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# The Role of Religious Tourism Projects in Reducing Unemployment in Holy Karbala (A Case Study of some Sections of the Holy Hussein Shrine)

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## ABSTRACT

Economists with different orientations have emphasized the importance of the role of the human element and consider it one of the most essential elements of production. Therefore, most countries in the world, with varying degrees of economic progress, have paid attention to building and forming human capital, developing it, and acquiring knowledge, experience, and skills, which leads to increasing job opportunities, reducing unemployment, and redistributing income. The national and Iraqi economies suffered from unemployment challenges before and after 2003, and there are factors and reasons for the increase in unemployment rates.

Based on this, our research focuses on building human capital formation by investing in the human element in various ways, including investing in tourism projects and their importance, especially in the holy city of Karbala.

**KEYWORDS:** Building and forming human capital, developing it, acquiring knowledge, experience, skills, which leads to increasing job opportunities, reducing unemployment, redistributing income.



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## INTRODUCTION

### Problem of the Study

The research problem is of utmost importance, as it delves into the sources of the irrational economic behavior adopted by the ruling elites in developing countries. This behavior pertains to the methodology of investing in human capital and employment policies, which often deviate from the references of economic theory and its standards governing the market. The issue of unemployment, a severe challenge to sustainable tourism in Iraq and all its various sectors, exacerbates this problem. This chronic structural imbalance in the labor force's structure, inconsistent with the different production structures, has had the most significant effects on the emergence of the phenomenon of unemployment.

### Hypothesis of the Study

The research hypothesis holds promising potential. It suggests that tourism projects at the Holy Imam Hussein Shrine can play a positive role in solving the problem of unemployment and reducing its aggravation. This hypothesis, if proven, could pave the way for significant improvements in Iraq's economic landscape.

### Aim of the Study

- 1- Study the concept and types of unemployment and the reasons for its aggravation in Iraq.
- 2- Study the concept, importance, types of tourism projects and their objectives.
- 3- Study and analysis of the departments of the Holy Imam Hussein Shrine and their role in recruitment and employment.

## METHOD

The research methodology has been meticulously designed to achieve the research objectives. It incorporates analytical, descriptive, mathematical, and analogical methods as important tools in special analyses. This comprehensive approach, coupled with an inductive approach reinforced by a comparative method for data expressing the selected variables, represents the course of the role of

religious tourism projects in reducing unemployment in Holy Karbala. This thorough methodology instills confidence in the research process and the potential for insightful findings.

## Chapter Two

### A Theoretical Framework for the Research

First: The concept of the tourism project:

1. Definition of the project: There are many definitions of the project in general, and the difference between them is formal in the name, including:

- It is a commercial, industrial, service, craft, or professional activity or activity, and it has a set of processes that organize the project upon completion of its implementation, achieve specific purposes, and have a budget (prepared in advance). Every activity in the project is considered to have a life cycle, especially a specific beginning and end (Abdul Maqsood: 2006 AD, 11).

- It is defined as an organized human activity established to accomplish a specific goal in a particular period with a specific beginning and end and using various resources, including human resources, technical supplies, energy and primary resources, financial resources, or any necessary data or information included in the achievement process (Al-Fadl: 2009 AD). , 19).

- It is also known as an effort to achieve a specific, one-time achievement of a unique nature that is not repeated in the same way, accomplished within a particular period, and having a specific financial budget (Salama: 2020, 33).

- The investment project is an idea or a proposal to invest money in a specific investment opportunity, which aims to achieve an economic or social return. It includes establishing a project that has a beginning and is being implemented or expanding and enlarging an existing project (Al-Fadl: M.S., 20).

2. The goal of the tourism project: Profitability is considered one of any project's most critical main goals. The profitability of any project is defined as: (the difference between sales proceeds, production costs, and expenses). Still,

although achieving profitability is considered necessary for the project's continuation, development, and growth, it is not considered the goal. The only one, and we find many other goals that are of interest to public and private projects, including:

- Achieving the maximum possible sales will allow the project to gain wide fame and great confidence in the markets.
- Established for public state utility purposes, which produces essential services, infrastructure, and superstructures.
- It was created to reflect the civilized and cultural aspects of the country and to stand at the same distance as developed countries.
- Benefiting from developed tourism countries in developing projects in terms of work and modern methods in education and training by sending workers on scientific and training missions to gain new experiences and develop their competencies at work.
- The goal of investment spending for the existing project may be to protect its main activity from the risk of stopping production.

