

17 - 19 October 2025

Lyon , France

Exploring the Impact of Expatriate Workers on Saudi Arabias's Inbound Tourism Demand

EMAN Alanzi , Eman Alanzi

Princess Nourah bint Abdulrahman University (PNU), Saudi Arabia

Victoria University, Melbourne, Australia

Abstract

This study examines tourism demand in Saudi Arabia (2000–2019) using dynamic panel regression with the ARDL approach, focusing on top tourist-origin countries. Findings show that income in origin countries influences tourism types differently: Total tourism is income-sensitive, religious tourism is necessity-driven, and business travel remains largely unaffected. Higher income in Saudi Arabia enhances demand through improved infrastructure and services. Lower travel costs boost overall tourism, though business travel is less price sensitive. Human rights and national prosperity significantly drive religious and visiting friends and relatives tourism. Expatriate workers play a key role by maintaining transnational ties and supporting religious and business travel, especially for events like Hajj and Umrah. Granger causality tests reveal bidirectional links between expatriates and both total and religious tourism, with unidirectional effects from VFR and business tourism to expatriate numbers. These insights inform sustainable and targeted tourism strategies aligned with Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 goals

Keywords: Expatriate Workers, Panel Data, Ardl, Tourism Demand, Saudi Arabia