest in a significant manner in the country completed in this sector, which helps in the economic progress of that country and also increases the opportunity to promote its related products in this aspect. In a manner that is at the international level.

Many studies have shown that the countries of the world have undergone significant positive changes due to the impact of religious tourism on the global economy (Postelnicu, 2018). Also, the motives that can bring tourists to religious tourist places represent an important factor in increasing the number of tourists coming to those religious tourist areas, where interest in those motives may lead to a positive impact on the economic side of those destinations, for example, and in a study conducted to find out the motives for coming Tourists to the city of Karbala, which is one of the important religious tourist cities in Iraq, where it was found that the motives of the tourists coming to this city with the aim of religious tourism are driven by permanent rituals practiced by the Shiite community at a specific time each year, where interest in those motives and studying them as factors that increase the number of tourists may affect the economy of this city in a way that makes it one of the important cities on a global scale in this aspect (Husein, 2018). In recent years, pilgrimage has witnessed a clear recovery worldwide, especially in countries considered to be important destinations for Muslims, where pilgrimage is one of the pillars of this religion.

The second topic

The impact of Covid 19 on religious tourism:

The pilgrimage is also the result of religious and spiritual reasons, and it can be considered one of the important experiences that create understanding between new environments, cultures and peoples for the important religious areas and, thus, leads to the revival of those areas, especially from the economic side (Collins-Kreiner, 2006). On the other hand, the coronavirus pandemic, at present, has many negative effects on religious tourism, as this pandemic caused the establishment of controls for the travel of tourists to avoid its spread, as this affected the percentage of tourists in many countries that are considered among the important religious tourist destinations in the world. It is necessary to consider this aspect when promoting religious tourist areas by taking preventive measures for the tourist area which receives high numbers of visitors coming to it.

COVID-19 is expected to lead to fundamental changes in the religious tourism sector, which should be considered when developing any strategy to develop this important sector, especially in economic terms.



For this reason, the path to the transformation of religious tourism can bring about sufficient institutional innovation on the supply and demand sides of tourism to promote the emergence of new paths and also contribute to enhancing the economic reality of this important sector (Brouder, 2020).

On the other hand, Covid 19 revealed the challenges and prospects of the religious tourism sector, and also showed the strengths and opportunities for development of religious tourism (OsamahAl-Khazali, 2017). Therefore, in recent years, religious tourism has witnessed an increasing interest by countries that suffer from economic depression because it is considered a cure for many international economies that suffer from many problems (Singh, 2003).

The third topic

The opportunities offered by religious tourism and the factors affecting tourists and their impact on the global economy:

Religious tourism is also considered one of the best economic development opportunities for countries with important religious historical places. Religious tourism, with time, has become one of the important factors for the economies of middle-income countries. Therefore, attention must be paid to this aspect as it is an important factor in global economic development. Tourism and tourists provide as well as a broad introduction to the interrelationship between religious tourism and the development of the global economy, which can have a significant impact on societies in the coming years, and this is evidenced by the motives, attitudes and behaviors of tourists' consumption of religious products. Factors that have a significant impact on the religious destination in terms of the increase in the number of tourists coming to this destination will affect the communities of that destination in a positive way (Sharpley, 2018). Other factors also affect the religious tourism sector, which is closely related to tourists. A study conducted in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was concerned with the satisfaction of tourists with the costs of travel and airline companies and how this factor affects the tourist, which was through the use of the number of international tourists arriving Monthly to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia from July 2010 to December 2015, where the results found that airline and travel prices have a significant impact on the tourist's assessment of the destination, considering that travel and airline companies are important factors for the movement of the tourist. The tourist's intention to go to a tourist destination is closely linked in the prices of transportation to that destination (MohammadAlsumairi, 2017). This also has an impact on cities, especially cities that represent a religious tourist destination, as it may affect the economy of these cities in a way that makes them develop and significantly from famous religious destinations in a way that makes them attract more tourists on the one hand and the other hand study the factors that led to Make the tourists visit these destinations to develop them to make the tourists more willing to visit these destinations and promote them as a destination that welcomes tourists. Religious cities also represent a close link between religious tourism on the one hand and worship and religion on the other hand, as it can gather tourists from all countries of the world through this connection, which leads to a positive impact on the economy of those cities, as this can help in developing Those cities and quickly all over the world where it can lead to the creation of a strong global economy depends in its development on this aspect and on many other aspects that are related to religious tourism (Farhan, 2019). Religious tourism can also represent one of the strong sectors in the tourism industry because, through Conducting several studies in recent years proved that religious tourism is one of the factors responsible for the prosperity of the global economy because many of the world's



