



Opting for Enriching Saudi Arabia's Tourism Attraction Sites towards the Realization of Vision 2030

Ahmed Osman Ibrahim, Architectural Engineering Department, College of Engineering, the University of Hail, Saudi Arabia, ah.Ibrahim@uoh.edu.sa

Faizah Mohammed Bashir, Department of Interior Design, College of Engineering, the University of Hail, Saudi Arabia, fai.bashir@uoh.edu.sa

Henry Ojobo, Department of Department of Architecture, Faculty of Environmental Sciences, Kaduna State University, Nigeria, henry.ojobo@kasu.edu.ng

Yakubu Aminu Dodo, Department of Architecture, Faculty of Engineering and Architecture, Istanbul Gelisim University, 34310 Istanbul Turkey, yadodo@gelisim.edu.tr

Inda Abdulmumin, School of Education, Department of Educational Foundations University Teknologi Malaysia, abdulmumini.indal1976@graduate.utm.my

Okafor Izuchukwu Christian, Razak Faculty of Technology and Informatics, Perdana Centre, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, okaforchris34@yahoo.com

Abstract- Saudi Arabia has great potential for the international tourism industry however; the industry remains predominantly under-developed. Hajj is obligatory at least once in a lifetime for the 1.8 billion followers of Islam and as it is the fifth five pillars of Islam, as well considered the greatest international tourism industry constituent. The kingdom's attempt to diversify its economic dependence on fossil fuels focusing on its tourism potentials spearheaded by the 26,000 km² and \$500bn economic city, Neom, on its western edge, powered by clean energy. The Saudi Commission for Tourism & National Heritage (SCTH) has entered into a number of agreements with relevant organizations to promote the Kingdom's rich history, ancient civilizations, and nomadic tribes. The Kingdom boasts three UNESCO and three World Heritage list sites. A recently concluded joint Saudi German archeological excavation mission has unearthed objects dating back 7,000 years. Additionally, the SCTH is hoping the convertible Umrah-plus visas will encourage pilgrims to partake in annual events and initiatives such as the Janadriyah, the national and international most visited urban heritage tourism event. The measures put in place to attract more visitors in future should lead to a more diverse economy. The SCTH for example has adopted a proactive and engaging environment that promotes tourism for pilgrims and allows them access to historical sites beyond the holy cities, where the Kingdom plays its role in the entire human civilization and its existent impact on the international community. Traveler, travel agencies and tour operators expect the country to start easing rules toward issuing 30-day general tourist visas to those who wish to explore the kingdom's hidden treasures. The hidden treasures including the Nabatean city of Madain Saleh, featuring more than 100 tombs with elaborate facades and interiors with inscriptions dating to late antiquity, the Red Sea coast sites capable of invigorating tourists, the 50 islands between the cities of Umluj and Al Wajh is among the most distinguishable global tourism destination. Tabuk is known for being a hotspot for diving, as well as home to a nearly 500-year-old castle. The port city of Yanbu is another diving hotspot, known for its white-sand beaches and family-friendly resorts, while further south, Abha, the capital city of Aseer Province, is a popular destination for local travelers because of its lush green countryside, national parks, and mud-built castles. The country is reopening cinemas, hosting concerts as well as film and comic festivals, organizing sports tournaments, and is pitching itself as viable leisure and not just religious tourism destination. Saudi Arabia plans to double the number of incoming travelers to 30 million within the next 12 years, increasing its national income revenue. The analytical aspect of the research shows the theoretical method based on which the Ha'il attraction tourism sites and occasions investigated and explored within those of the whole country to shed light on the much they contribute in boasting the booming tourism of Saudi Arabia.

Keywords: Tourism, attractions, Vestige, Heritage, nature-based attractions, human based attractions and Mixed Nature-based and Human-based Attractions.

I. INTRODUCTION

1-1. Tourism

Tourism is the act and process of spending time away from home seeking recreation, relaxation, and pleasure. It includes activities such as sightseeing and camping according to Beaver, Allan (2002) [1]. Tourists travel for fun. There are many reasons why people travel for fun, others travel to learn about the history or

culture of a city or country, or learn about the people who live there, or their ancestors. People from cold places sometimes like to relax in the sun and warmer places and visit beaches. Some people travel to do an activity, which they cannot do at home. People sometimes visit friends and family in another city or country. Finally, some people enjoy a change in scenery. City people go to forests or deserts, and vice versa. Tourism begins in Western Europe in the 17th century. It is distinguished from exploration in that tourists are pleasure-seekers, whereas, exploration face difficulty, danger, and embarrassment. Tourism, however, overlaps with other activities, interests, and processes, including, for example, pilgrimage. This gives rise to shared categories, such as “business tourism,” “sports tourism” and “medical tourism”.

A tourist known to be someone who is vacationing somewhere far from home, but the technical definition of a tourist is anyone who travels to a place outside of his usual residential environment and stays away for at least a night, but no more than one year as R. Goeldner, Charles (2009) [2] explained. The motivation for the trip is irrelevant as the trip could be for business reasons, to visit friends and family, for education, or simply for pleasure. This definition used to compare tourist arrivals among countries internationally, by organizations such as the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). Different definitions sometimes used within a country and within local destinations. China, for example, counts day visitors those not staying overnight in its total tourist numbers, although they also provide standardized numbers to the UNWTO. Many countries separate business travelers from leisure travelers. For international travel overall, leisure travelers generally outnumber business travelers two to one. This, however, varies considerably among destinations. At the opposite end of the tourist trip is the recreation activity. The clearest form of a non-tourism recreation activity is any leisure activity that occurs within someone’s residential home place. The exception would be planning a vacation trip. As recreationists travel further away from home, the same activity might transform into tourism according to McLean DD, Hurd AR, Rogers NB (2005) [3]. In general, recreation activities become tourists’ activities or tourism products when they provided by private sector companies who mostly service non-resident visitors. They consider recreation products when visiting tourists comprise a minority of the clients served.