3. The importance of the tourism project: The importance of the tourism project lies in the fact that it is one of the most important fundamental and practical pillars that make up the economic, social, and political fabric of any country and, to the extent of the integrity of these pillars and the cohesion of their fabric, the national economy of any country will be vital and have high growth rates (Al-Mansour: 2005, 44). .)

The project also plays an important role in the lives of individuals and groups in various aspects of life. It is the responsibility of projects to perform various productive and service activities and thus achieve the economic well-being of society.

Importance is considered a basic system for performing specific activities and functions such as planning, economic and social feasibility study, financing, production, marketing, selling, and feedback, and then achieving its goals (Al-Mansour: M.S., 37).

According to this principle, the tourism project is one of the most important and broadest human activities. It begins, grows, and develops with the development of societies and expanding

life's horizons and prosperity.

Tourism projects have significantly spread due to the excessive expansion in international trade and international trade, the openness of the world to each other through the technological and information revolution, the explosive technical progress in communications, and the codification of global free trade agreements. Through these projects, the country's wealth has become apparent. (cultural, heritage, civilizational, historical, natural, religious, and many others). Tourism also has fundamental pillars based on solid infrastructure, natural or human attractions, or individuals capable and willing to serve their guests, and this requires excellent efforts by the public sector. And private, to create tourism projects that give it the character of a tourist state or an encouraging destination (Lattin: 1998, 65).

After tourism projects have become a tangible reality that we live in at the level of practical life, they are a workplace that can accommodate a large number of people in various countries of the world. They are considered a source of income, wealth, savings, and investments through the provision of goods and services, and they are the focus of ambition for individuals of all categories: society, especially young people, and business people who seek to achieve their economic and social goals.

4. Types of tourism projects: Tourism projects are diverse and vary in general between productivity and service, and this diversity differs from one country to another, depending on what that country has of tourism components and supporting capabilities in terms of (geographical location, climate, and terrain, seas, rivers, etc.) (Chen, Clarke 2007 AD, 31), and there are several types of tourism projects depending on their nature, including:

- Archaeological, heritage, and religious components.
- Hotels of all types: (furnished apartments, hotels, resorts).
- Restaurants of all kinds.
- Large and small stadiums, according to sports styles.
- Tourist villages.
- Shopping centers.

- Museums.
- Parks.
- Travel and tourism offices and companies.

5. The legal structure of projects: Projects have many legal forms, and among these forms are (Al-Mansour: M.S., 39-42):

- Capital return: It includes:
  - A - Private projects: They are financed with private capital, such as (individual projects, private companies, financial companies, joint-stock companies, and cooperative companies).
  - B - Public projects are managed, supervised, and funded by governments focusing on vital public benefit sectors.
  - C—Joint projects: They are financed jointly by the public and private sectors, according to the percentages agreed upon in accordance with the applicable laws.
  - D—International projects: They are managed, supervised, and financed jointly between two or several countries linked by common interests, and the cooperation of these countries with each other has political, economic, social, environmental, and tourism necessities.
- Projects by size: These include projects (large, medium, and small).
- Projects in terms of activity: These include activities (industrial, agricultural, commercial, and service).

Second: The concept of unemployment:

The high unemployment rate is a significant issue for many nations. There is a correlation between this and the number of people who can work but cannot do so because they cannot find employment that pays enough to meet their most fundamental requirements. The rate of unemployment and the percentage it represents are determined by our familiarity with the causes of unemployment and the best methods for addressing it. There is a wide range of unemployment rates, each with unique characteristics, and each significantly impacts economies worldwide.

1. Unemployment: What is it? A person is considered unemployed if they do not have a job and have made an effort to find one within a specific time frame, as well as if they are not working while actively seeking work or waiting to return to it (Zaki: 1997, 23). Something

particular has happened to him, like being briefly laid off from work and then back again or hoping to get a job soon.