population are greatly interested in exploring the religious aspects of the other country when travelling. More religious tourism in the world. The Internet also has a significant impact on the tourist's decision to visit a specific area because the tourist's decision to visit a specific destination is linked to the amount of information on the Internet and the evaluations of previous tourists, which can help him in identifying his villages, whether for religious tourism or other goals such as exploration, entertainment and spending the holiday for that. It is important to consider this aspect when promoting the tourist destination through Internet sites, which represent modern means of promoting tourism. Many studies have been conducted in recent years in this regard, which have proven that the information on the Internet has prompted tourists to a large extent in the world to visit a wide range of religious tourist destinations (HyunaeLee, 2019). Religious tourism is also one of the types of tourism that depends on religious travel in a large way, where the reason for the travel motive is religious factors related to religious archaeological sites. For this reason, many travel agencies and companies offer large-scale trips to religious and archaeological sites, pilgrimage sites and holy sites.

The fourth topic

Knowing the religious motives of tourists that motivate them for religious tourism:

According to data provided by the Ministry of Tourism in Israel, about one-fifth of the tourists to the country identified religious tourism or pilgrimage as the main goal of their visit (Gil-Fuentetaja, 2019).

Religious tourism is also one of the important factors that contribute to solving the problems of unemployment and many problems of economic stagnation in most countries of the world, as it is considered one of the most important industries that have large returns and occupies an important position in the economies of developed countries in the world (M. Yusuf Wibisono, 2021). Also, understanding consumer behaviour and the motives that make tourists flock to a particular religious site is one of the necessary factors in the religious tourism sector by identifying the behavioural system and requesting specific tourism products and studying the motives of tourists to come to a particular tourist destination that can prepare the destination or site for a tourist Religious tourism is friendly to tourists and responds to their requests, as this is one of the important factors in the success of the religious tourism sector (Arabshahi, 2017).

A study conducted in this regard in Jerusalem, Israel, aimed to identify the motives that made tourists flock to that region for religious tourism. 848 statements were collected from tourists of different religions.

The results showed that the most important motives that prompted the tourists to go to that religious site were spiritual and emotional communication, relaxation, finding dimensions of peace and discovering and exploring new places (TahirAlbayrak, 2018). And in another study conducted to understand the behavior and motives of tourists to visit religious tourist areas, and by analyzing the number of data of tourists coming to certain religious tourist places, the results showed that the important motive that led tourists to visit religious areas is the religious and spiritual motive and motives that go back to their belief in Those places and their urban and religious history included all the religious tourist places in the world (Yasuda, 2018). The Middle East region is considered the cradle of religious tourism because it is the home of the world's most important religions and

pilgrimage sites, where Islam is the main link between the peoples of this region. It is also considered the hub of spiritual and Islamic tourism, as this region has witnessed remarkable economic growth. As (Zamani-Farahani, 2028) points out, this region has the potential to become a major tourist destination for Muslims worldwide. He also pointed out (Butler, 2018) that the Middle East has been the center of religious and cultural tourism since ancient years and until now, which led to the prosperity of the tourism industry, especially religious tourism, in a way that affects the economic side positively. For example, the city of Karbala in Iraq has suffered over the past years from neglect and destruction of religious sites in the city. Still, in recent years and through the conduct of many developments and construction of religious sites in the city, these have become important religious tourist cities in the world. Also, a study conducted in the city of Najaf in Iraq, where this study answered a question that was posed for a long time by specialists in religious tourism, which is :

What is the tourist activity limited to?

The results found that the tourism activity is largely limited to the pattern of religious tourism and the quality and quantity of promoting religious tourism sites (Hussein, 2021). There are also factors and ingredients for religious tourism that can affect the tourist. These ingredients can be identified by studying the ingredients that are available in the countries that are considered to have a great impact on this sector, where the ingredients that were available in religious tourism in Iraq were taken. Because this country is one of the countries that are considered a place of great religious tourist attraction.

The elements of religious tourism in Iraq :

Iraq possesses religious tourism potentials, which makes it the most visited in the world. Also the components of religious tourism in Iraq can be classified into six categories:-

Historical components, material components, spiritual components, spatial components, temporal components,

Also, there are qualitative components, which can be detailed as follows:

- 1- Historical components:** These are the total indicators that indicate the continuation of the religious tourism path in Iraq through different generations and eras. It makes Iraq an ancient tourist and religious heritage dating back to the seventh millennium BC, when the various civilizations of the Sumerians, Babylonians, and Assyrians flocked to them, and after them the Romans, Greece, Persians, Muslims and others.