1-2. The end of oil; a future constraint on travel

One of the most significant issues facing tourism is the increased costs of energy and issues of availability. In January 2005 the Energy Committee at the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences concluded that it is very likely that the world is now entering a challenging period for energy supply, due to the limited resources and production problems now facing conventional easily accessible oil. Nearly 40 percent of the world’s energy provided by oil, and over 50 percent of the latter used in the transport sector. Aviation will be more fuel efficient in the future as a result of technological innovations but possibilities are limited and although energy use per person per km will fall the overall predicted increase in the number and distance of people flying will mean that overall fuel use and amount of emissions will continue to grow. However, over the longer term, completely new energy solutions are required given the decline of cheap oil. Key issues with respect to oil supply outlined as follows; Shortage of oil as the global demand for oil presently growing by almost 2 percent per year according to Alan A. Lew et al (2008) [4] who continue explaining. Finding additional supplies increasingly problematic since most major oil fields well matured. Already 54 of the 65 most important oil-producing countries have declining production and the rate of discoveries of new reserves is less than a third of the rate of consumption as at the end of 2005. Reserves of conventional oil since 1990 two-thirds of the increases in reserves of conventional oil based on increased estimates of recovery from existing fields and only one-third on discovery of new fields. A conservative estimate of discovered oil reserves and undiscovered recoverable oil resources is about 1200 billion barrels, according to the United States Geological Survey; this includes 300 billion barrels in the world’s, as yet unexplored, sedimentary basins. The key role is only in the Middle East and possibly the countries of the former Soviet Union of which role potentially proven reserves of 130 billion barrels significantly increase production rates to compensate for decreasing rates in other countries. As of the end of 2005, Saudi Arabia provided 9.5 million barrels per day, 11 percent of the current global production rate. There are very large hydrocarbon resources, so-called unconventional oil reserves, including gas (c. 1,000 billion barrels of oil equivalent, much of which could be converted to liquid fuels), heavy oil and tar sands (c. 800 billion barrels), oil shales (c. 2,700 billion barrels); and coal. Immediate action on supplies improvements in the search for and recovery of conventional oil as well as the production rate of unconventional oil are required to avoid price spikes, which would lead to instability of the world economy over the next few decades lowering present tourism booming rate. Oil supply is a severe liquid fuels problem and less of a general energy supply problem; 57 percent of the world’s oil consumed in the transport sector which on the other hand affect the tourism industry. Unconventional oil

will significantly extend the length of the hydrocarbon era and its subsequent contributions to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Constraints similar to those imposed on other fossil fuels such as emission controls and CO₂ sequestration will be necessary and provide major challenges for the industry. From a global point of view, transport is the most relevant sector in terms of the long-term environmental sustainability of tourism, accounting for an estimated 75–90 percent of all GHG emissions caused by tourism. Within tourism transport, the share of aviation-related GHG emissions corresponds to about 75 percent of all transport emissions. However, the contribution of GHG emissions from aviation obviously not spread evenly across the world and instead is concentrated in the wealthier countries from where the vast majority of tourists actually come from according to Rubén C. Lois-González, et al (2014) [5]. Heritage referred to something that is handed down from the past, or something that comes or belongs to one by reason of birth, it could as well referred to inherited lot or portion. A visit to these tourism urban heritage and vestiges sites at Jubbah made by the researcher as part of his data collection efforts, figure (1) [6]. Rock drawings of Jabal Umm Sinman at Jubbah, Hail province, Hail region are exemplars of urban heritage, whereas, rock drawings cuts displayed on walls at Al Naif Archeological Palace Museum at Jubbah, Ha'il province, Hail region.



Figure (1) A visit to these tourism urban heritage and vestiges sites at Jubbah made by the researcher [6]

II. THE POTENTIALITY OF TOURISM IN SAUDI ARABIA A KEY TO VISION 2030 PLANS

Based on the Arabian Business, Sunday 21 Jan 2018 the BMI (Business Monitor International) made a report on the potentiality of Saudi Arabia tourism in the year 2018 to come out with various conclusions focusing on the best ways to improve tourism in the kingdom. Both religious and non-religious tourism have potential for significant expansion. The Saudi tourism sector stands to be a major contributor to job creation, as the number of jobs in the tourism sector will increase by almost 50 percent to 1.2 million by 2020. The tourism sector is one of the most promising parts of the kingdom's diversification efforts, and its Vision 2030 plans, with international tourism receipts forecast to grow by 5.8 percent per year between 2018 and 2022. The tourism sector has the potential to become a strong contributor to job creation at a time when the Saudi government is seeking to bring down the unemployment rate for Saudi citizens while reducing reliance on public sector jobs. The religious tourism sector, which already accounts for 40 percent of tourist arrivals in the country, has the potential significant expansion, as additional accommodations, high-speed railways connecting Mecca and Medina and a metro network in Mecca will allow the number of pilgrims visiting the country for Hajj to recover. Saudi Arabia needs to compete with other GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) the group of six countries; Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates especially with those that have much more established tourism sectors such as Bahrain, Oman and the UAE. There is at least one site selected in each region as the

Kingdom has 13 regions, therefore a reasonable number of tourism attraction sites exemplified in this research ranging between *nature-based attractions*, *human based attractions* and *Mixed Nature-based and Human-based Attractions* proving that Saudi Arabia is having a diversified tourism attractions. Saudi Arabia divided into five administrative provinces: Asir Province (Southern), El Hasa Province (Eastern), Hejaz Province (Western), Nejd Province (Central) and Shammar Province (Northern). The Kingdom is divided y into 13 regions: Riyadh Region, Makkah Region, Madinah Region, Eastern Region, Asir Region, Baha Region, The Northern Border Region, Al Jouf Region, Qassim Region, Ha'il Region, Jazan Region, Najran Region and Tabuk Region. Each region is divided into governorates and the region capital, which has the status of municipality (amanah) headed by mayors (umana). There are 118 entities combined. The governorates further subdivided into sub governorates (marakiz). Saudi Arabia has 5 administrative provinces and 13 regions.