Disability is also described as being unable to accomplish something for a certain amount of time while being of working age and having the ability and desire to do so (Shiha: 2000 AD, 24).

- Another way of looking at it is the incapacity to make money, which may be due to inherent characteristics like being young or female or external factors like being too busy trying to learn all there is to know. The same holds for the hard worker who can't make ends meet the conventional, lawful way and for the wealthy individual who has plenty of money but needs to figure out what to do with it (Ibn Abidin: 2011 AD, 670).

2. The Unemployed: What Is It? Everyone capable of working wants a job, looks for one, and is willing to take pay at the going rate, yet nobody is hiring, according to the International Labor Organization (Al-Hajjar and Rizq: 2010 AD, 322). People fall into this category if they are newly jobless or if they were compelled to work but then had to quit the workforce for whatever reason.

A person is considered to be jobless if they can work and actively seek employment.

3. Different forms of joblessness: Different types of unemployment are defined by the factors contributing to their formation. The agencies I work with:

- Irregular joblessness: Unemployment caused by changes in the economy's aggregate demand. When aggregate demand drops, some workers leave their jobs, and the unemployment rate rises. This happens occasionally in the economy. Nevertheless, when aggregate demand increases again, this proportion falls (Al-Hayali): 2011 AD, 12.

- A while people take short breaks from their jobs to switch gears or while in school; it's called frictional unemployment (Al-Hayali: M.S., 12). Both job searchers and company owners need more information to address this unemployment. When an employee moves to a new place or changes careers, it takes time and poor communication between the person

offering the job and the one seeking it. According to Al-Hajjar and Rizk (M.S., 326), this issue is sometimes handled by direct interactions, newspaper advertising, and social media.

- Structural unemployment: This type of unemployment arises when specific professional and practical fields experience growth and development. As a result, technological machines can perform the tasks employees used to do in establishments. However, there is a decrease in the need for employees with the necessary skills to handle these new developments. The good news is that this kind of unemployment is curable via education and training tailored to the needs of the modern, productive economy (Al-Hayali: M.S., 13).

The first kind of unemployment is known as "blatant" or "open" unemployment, and it occurs when a significant portion of the population is unable to work while having the skills and willingness to do so (Qanqalji: 2015, 9). As a result of hiring more people than are needed, a phenomenon known as "disguised unemployment" occurs. In this form of unemployment, workers are not necessarily out of work; instead, they are able to be let go without negatively impacting output, and they are often paid more than what they contribute to the production process (Al-Hajjar and Rizk: MS, 328).

Workers' hesitation or outright rejection of participating in production or doing specific tasks due to negative societal perceptions is known as behavioral unemployment (Al-Hajjar and Rizq: M.S., 326).

- Imported unemployment affects a segment of the local workforce in a certain industry due to the exclusion or substitution of workers from outside the area. This issue could affect the economy.

1. Reasons people are out of work: According to a political website (2018), a cluster of factors contribute to the growth of the jobless rate.

- Human migration from rural areas to urban centers is a social phenomenon with far-reaching consequences, one of which is the escalation of urban unemployment rates.

- The appearance of changes in the local economic situation in nations is a component that leads to a cluster of monetary problems; the absence of job provision is the most notable of these, thus highlighting the monetary hardships produced by these changes.

Unemployment is becoming more widespread since there aren't enough jobs to go around compared to the number of people actively seeking employment.

The availability of opportunities with qualified personnel highlights the dissatisfaction felt by job searchers since the criteria for these positions sometimes line up with people's educational backgrounds or work experiences. Provide occupations during particular seasons of the year in which persons labor during a period that finishes when it ends, examples of which are agricultural vocations.

**A Practical Framework for Research**

First: Analysis of the employment of human cadres in Karbala Governorate

We mention some jobs and unemployment statistics for the city of Karbala, as follows:

**Table No. (1) Unemployment rate for individuals aged 15 years and over by gender.**

Unemployment Rate%		Variable
Female	Male	
%18,8	%5,4	Karbala Governorate

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on: Ministry of Planning - Central Bureau of Statistics, Poverty Survey, Prediction and Evaluation in Iraq for the year 2017-2018, Trade Statistics, 2023, p. 42  
The above table clearly shows that the

unemployment rate among residents aged 15 years and over in the city of Karbala for both sexes is 24.2%, noting that the unemployment rate in urban areas is higher than its rates in rural areas.