The Iraqi cities and regions in the centuries BC were associated with the history of the prophets and messengers but rather represented the religious capitals of many civilizations. For example, the ancient city of Ur in southern Iraq was associated with the birth of the Prophet of God Ibrahim (peace be upon him) between the period (1200-1700) BC and was famous for the temples of the gods in the legends. The ancient city, located south of Baghdad, represents the religious capital of the Sumerians and Babylonians, which confirms the religious ethnicity of the religious tourism monuments in Iraq since ancient times (Jazeera, 2008).

- 2- Material components:** by which we mean the total religious monuments in the land of Iraq, for which Iraq is famous, such as the shrines of prophets and gods, as well as churches, monasteries, and all temples in the northern, central and southern regions, where evidence of religious tourism and its landmarks are evident for all sects and religions.

Examples of that are:-

- The shrines and shrines of the Iraqi prophets, such as the shrine of the Prophet Ibrahim, the Prophet Shuaib, and the Prophet Noah (Zidelkhir, 2013).
 - **Christian shrines:** There are a large number of churches in Iraq, and the study counted more than 150 A church in only twelve governorates out of a total of 18 Iraqi governorates, including 75 churches in Baghdad and 30 in Nineveh, 16 in Basra, and 13 in Dohuk (East", 2018).
 - **Jewish Shrines:** There are a large number of shrines and shrines for the Jewish community in Iraq, including, for example, the Jewish gifts and the shrine of Dhul-Kifl (Hazqbal) between Najaf and Baghdad, and the shrine of the three Jewish prophets, Daniel, Hanin, and Aziz in the Kirkuk Castle and the Torah Temple (Zidelkhir, 2013).
- 3- **Spiritual ingredients:** These are the ingredients that are represented in the set of distinctive features of what Iraq possesses in religious tourism shrines compared to the rest of the tourist patterns, which means that Iraq possesses intrinsic and inevitable elements in the hearts of visitors and arrivals to places of religious tourism.
- These features are:
- The launch of the tourist's religious tourist desire from the depths of the soul and not just a desire for entertainment or fun and excitement.
 - The connection of religious visits with the urgent needs of the visitor and the visitor, such as the desire for spiritual and physical healing or the fulfillment of visions, dreams and vows.
 - Religious tourism is not bound by the considerations of the tourist seasons and the conditions of the ideal tourist attraction that must be available in public tourism services, as the religious tourist crosses all barriers and borders and sacrifices to seize the shrines, which are among the sacred religious tourist sites for him (Salman, 2017).
- 4- **The quantitative components:** - By these components, we mean here those spatial characteristics that characterize the religious tourist attractions in Iraq, with their diversity and affiliations, the most important of which can be summed up in the following:
- The spatial spread that supports the movement of religious and public tourism in the country, where the geographical and spatial reality of the map of the holy shrines in Iraq prepares for a promising economic environment awaiting employment and exploitation (Salman, 2017).
 - The ability of religious shrines to positively change the urban reality of the areas in which they are located in terms of economics, tourism, and civilization. The best example is the shrine of the two Imams Kadhimin in Baghdad.
- 5- **The temporal components:-** What is meant by these components here is the departure of the pattern of religious tourism from the familiar temporal scope of the usual tourist seasons, meaning that religious visits in Iraq have an extended season, but rather it is a permanent season for visiting at all, which is what we seek in the following:



A- The large number of fixed religious occasions and visits in Iraq each year, which start from the beginning of the Hijri year on the first of Muharram and extend until the eighteenth of Dhul-Hijjah, which represents Eid Al-Ghadir Al-Ghadir, passing through several occasions, nearly thirty annual occasions.

B - The traditional visitors to the shrines and holy shrines in Iraq do not stop throughout the year, which means that Iraq possesses the element of temporal openness to its religious landmarks and the extension of traditional visits, as they are continuous visits and are not defined by time or time.

- 6- Qualitative components: It means the difference of allegiance to religious occasions to shrines, shrines and holy places in Iraq from the occasions of Hajj and Umrah, being the two main occasions for all Muslims in the world, and this difference is divided into:

A- Qualitative difference: It is represented in the possibility of opening Iraqi religious events to non-Muslims so that they are allowed to participate in the rituals of the religious event, both spiritually and physically, regardless of their different religions and orientations, while this can happen in the rituals of Hajj and Umrah.

B - Quantitative difference: the Iraqi religious events accommodate many people coming to the Hajj and Umrah rituals in Mecca and Medina. It indicates this city's distinctive religious position as a religious tourist site that attracts tourists.

The fifth topic

The global offer of religious tourism seekers and the absorptive capacities of the city of Karbala

First: The Global Presentation (Shiite Muslims):-

The Shiite sect is one of the largest Muslim sects in the world, as it is several alongside Islamic sects. The other is spread all over the world, and statistics indicate that the number of sects is up to a year (2000).