The exemplar of at least one selected tourism attraction site begins by Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia, the center of governance, and the first destination for business. It is a city where the history of Saudi Arabia and the ancient heritage of Najd unites. Riyadh is famous for its gardens and natural oases that surround it amid the golden desert and the mountains and plains of Tuwaiq. The capital of Saudi Arabia is one of the largest Arab capitals, the headquarters of decision-makers and financial and business centers where the most important international and Arab conferences and exhibitions are held beside major national festivals and events. It offers a unique tourist experience for shopping lovers and desert adventures and enjoying gardens and natural reserves. It attracts visitors who want to know more about the history and authentic culture of Saudi Arabia according to David E. Long et al (2010) [7]. The various tourism sites visits including; Dir'iyah the Al-Turaif Quarter, Monuments of Dir'iyah, Historic Districts, Wadi Hanifam, Al-Bujairi Quarter, AlMatwiya Garden, Dir'iyah Park, Al-Zawihra Mosque, Dir'iyah's natural Sceneries, events open galleries, and Dir'iyah palaces, which will be the only exemplifying tourism site for the whole of region Dir'iyah. Out of the 11 Riyadh Region's tourism attraction sites, only the extensive valley Hanifa which is *nature-based attraction* will exemplify the whole region. The First exemplar of at least one selected tourism attraction site is, therefore, the extensive valley Hanifa. The extensive valley Hanifa is in the Najd region of the Riyadh Province and runs from northwest to southeast cutting through the Kingdom's capital of Riyadh, which lies to the northeastern side. Visitors can not only marvel at the beauty of this rich valley but also enjoy the Alealb Water Dam, considered the biggest water dam in the north west of Riyadh. It's the perfect spot for picnics and enjoying family time with its many walkways, seating options, palm trees and water cycles, figure (4) [8].



Figure (4) the extensive valley Hanifa, the perfect spot for picnics and enjoying family time [8]

Makkah region is the jewel of the civilizations that highlights the vibrant tall mountains, where the great tourism diversity boast with religious landmarks and popular markets decorated with fragrant past, authentic culture, sophisticated variety. Its mountains represent the spirit of old civilizations that commenced from here. Makkah has varied cultures since it receives millions of visitors of all nationalities every year bringing their own traditions and cultures, Winder, R.B. (2008) [9]. Makkah's 11 tourism attraction sites are; Kaaba, Al-Haram Mosque, Al Bay'ah Mosque, Al Hijra Path, Ghar Thawr, Ghar Hira, Ghar Hira, Um Al Qamari Islands, Ain Zubaida Canal, Al Aseelah Inscriptions, and Al Aziziyah Market. Out of the 11 Makkah region's tourism attraction sites, only the vast Kaaba, Al-Haram Mosque site, Mecca or Makkah Al-Mukarramah which is a *Mixed Nature-based and Human-based Attraction* will exemplify the whole region. The

second exemplar of at least one selected tourism attraction site is the Islamic religious tourism most visited site, the vast Kaaba, Al-Haram Mosque site, Mecca or Makkah Al-Mukarramah. The birthplace and spiritual home of Islam, Saudi Arabia officially the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia or KSA contains the holy Muslim cities of Mecca and Medina, to which all physically and financially able Muslims are required to make a pilgrimage at least once a lifetime if possible Winder, R.B. (2008) [9] explains. Mecca or Makkah Al-Mukarramah, The historical and spiritual heart of Islam, which contains the vast Holy Mosque, parts of which are thousands of years old. Kaaba, the first holiest mosque in Islam stands in the central courtyard of the vast Al-Haram Mosque site in Mecca. It is toward this spot that Muslims turn five times a day in prayer, as it is the goal of every devout Muslim to make a pilgrimage to the Kaaba at least once in a lifetime, figure (5) [10].

Figure (5) the Islamic religious tourism most visited site, the vast Holy Mosque site, Mecca or Makkah Al-Mukarramah [10]

Al-Madina or Al-Madina Al-Munawarah is the site of the Prophet's Mosque as well where he and his family and companions lived and buried. It is the capital of the first caliphate land. Al-Madina is the administrative center of the Madina province, as well as the most important Islamic city. It contains various important Islamic landmarks. Tourism in Madina is unlike any due to its immensely religious undertone. Historical battle sites and landmarks abound here. Al-Madina besides its glorious history, it presents enthralls when visiting its heritage areas amidst architectural beauty. A city of peace and tranquility, where many historic and archaeological sites along with several Islamic historic battle sites found. Madinah is rich in culture, heritage and museums. Vast date plantations and ancient traditional markets (Souks) alongside modern shopping malls and arcades in abundance. The Prophet's Mosque in Al-Madina is a place Muslims from around the world visit while performing Hajj and Umrah, or simply to pray, performing the salat, and visit Prophet Muhammad's tomb as Peters, Francis (1994) [11] affirmed. Some other historical sites for events that took place during the prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, and his companions' time. The Al-Madina region besides its Hajj and Umrah religion tourism is perhaps the most versatile and offers plenty of tourism sites visits. The various tourism sites visits including; The Prophet's Mosque, Mount Uhud, Baqi Al Gharqad, ALola and Mada'in Saleh, The Hejaz railway, Gharamil Al Ula, Makida Village, Al Soor Historical District, Al Madinah Museum, Al-Ula Museum, Mohammed Khulais Al-Harbi Museum, Marine Life in Yanbu, Yanbu Al Bahr Corniche, Madakhil Camp, Royal Commission Beach, Marsa Al Ahlam Beach, Dolphin Beach and Al Mahar Island. The region has stunning scenery from the Red Sea Coast of Yanbu to the lava files and the volcano craters. Out of the 14 Makkah region's tourism attraction sites, only the Prophet's Mosque called Al-Masjid an-Nabawi, the Grand Mosque or Al-Masjid Al Haram the second holiest mosque in Islam which is a *Mixed Nature-based and Human-based Attraction* will exemplify the whole region. The third exemplar of at least one selected tourism attraction site is, therefore, the Prophet's Mosque called Al-Masjid an-Nabawi, the Grand Mosque or Al-Masjid Al Haram, figure (6) [12].