**Table No. (2): Distribution of individuals in wage labor aged ten years and over by sector**

Total	Private Sector	Public Sector	Government Sector	Variable
%100	%43,4	%0,6	%56	Karbala Governorate

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on: Ministry of Planning - Central Bureau of Statistics, Poverty Survey, Prediction and Evaluation in Iraq for 2017-2018, Trade Statistics, 2023, p. 49.

The data presented in the table above underscores the significant role of the government sector in Karbala's economic development and job creation. With an employment rate of 56% among individuals aged ten years and over, the government sector is a

critical driver in moving the city's dormant economies and overcoming the challenges of backwardness and unemployment.

Second: Analysis of the employment of human cadres in the departments of the Holy Imam Hussein Shrine

Developing tourism projects and their departments is a way to reduce unemployment. The Holy Shrine of Hussein has accommodated a large number of human cadres in its departments. as follows:

**Table No. (3) Human cadres for the departments of the Holy Imam Hussein Shrine**

Total percentage	Rate	Number	Human Resources	Sections of the Holy Hasaniyya Shrine	N.
12,4	86,2	438	Associates	The city of the Master of Guardians (peace be upon him) for visitors	1
	4,9	25	Amounts		
	8,8	45	Volunteers		
	100	508	The Total		
25,7	33,4	352	Associates	The city of Imam Hussein (peace be upon him) for visitors	2
	47,5	500	Volunteers		
	19	200	Volunteers		
	100	1052	The Total		
18,1	29,2	217	Associates	Host of Imam Hussein, peace be upon him	3
	70,7	525	Volunteers		
	100	742	The Total		

13,4	90,9	500	Associates	Department of machinery	4
	9	50	Volunteers		
	100	550	The Total		
6,8	100	280	Associates	Maintenance Department	5
	100	280	The Total		
23,4	53,1	510	Associates	Department of Foreign Service Affairs	6
	46,8	450	Volunteers		
	100	960	The Total		
100	100	4092	Total		

In 2015, the number of hotels classified as tourism reached 425, accounting for the highest percentage compared to the total number of hotels in Iraq, 52.4%. The number of workers in these hotels also saw a steady increase, reaching 3,146 in 2015, compared to the total number of workers in hotels in Iraq, 42.1%. This hotel industry growth reflects the tourism sector's potential in Karbala.

We note that the Holy Imam Hussein Shrine, with its total number of human resources at 4,092, plays a significant role in the employment landscape of the Holy Karbala Governorate. This number represents 0.29% of the total population of the governorate, which is 1,384,941. The governorate has 602 hotels and other tourism projects, employing 1,386 workers. The Shrine's ability to attract more human resources than the rest of the hotels and tourism projects, at a rate of 33.8%, underscores its importance as a critical player in the tourism industry of the governorate.

Third: Results of hypothesis testing

Through the above percentages and analyses, which we reached through statistics published by the official authorities, we conclude that the tourism projects at the Holy Imam Hussein Shrine played a high role as one tourism organization among 602 in the governorate, with a worker employment rate of 33.8%.

This makes us accept the research hypothesis as it is consistent with the reality of religious tourism in terms of unemployment and employment.

### CONCLUSION

The significance of tourism projects in Karbala Governorate cannot be overstated. These projects are pivotal in creating job opportunities, reducing unemployment, and employing a significant portion of the workforce. As one of the 602 tourism organizations in the governorate, we boast a worker employment rate of 33.8%. The city of Karbala, with its religious character and high tourist demand, presents a promising landscape for tourism growth. This is further underscored by the abundance of tourist organizations in the governorate, which is a testament to its superiority in the percentage of hotels and tourism projects compared to other Iraqi governorates.

The future demand for labor in Iraq is not just significant; it's urgent. The destruction of infrastructure and the potential influx of foreign companies for reconstruction and investment will create a pressing need for skills, competencies, and specializations. This underscores the crucial role of certificate holders in Iraq's reconstruction and investment efforts.

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