It is more than 349 million, and with a population increase of 3% until 2021, the number will be about 550 million. According to statistics, the number is more than 600 million and is increasing.

The intent is not the number of numbers, but the search for economic wealth that did not pay attention to in Iraq, which generates large sums of money for the country and provides millions of job opportunities.

The following are some tables to show the features of this problem and to know the purposes of the research:

- 1- A table showing the number of Shiite Muslim tourists worldwide and the number of years required to have an opportunity To visit the thresholds once per person, the total number (560) million people .

Table No. (1) prepared by the researcher

The total number	Recruitment strategy	Annual number	Number of years	Notes
350 million up to a year 2000 and the ratio population growth of 3% Become The number until 2020 is 560 million .	10,000	3,600,000	166	350 million up to year 2000 and percentage 3% population growth The number becomes up to 2020 is 560 a million .
	15,000	5,400,000	11	
	20,000	7,200,000	83	
	30,000	10,800,000	55	
	35,000	12,600,000	47	
	40,000	14,400,000	43	
	45,000	16,200,000	33	
	70,000	25,200,000	22	
	100,000	36,000,000	16	

A- It is clear from the above table that the adoption of the probabilities mentioned in the table shows that in the case of using

A thousand per day, i.e. a total number for a period of (12) months, we need (166) years to be able to give each person the opportunity to visit the holy shrines once, assuming that the number remains constant during the period of (166) years, and this is impossible in terms of human age and population growth rate .

B - In the event that (15) thousand are used daily, the total numbers for a year will be 5,400,000 and on this

The basis for dividing the total number by this number, we need 111 years so that each individual can visit the thresholds once, assuming the stability of the total number. This is impossible in terms of human age and population growth rate.

C - If we see the possibility of entering (45) thousand per day, the total number during the year will be 25,200,000 million

By dividing the total number by this number, the period of years required to allow each individual to have the opportunity once

One (22) years old.

D- If we take the probability of entering 100,000, the total annual number will be 360,000, and thus we need

(16 years

Important note : These assumptions are based on the fact that the number of people leaving is equal to the number of entrants per day, and assuming that the duration of the visit is only (10) days.

Secondly: The absorptive capacity to host tourists in Karbala Governorate, the subject of the study, is a model (80,000) beds and the number of hotels (800) hotels:-

The following is a table showing the situation:

Table No. (2) prepared by the researcher

sequence	Daily number of Inbound tourists	Daily rotator for 10 days of the year period	Daily required family	Notes
1-	10,000	100,000	100,000	Assuming that the duration Visit 10 days and enter Daily number and goes out daily The same number is rounded for a period of time 10 days is the intended number
2-	15,000	150,000	150,000	
3-	30,000	300,000	300,000	
4-	40,000	400,000	400,000	
5-	100,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	

A - It is clear from the above table that the daily tourists in Karbala, the subject of the study, depend on the numbers entering daily.

B - In the event of the entry of 30,000 beds, the required number of beds is 300,000, and here the deficit will be 220,000 beds

C - In the event of entering 100,000, the required family amount will be (1000,000) million, with a deficit of 520 thousand beds.

It is clear from the foregoing that the infrastructure in the field of tourist accommodation is in deficit. Appropriate and sound measures must be taken to fill this deficit.

Third: Preparing the workers to be distributed to provide services to tourists:

Tourism studies indicate that the number required to provide services to tourists at various levels and for all sectors is (4) people for each tourist, or you can say that each tourist helps to provide four jobs opportunities and these numbers can be clarified by preparing the following table:

Table No. (3) prepared by the researcher

sequence	Round number of tourists per day	The required number of workers	Note
1-	100,000	400,000	The numbers multiplied by 4
2-	150,000	600,000	
3-	250,000	1,000,000	
4-	400,000	1,600,000	
5-	1,000,000	4,000,000	

A- It is clear from the above table that in the case of the ability to use 100 thousand, it is possible to provide job opportunities of up to (400) thousand.

B - In the event of the ability to employ 250 thousand, it is possible to provide job opportunities of up to (1,600,000).

C - In the case of the ability to use (1000,000), it is possible to provide job opportunities of up to (4000,000).

It is clear from the above that the preparation of job opportunities will be outside the local ability to provide them.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, it is necessary to emphasize the necessity of paying attention to religious tourism, as it is considered the ideal economic and global engine that can be followed to achieve sustainability, especially through the aspects that were addressed in this research. Sustainability is one of the most important goals of future countries, and emphasis must be placed on preserving tourism. Religious heritage places represent important tourist sites and are an important factor in achieving sustainability, as the sanctity of these places helps tourists commit to preserving the environment of those places.

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