Figure (6) The Prophet's Mosque called Al-Masjid an-Nabawi, the Grand Mosque or Al-Masjid Al Haram at Madinah is the second holiest mosque in Islam [12]

Eastern Region is home to most of the oil production of Saudi Arabia. Located in the eastern part of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia it is like a jewel with bright colors. It boasts of beautiful gardens and sandy beaches on the shores of the Arabian Gulf. It is a combination of emerald green sea, beautiful Corniches and green Oases, in addition to sprawling desert, where sights extend for miles to distant horizons. Dammam is its regional capital, the home to a vast sea, beautiful beaches and excellent fishing spots. It is a favorite destination for tourists from different parts of the Kingdom and from overseas. Dammam considered as one of the most ancient inhabited places due to the discovery of many ancient artifacts in Rakah neighborhood, pointing out that Dammam was a famous place for dwelling long time in the past. The 22 various tourism sites visits in the Eastern Province including; Tarut Castle, Al Rub' Al KHail, Jannah Island, Half Moon Beach, Aali Palace, Intaa' Palace, Al Khobar Corniche, Sunset Beach, King Fahd Park, Coral Island, Happy Land, Cobra Park, Adventure World, Heritage Village, Dolphin Village, Eastern Province Tower, Modon Lake, Water Park-Dammam, Bateel Diver, Scubamaster, Al Assalah Al Arabiya and Al-Ahsa Oasis. Out of the 22 Eastern Province region's tourism attraction sites, only the Al-Ahsa Oasis which is a *Nature-based Attraction* will exemplify the whole region. The third exemplar of at least one selected tourism attraction site is, therefore, the magnificence of Al-Ahsa Oasis, figure (7) [13]. Al-Ahsa Oasis is one of the largest and most famous natural oases in the world with over 30 million palm trees producing a vast daily output of one of the finest dates. Figure (7) the magnificence of the Al-Ahsa Oasis [13]

Due to its lush fertile land and strategic location, the area has been inhabited since prehistoric times, leading it to be nominated as one of the Seven Wonders of the World. Nestled within the tranquil oasis the many archaeological sites showing the area's historical significance. According to Cavendish, Marshall (2007) [14]. Al-Ahsa with many other Saudi unique travel sites will be a local, regional and international travel destination. Al-Ahsa oasis are oasis of dates famous for renowned springs and the greenest. The magnificence of the Al-Ahsa Oasis has resulted in becoming a World Heritage site in 2018. It has also been part of UNESCO Creative Cities Network since December 2015. The listing of Saudi Arabia's Al-Ahsa Oasis as a UNESCO World Heritage site shows that thousands of years of civilization and trading with other nations and many ancient civilizations and kingdoms built on this great land. Henceforth, the Saudi people are ready for another development stage. On the banks of this oasis are many agricultural projects, due to the abundance of water, and freshwater springs. Al-Ahsa acquired its name from the large number of springs it has, for example, Al-'Jawhariah, Um Sab'ah, and Al-Khodoud and sulfur water. It also known for its great weather.

Abha, the Asir Region capital situated 2,270 meters above sea level in the fertile mountains of south-western Saudi Arabia. Abha's mild climate makes it a popular tourist destination for Saudis. The diversity of the terrain reflected in its towering mountains, flat plains, beautiful marine and coastline rich in spectacular scenery in vibrant colors described by David E. Long et al (2010) [7]. The City of Abha includes a large number of monuments and palaces, the various tourism attraction sites including the old souks like the Tuesday market, where you can acquire antiques and precious memorabilia. Abha visitors will return to their homes, bringing with them the most beautiful memories of the coolest trip of fantasy. The 17 various tourism sites visits in the Asir Region including; Rejal Almaa, Al Muftaha Village, Al Olayan Village, Al Muftaha Village, Al Basta District, Al Sawda Park, Abo Khayal Park, Al Sawda Park, Abo Khayal Park, The Green Mountain, Al Jahl Heritage Museum, Al-Namas Museum, Mawrooth Al Ajdad Museum, Codombol Island, Bin Hateel Palace, Asir Aviation Club, Equestrian Club. Out of the 17 Asir's tourism attraction sites, only the Rejal Almaa rock village which is a *Mixed Nature-based and Human-based Attraction* will exemplify the whole region. The fourth exemplar of at least one selected tourism attraction site is, therefore, the Rejal Almaa rock village in the Assir region, figure (8) [15]. The various tourism sites visits including; More than nine Saudi sites anticipating listing by UNESCO among which is Rejal Almaa rock village at the Assir region handed over to the UNESCO World Heritage Center in January 2018, an amazing village in the mountains in form of stone buildings and tower-like houses with multiple stories. The village was a natural corridor linking those coming from Yemen and the travelers to Makkah and Madinah, which makes it an important regional commercial center. The village located 45 km west of the city of Abha, consists of about 60 palaces built from natural stone, clay and wood, and the palaces consists of several floors. It is a tourist destination for those visiting the region of Asir acquiring significance because of the numerous historical, cultural, heritage and natural factors, and the hospitality and culture of its residents. Rejal Almaa witnessed many stages of development. At first came the open theater, which can hold up to 1,000 people, as well as the surrounding areas that are mainly shopping places that display the village's famous products. Green spaces increased by about 7,000 square

meters, in addition to 15 canopies, family gatherings at the village entrance and the lighting of the highway leading to the village.

The Pearl of Resorts is the name given to Al Baha by those natural and heritage wonders acquainted with the city. Those natural and heritage wonders best visited in picturesque Abha, Al-Baha. Al Baha is one of the Kingdom's prime tourist attractions. Al Baha, rich with natural resources and a delightful tourism destination, known for its cool weather and natural diversity. Its charm lies in the architectural heritage, folk arts, crafts, heritage and buildings described by Abdul-Razzaq H. A. (2001) [16]. The beautiful gardens and majestic mountain range of Hijaz take by surprise. Al Baha is small but impressive in its splendor, known for the majestic Sarawat mountain range, which often enveloped in thick fog during the winter. The temperatures are moderate in the Tuhama plains. The various tourism sites visits including; Thee Ain Village, Shada Mountain Park, Raghadan Forest, Al Qimi' Park, Al Shukran Park, Al Baha National Park, Al Khalaf and Al Khulaif, Prince Mishari bin Saud, Prince Mohamed bin, Khaira Forest Park and Al Baha Mountains. Out of the 11 Al Baha's tourism attraction sites, only the Thee Ain which is a *Mixed Nature-based and Human-based Attraction* will exemplify the whole region. The fifth exemplar of at least one selected tourism attraction site is, therefore, the Thee Ain or the Marble Village in the Al Baha region, named after the water spring (Ain) that flows out of the mountain, figure (9) [17]. The village built of rocks on a White Mountain peak including a number of houses and a small mosque. The houses consist of two to seven floors built of stones. The ceilings built from juniper trees brought from the nearby forests, and the balconies decorated with quartz. The water spring (Ain) that flows out of the mountain characterized by the abundance of water and its constant flow. The water flows from the mountaintop amid the rocks to draw a matchless picture. Due to the abundance of water, banana farms are widespread in the village. The bananas characterized by the small size and the sweet taste. The village also known for the cultivation of pepper and some fragrance products such as basil, hala trees and some roses, which the village visitors are keen to get. The Thee Ain Village nicknamed the Marble Village, for the rocky outcrop it built upon. Surprisingly, the houses of the village itself not made of marble, but instead of flake stones similar to

Figure (9) Thee Ain or the Marble Village in the Al Baha region, named after the water spring (Ain) that flows out of the mountain [17]

other villages in the Al Baha region. The gray mountains that tower behind the outcrop and the green fields in the foreground add to the beauty of this picturesque village.

The Northern Borders is a land with rich prominent archaeological and historical sites. Nature reserves and beautiful suburbs fill this region. Northern Borders have been the North Gate of Arabian Peninsula since antiquity; hence hold significant historical and geographical importance to the Kingdom. Its capital Ar'ar is a city with plateaus, valleys and plains, and home to falconry. It is a fertile land for natural vegetation and herbs, which grow wildly in locations such as Awaisi and Bednah Valley in addition surrounded by hills and mountains like Mount Kathifah. The various tourism sites visits including; The Old Emara Palace at Ar'ar, Zubala Archeological Palace, Al Habka Caves, Al Qaa and Al Haitham Pond, Linah Historical Market, Zubaida



at Faid Trail, Al Asfar Road Garden, Ar'ar National Park, King Abdul-Aziz Archeological Palace. Out of the 9 Northern Borders' tourism attraction sites, only the Ar'ar National Park which is a *Human-based Attraction* will exemplify the whole region. The sixth exemplar of at least one selected tourism attraction site is, therefore, Ar'ar National Park, figure (10) [18]. Ar'ar National Park in the city of Ar'ar is one of the most

beautiful parks in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, as it's especially famous for its large size. The park is an entertaining place to go to by families in order to enjoy the landscapes and the natural and healthy weather provided by the park. The children prefer to go to the National Park of Ar'ar because it contains many of the games they prefer, as it is worth mentioning that people from all over the Kingdom come to the park as well as visitors from outside is region being an excellent tourist place in the city, which is easy to reach without any difficulty.



Figure (10) Ar'ar National Park [18]

Al Jouf region is an olive oil resort of Saudi Arabia. The atmosphere usually filled with the sweet aroma of olives. It is the home of a diverse natural environment, and a place of deep cultural heritage and handicrafts. Its strategic location has made it one of the most sought after tourist destinations in the Kingdom. Sakaka, the administrative center of the Al-Jouf Province known for both its biodiversity of natural resources as well as its cultural heritage according to Taher, Mohamed (1998) [19]. It is the home of authentic olives. Due to its geographic location, the town being the capital of Al Jouf region has been the Northwestern Gate of Saudi Arabia since antiquity. It contains huge olive and date farms, which distinguishes it from other Saudi cities. Sakaka is also the home to a large group of famous historical sites that tell the rich history of the region. The folklore songs and dances of Al Jouf have always very distinctive of the region. There is a song for every occasion, especially with the accompanied mono-string Rababah and its mesmeric desert tunes. Folkdances of Al Jouf play a great role in energizing any special occasion. The various tourism sites visits including; Effects of Rajajil or the standing stones of Al-Rajajil, Neighborhood Dera', Dumat Al-Jundal, Souq Domat Al-Jandal, Al-Jouf Museum of Archaeology and Folklore, Omar ibn al-Khattab Mosque, Tree Heritage Museum (Private), Nuweiser Heritage Museum (Private), Al-Wizeman Museum (Private), Nasser Kader Al Arouj Heritage Museum (Private), Nawaf Al-Rashed Museum (Private), Mount Prince, Sisra Well, Valley fall, Hawas Spring, Haditha Village, Kaf Village, Manoah Village, Hawas Village and Palace, Kaf Palace, Palace of the Nabataeans, Al-Saidi Castle, Mard Castle, Zaabal Castle, Moysen Castle, Al Jouf Recreational City, Sindbad Amusement Park, Al Bawadi Park, Al Juba Park, Kara Mountain Park, Prince Fahd Bin Badr Park, Yarmouk Park and the Zoo. Out of the 33 Northern Borders' tourism attraction sites, only the Effects of Rajajil which is a *Nature-based Attraction* will exemplify the whole region. The seventh exemplar of at least one selected tourism attraction site is, therefore, Effects of Rajajil or the standing stones of Al-Rajajil, figure (11) [20]. The mysterious and enigmatic standing stones of Al-Rajajil seems to the visitor from afar that these stone columns are a group of men standing close to each other's. Al-Rajajil sometimes referred to as the Standing Men, or Standing Stones. Their manner of formation and scattering and sometimes in adjacent groups standing in clusters of three-meter tall standing stones. The stones arranged in groups of four or more, joined at the base and leaning outwards at random angles. Some of them have appears to have fallen over. Often called the Stonehenge of Arabia, Rajajil is a mysterious ancient site located on a sandstone terrace some 20 kilometers south of the center of Sakaka, the capital of Al-Jawf Province, and a few kilometers south of Qarah village. It is believed that these granite stone columns may be a place of worship or of timing, where all the columns perpendicular to the sunrise and sunset. Some of them etched with ancient Thamudic graffiti or inscriptions aligned to sunrise and sunset. Al-Rajajil, the men, weigh up to five tons each. They are possibly the oldest human monuments on the peninsula, sometime in the Chalcolithic, or Copper Age, believing that people living in the area where Al Jawf is today laboriously erected 54 groups of rudely trimmed stone pillars. Each group contains two to 19 squared-off pillars. At ground level, there is no immediately obvious placement of the

groups. An archaeological dig over 30 years ago at the base of one set of pillars failed to turn up any bones or votive offerings, suggesting that this was not a religious site. It could represent a landmark for a trade route, as this area was a significant stopover point on the trade route from Yemen to Mesopotamia. One ancient trade route ran from Yemen and parallel to the Red Sea coast through Madinah, AlLola and Mada'in Saleh. It turned northeast to Al Jouf and then north toward Egypt, Damascus and Turkey connected the Arabian Peninsula, Mesopotamia and Syria. The road avoided the harsh sands of the Great Nafud to the south and the less passable terrain of Wadi al-Sirhan (Sarhan) to the north. The stones may have been an indicator of the presence of the crossroad, and the safer route to take. The enigma of the standing stones of the site attracted popular explanations, including stories of fear and superstition, or the understanding that the site had astronomical functions, was an open-air sanctuary. Archeological excavations have revealed that Al-Rajajil is indeed a burial site but its true importance is probably its role in the transition of lifestyles from nomadism towards sedentarism induced by the changes of climate in the Arabian Peninsula. The believed to be burial site and funerary complex, extended along an east-west axis, and featured a number of burials identified by monolithic blocks more than 3 meters long, set into the ground one next to another. The complex known to have been in use over a long period, since many monoliths were broken up into fragments to make burial chambers. About 54 burials and collections of groups of manmade stone columns identified, ranging from single trench tombs to structures containing more than 10 funerary chambers. Excavations have unearthed tools like fan scraper, pen camp sites, insulation material as coating of troughs of the well or watering complex, which have all confirmed the dating of Al-Rajajil at least as early as the 5th millennium BCE and possibly the 6th millennium BCE. Al-Rajajil pottery shards and nearby rock carvings make the area a magnet for archaeologists. Al-Rajajil stones mysteriously erected and archaeologists do not know much about them, such as who built them and what their purpose was.

The Tabuk Region located along the north-west coast of the country, facing Egypt across the Red Sea. Its capital is Tabuk. It is a major destination for marine tourism with many beaches and coasts. Its amazing desert nature, unique locations, and

Figure (11) Effects of Rajajil or the standing stones of Al-Rajajil [20]

cultural heritage landmarks, provide a mix of adventure and leisure tourism for visitors. It is the home of the sea, the snow, the magnificent coastline, sunny islands with luxurious coral reefs. The history of the Tabuk region dates back to 5,000 years ago. The region identified with the land of Madyan. The region is rich in antiquities and archaeological sites such as petroglyphs, inscriptions, forts, palaces, walls, Syrian-Egyptian pilgrimage route. The various tourism sites visits include; The Prophet's Mosque, Maliha, Mu'edhim Castle, Sheq, Sukkar Springs, Mguena Beach, Kiyal Valley, Ancient Castle, Snafer Islad, Ras Al Sheikh Humaid, Desert Sites, Tabuk Islands, Tabuk Beaches. In addition to Tabuk Castle, Taima, Parks, Traditional Souks, Alwadi AlAkhdar, Mud House Museum, Al-Kenani Heritage, Spring of Duba, Maritime Heritage, Neom, Umm Lajj and the remains of the Hejaz Railway line. Out of the 25 Tabuk Region's tourism attraction sites, Umm Lajj or Umluj and Al-Wajh which is a *Nature-based Attraction* will exemplify the whole region. The eighth exemplar of at least one selected tourism attraction site is, therefore, is the Lagoons of 50 pristine islands, situated between the cities of Umm Lajj or Umluj and Al-Wajh on the west coast tourism site, figure (12) [21].

For the unveiling an ambitious plan for tourism revolution to make Saudi Arabia an excellent travel destination, "The Red Sea" tourism project announced in August 2017. Envisioned as a resort built across a lagoon of 50 pristine islands, the ambitious tourism project situated in one of the world's last natural hidden treasures between the cities of Umm Lajj or Umluj and Al-Wajh on the west coast. Umm Lajj is located in Tabuk region. It is an old oasis comprising a number of antiquities dating back to pre-Islamic era, like the relics and inscriptions that date back to the eighth century BC, and other artifacts dating back to the early Islamic periods. Rehabilitation Works begin on the resort in 2019, with an initial phase that includes expanding a domestic airport and developing luxury hotels and housing. That first phase expected to be complete by 2022. The project for the development of the Red Sea includes the creation of infrastructure, the construction of hotels and entertainment complexes, as well as resorts of the highest level, not only on the coast of the Red Sea, but also on 50 pristine islands. The new project promises to become one of the most interesting tourist destinations.

The Red Sea project is committed to development. As a rare treasure, it promises to be an exciting place that meets the growing demands of today's luxury traveler for authentic, undiscovered destinations.



Figure (12) Lagoons of 50 pristine islands, situated between the cities of Umm Lajj or Umluj and Al-Wajh on the west coast [21]

Al-Qassim region is rich in heritage, nature and traditional crafts. Its geographic location has made it a hub of diverse cultures and a variety of festivals. Buraydah, the capital of the province amazed with its diversity, history and culture as described by Mackey, Sandra (2002) [22]. The Buraydah Museum encompasses the marvelous collection of historical artifacts. The various tourism sites visits including; Al Shanana Tower, Antarah's Rock, Al Qassim National Park, Al Khabar Heritage, The Handicraft Center, Al Musawkaf Traditional , Al Khobara Heritage, Falayeh Unaizah, Antariyat in Qusaiba, Falayeh Unaizah, Al Rajhi Farms, Al Sabbakh Farms, Al Habardi Farm, Al Zunaidi Farm, Al Ghazal Resort, Mohamed Al Saleem and Al Qassim Flying Club. Out of the 17 Al-Qassim's tourism attraction sites, only Ash Shanana Tower which is a *Human-based Attraction* will exemplify the whole region. The eighth exemplar of at least one selected tourism attraction site is, therefore, Ash Shanana Tower, figure (13) [23]. Ash Shanana Tower reflects the authenticity of the Najdi architecture. It is a cone-shaped and 27 m high with a round base of 21 m diameter. This conical tower has become a mini-tourist landmark. The tower symbolizes the heroic role that Al-Rass residents played in the unity of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Built as a watchtower, the structure is largely made of a mixture of mud and straws from palm trees. The mixture is believed to have been left to dry under the sun following which one layer after another was added to complete the tower. Historians have multiple opinions on when the tower was actually built with reports ranging from anywhere in between 1699 AD to 1817 AD around 12th century AH. Based on the estimation it is at least 200 years old. The tower built for surveillance. There have been so many battles fought around it, but has somehow managed to survive through them all. Most of these battles were between the Saudi State and the allies of the Ottomans. During one such battle, the tower was under massive artillery fire and it is believed that due to this it has reduced from its original height of 45 meters to the nearly 27 meters that it stands as of today. The last of such battles to take place was in 1904 AD between King Abdul-Aziz's forces and his adversaries from central Arabia. Despite all the battles that happened around it, Ash Shanana tower has literally stood the test of time and it stands with stories of numerous battles to tell to tourists.



Figure (13) Ash Shanana Tower [23]

Jizan Region called the nature's treasure and the Pearl of the South and a place of generosity, kindness, and finest hospitality. The Sea, the islands, the mountain and the plains are the basics of diversity in Jazan. It has high mountains with perennial green cover and including spectacular waterfalls that create most beautiful lakes that are no less splendid than the pristine beaches in the islands nearby. It is the second smallest, after Bahah, region of Saudi Arabia. It stretches 300 km along the southern Red Sea coast, just north of Yemen. The various tourism sites visits including; Farasan Islands, Idrisids Houses, AlRifai House, AlJarmal House, The Ottoman castle, Ibrahim Muftah Museum, Al Qandal Forest and Hasees Gulf. Out of the 8 Jizan's tourism attraction sites, Farasan Islands which is a *Nature-based Attraction* will exemplify the whole region. The ninth exemplar of at least one selected tourism attraction site is, therefore, Farasan Islands, figure (14) [24]. The Farasan Islands are a large coral-island group in the Red Sea, which are over 100 islands in the Red Sea, all belonging to Saudi Arabia. The islands are located some 40 km offshore from Jizan, the capital of Jizan region, and at the eastern side of it in the far southwestern part of the country. It is the largest island of the archipelago as the others include Sajid Island and Zufaf Island. Farasan Island has spaces of coral reefs and rich land, marine and plant life. There is a variety of trees, such as Rhizophora, Acacia tortilis, impatiens, Christ's thorn jujube and arak. The islands are marine sanctuaries, protected areas and home to the extinct Arabian gazelle and, in winter, migratory birds from Europe such as Osprey, pink-backed pelican, seagull, heron, Sooty Falcon, and some kinds of European Turtledoves. Oceanic animals include manta rays, whale sharks, and several species of endangered sea turtles especially the green and hawksbill turtles, dugongs, and several species of dolphins and whales with occasional visits by others such as orcas. The Arabian gazelle is a species of gazelle known from the Arabian Peninsula specially the single lectotype specimen of which the 2013 genetic study of the lectotype specimen revealed that skull and skin belong to two distinct lineages of the mountain gazelle found in the Islands. The Islands tourism attraction site have plenty of virgin beaches where migratory birds often visit and where visitors freely transported. The islands considered among the best diving spots in the world where the islands surrounded by original turquoise waters. The have more than just private beaches and sand for visitors to enjoy. There are bird watching paradise, mangroves and endemic Gazelle species in addition to the numerous historical sites on the main island.



Figure (14) the Farasan Islands [24]

Najran city is the administrative center of the Najran Province, a seat of history and civilization holding rich and enduring historical diversity, where historical buildings, scenic nature, nature reserves, theme parks, gardens and traditional market places create a unique tourism diversity. Najran city is full of incredible examples of archaeology, history and civilization, providing visitors endless attractions and activities. However, the thrill not confined to only this. The site of spacious landscape and innumerable sand dune formations in the nearby Rub-el-KHali desert, (Great Empty Quarter of Saudi Arabia) is extremely captivating. Nature reserves, parks and entertainment cities will make you forget the time as you move about them. Najran is truly a land of nature, history, heritage and biodiversity. The various tourism sites visits including; the archaeological city of Al-Ukhdood, Almanjam Heritage Village, Hima Wells, the Dancing Fountain, the Great Nafud Desert, AlJanabi Market, Najran Dam, Almashkah Heritage Village, ALLijam Heritage Village, Kasrash Village, Urug Bani Ma'arid National Park, Saqam Forest, Najran Emara Palace, Almanjam Heritage Village, King Abdul Aziz Park and King Fahd Park. Out of the 16 Najran Region's tourism attraction sites, Al-Ukhdud which is a *Nature-based Attraction* will exemplify the whole region. The tenth exemplar of at least one selected tourism attraction site is, therefore, the archaeological city of Al-Ukhdood, tourism site contains many sculptures, wonderful drawings, Sabaeans and Kofi's Calligraphist, figure (15) [25]. The name Al-Ukhdud means 'the ditch', 'the trench', or 'the groove' mentioned in the Holy Quran as the site of a massacre of the believers, the Christians in 107BH (525). Dhu Nuwas laid siege to Al-Ukhdud, when the town capitulated, the inhabitants given an impossible choice of either convert or die. They chose the latter and thousands thrown into a burning ditch. Al-Ukhdud believed to be the place that referred to in the Holy Quran in Surah Al Burooj, chapter 85, which praises a group of believers who were burnt alive by the "People of the Ditch" (in Arabic "Ashab Al-Ukhdood") because they refuse to renounce to their believe in God. Cursed were the People of the Ditch. Of fire fed with fuel. When they sat by it. Moreover, they witnessed what they were doing against the believers. In addition, they had no fault except that they believed in Allah, the Almighty, worthy of all praise, to whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth, Allah is Witness over everything, Al Burooj (85:4-9). The ditch, which may be a defensive moat is still visible, and archaeologists have found evidence of burning which supports the written accounts of the tragedy. The Frankincense Trade Route from Yemen passed through Al-Ukhdud, the town now known as Najran on its way to Makkah, Madinah and then on to Palestine, Syria, the Arabian Gulf and Mesopotamia. Cities along the main caravan routes were able to levy taxes on the merchants, and in this way, they became rich. At its peak, Al-Ukhdud was one of the most important trading cities in Southern Arabia and its wealth demonstrated by the high quality construction of the main buildings. At Al-Ukhdud remain substantial areas of dressed stone, and ornate bronze drain spouts. Al-Ukhdud declined in importance when traders discovered how to sail to India on the monsoon winds. Around the same time, there was a decline in demand for frankincense when Christianity became the state religion of the Roman Empire in 235 BH (395).



Figure (15) the archaeological city of Al-Ukhdood tourism site contains many sculptures, wonderful drawings, Sabaeans and Kofi's Calligraphist [25]

III. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Saudi Arabia has great potential for the international tourism industry not only restricted to Hajj and Umrah as religious tourism making up the bulk of visitors to the country. The Kingdom is succeeding in boasting the booming tourism planning to become an excellent tourist destination and a tourist hotspot by first implementing a "Tourism Law" in 2014 with a focus to add structure to the industry, and create a platform to attract both domestic and international tourists both within cities and other destinations such as beaches,

islands and deserts allowing any person, with the assistance of tour guides, who must be Saudi nationals, including foreign entities and individuals to carry out tourism activities. The Kingdom continues to create and implement proactive steps to diversify from an oil-based economy which is already globally diminishing, making the tourism industry a very wise option especially as supported by the political, economical and social will spearheaded by the government via The Saudi Commission for Tourism & National Heritage (SCTH). From all the above for the campaign to enrich tourism to succeed people in their different government and private sectors must feel or anticipate to touch the social and economic benefits of tourism. People of different age; children, teenagers, adults and old must feel and touch the benefits of tourism. For people of different government and private sectors and those of different age groups to benefit from tourism beneficiaries being government and private should provide attraction sites in their three different forms; *nature-based attractions*, *human based attractions* and *Mixed Nature-based and Human-based Attractions*. Even though there many, but still more need to be provided. The research shows the diversification of such attractions varying from religious to cultural and recreational lacking the entertainment attraction that requires much effort to provide despite the religious rejection facing this aspect even though the government is trying its best to look for solutions. Stimulation, encouragement and locally, regionally and internationally trading sessions to be provided for those working in the tourism sector such as the cadres of the Saudi Commission for Tourism & National Heritage (SCTH), hotel and motel owners, restaurants and coffee owners especially those providing traditional cuisines, folklore and traditional handcrafts products sellers in traditional souks, private museums and tourism guides. People working to boost tourism help in booming the tourism industry should be focused on in the media by creating TV, Radio and all other Social Media tourism programs specially those managed, directed and followed by the government. These people should be called upon these public media to tell experience, show contributions and reflect economical and social benefits of tourism in their daily life. The Culture and significance of tourism should be incorporated in school curricula as early as the nursery, primary, intermediate and secondary level reaching to university level where tourism programs should be encouraged and career opportunities for graduates should be abundantly provided in SCTH, the various tourism attraction sites both the at the present and the up coming future promising projects as the New Future (NEOM) project. Research papers shedding light on the tourism industry and on the different ways and means to boost the industry should be encouraged and most significantly seeks the implementation of their realistic and practical recommendations at the various aspects ranging from religious to cultural and recreational focusing on the entertainment attraction that the Kingdom so much lacking. The different media should provide, create, encourage TV, Radio and all other Social Media tourism programs specially those managed, directed and followed by the government in form of documentaries, series, film shows, stage shows, drama, open theatre performances, and all other means possible to spread tourism culture. Food ball tournaments should as well play a vital role by holding such activities at local, regional and international level at the different tourism attraction sites and if possible constructing new stadia, theatre stages and play grounds at these tourism attraction sites available everywhere in the different parts of the Kingdom.

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