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Authors	Balkhy, Duaa
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Department of Architecture
College of Architecture and Design
Effat University
Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

Heritage Tourism Management Approaches The Case of Al Ula, Saudi Arabia

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
Effat University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of
MASTER OF SCIENCE IN URBAN DESIGN

Prepared by | Duaa Balkhy

Supervised by | Prof. Mohamed Kashef
Professor of Urban Design

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Effat University
Jeddah, Saudi Arabia
Deanship of Graduate Studies and Research

This thesis, written by Duaa Hashim Balkhy under the direction of her thesis supervisor and approved by her thesis committee, has been presented to and accepted by the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research on 23/12/2021, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Urban Design.

Thesis Exam Committee

Thesis Supervisor

Name:- Prof. Mohamad Kahef

Signature:  8/3/2022

External Member

Name: Dr. Abdulrahman A. Majrashi

Title: Prof at Umm Al Quraa University

Signature: *on his behalf*  8/3/2022

Internal Member

Name: Prof. Asmaa Ibrahim

Title: Professor, Effat University

Signature:  8/3/2022

Department Chair

Name:- Prof. Asmaa Ibrahim

Signature:  8/3/2022

Dean of the College

Name: Prof. Asmaa Ibrahim

Signature:  8/3/2022

~~Vice-Dean of Graduate Studies & Research~~

Name:- Dr. Mady Mohamed

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أعضاء لجنة التحكيم

المشرف على الرسالة
الإسم: أ.د. محمد كاشف

التوقيع:

8/3/2022

رئيس القسم
الإسم: أ.د. أسماء إبراهيم

التوقيع:

8/3/2022

عميدة الكلية
الإسم: أ.د. أسماء إبراهيم

التوقيع:

8/3/2022

عميد الدراسات العليا والبحث العلمي
الإسم: د. ماضي محمد

التوقيع:

8/3/2022

العضو الخارجي
الإسم: أ. عبد الرحمن مجرشي

جامعة أم القرى

التوقيع:

on his behalf

8/3/2022

العضو الداخلي

الإسم: أ.د. أسماء إبراهيم

أستاذ - جامعة عفت

التوقيع:

8/3/2022

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Acknowledgment

The completion of this thesis in specific and the program in general was due to the enormous support and encouragement of so many of my friends, family and mostly my supervisor.

Dr. Mohamed Kashef, who held the position of both family and friend during my years in the program. He was more than just an educator but my mentor and a friend when needed. Without his support and encouragement I would not have been able to get to where I am, with my many attempts of quitting, he was the one that believed in me enough to push me through it and refused to let me give up, for that I am forever grateful.

I enrolled in the program for my son, Azil Sherbeny who was my greatest motivator to challenge myself. Nothing in this world matters other than making him proud and being the best mother I can be, he made me dream big because he deserves nothing less.

No words can reflect the gratitude I have for my husband, Ahmed Sherbeny, who sacrificed so much for me to be able to complete this thesis and earn my master's degree, his support, his faith in my capabilities, and his patience with me when I was under stress and not at my best can not be repaid. I will forever cherish everything you have done and endured for my success.

A great thank you is due to my sisters, Fedaa Hassan and Suha Saleh, you made it all possible, you are and will always be the friends I chose to be my family. Without being asked you were always there, opening your homes and your hearts, your love kept me strong enough to keep going all those late nights and early mornings wouldn't have been as productive without you.

To my sister Alaa Balkhy, all I can say is you might be my little sister but I look up to you, you're my inspiration, I love you.

Of course, so many others deserve great appreciation including my classmates who became more than a family to me, I can't imagine going through what we did with any other group. I love you all and thank you for everything this wouldn't have been possible without each and every single one of you

Duaa Balkhy

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أعضاء لجنة التحكيم

المشرف على الرسالة
الإسم: أ.د. محمد كاشف

رئيس القسم
الإسم: أ.د. أسماء إبراهيم

التوقيع:

التوقيع:

العضو الخارجي
الإسم: أ. عبد الرحمن مجرشي
جامعة ام القرى
التوقيع:

عميدة الكلية
الإسم: أ.د. أسماء إبراهيم

التوقيع:

عميد الدراسات العليا والبحث العلمي
الإسم: د. ماضي محمد

العضو الداخلي
الإسم: أ.د. أسماء إبراهيم
أستاذ – جامعة عفت

التوقيع:

التوقيع:

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Duaa Balkhy

Abstract

This research examines different management approaches to heritage tourism, the top-down, value-based and integrated approach. It analyzes the positive and negative aspects of the different management approaches and critically compares their impact on heritage tourism developments within a global context. The study underlines six critical strategies that potentially contribute to creating an effective heritage management approach. These encompass heritage interpretation, balance between tourism and heritage, satisfaction of tourists, community involvement, community improvement, and heritage protection and conservation. The primary case study of this research is AlUla in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia with an emphasis on the management and decision-making process that affect heritage tourism developments and the local community. Key members of the Royal Commission of AlUla as well as significant members of the community are interviewed to develop in-depth understanding of the heritage management approach in the region. In addition to the interviews, tourist surveys were developed to collect the needed data of heritage tourist experience. The research aims to contextualize the local approach within a broader understanding of heritage management approaches worldwide. It ultimately aims to highlight the best practices that contribute to the success of heritage and cultural tourism with an eye on promoting community collaboration and sustaining the balance between tourism and heritage conservation.

Keywords: Heritage Tourism, Cultural Tourism, AlUla, Community Collaboration, Community Empowerment, World Heritage Sites, Management Approaches to Tourism.

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1. Chapter one: Research Introduction

1.1.Overview

Saudi Arabia is undergoing massive changes in terms of opening its doors for natural, heritage and cultural tourism. The changes started in 2016 when the Vision 2030 strategy was adopted. According to it, by 2030 the share of the non-oil sector should grow from 15 to 50%, and the tourism sector plays as a main driver of growth. They plan to achieve this in the kingdom thanks to massive investments in tourism, and entertainment. In total, more than 64 billion dollars will be spent on infrastructure projects that are somehow related to tourism (Saudi Vision 2030). This research aims to examine the management policies and guidelines to better develop the management structure for a holistic approach of collaboration between all stakeholders of the touristic development in AlUla specifically (Fig 1, Fig 2). It will be focusing on the management policies adopted for the development of heritage and cultural tourism in the first of four-world heritage UNESCO listed sites in Saudi Arabia (UNESCO). It will analyze data on what are the aspects considered for a successful touristic development and what different management policies are being put in place for the protection and conservation of the heritage sites.



Fig.1: AlUla Region, Saudi (Afalula)

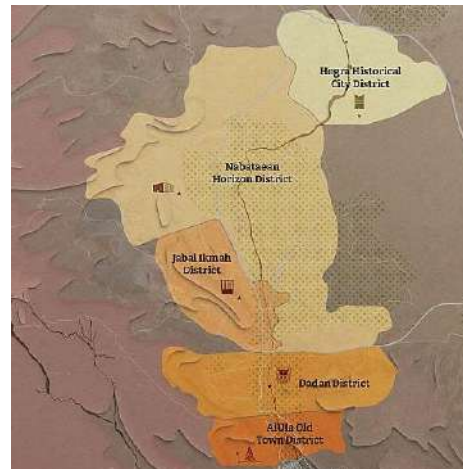


Fig.2: Detailed areas of AlUla Saudi Arabia (Royal Commission of AlUla)

1.2. Research Problem

Heritage tourism is new to the Kingdom with more touristic destinations and the promotion of various historic and cultural landscapes in the Kingdom for tourism. There is a need to understand the strategies required to ensure a sustainable heritage tourism sector in Saudi Arabia. There is a disconnection between the government objectives to enhance tourism and efforts to conserve heritage sites, and the likely impact of tourism activities on heritage regions. This research takes a deeper look at the reconciliation of the government objectives, conservation and community aspiration in order to develop a sustainable heritage tourism sector.

1.3. Research Questions

- What are the different heritage tourism management approaches practiced globally, and their likely impact on the tourism development?
- What is the heritage tourism management approach that complies with UNESCO recommendation for sustainable tourism development?
- What is the context of heritage tourism development for AIUla region in Saudi Arabia?

1.4. Research Objectives

1. To develop in depth understanding of global approaches to heritage tourism management.
2. To define the best practices of heritage tourism management worldwide.
3. To outline the sustainability parameters of heritage tourism management.
4. To develop a contextual understanding of heritage tourism in AIUla.
5. In-depth understanding of community concerns and engaging them in planning for heritage tourism

1.5. Research Methodology

The research uses a mixed methodology with both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Primary data collection includes a focus group, interviews with both professionals and community members, as well as a tourist survey. The secondary data was collected from the literature and UNESCO documents on heritage tourism developments. The research starts with a focus group of RCU (Royal Commission of AIUla) management professionals, that aided in

developing a list of experts in the RCU (Royal commission of AlUla) for face to face in depth interviews, as well as business owners from the community of AlUla. The survey aimed to engage tourists who previously visited AlUla in order to develop a comprehensive understanding about their experience in AlUla region.

1.6. Research Scope and Limitations

The research juxtaposes best global practices in heritage tourism with the current approach in AlUla heritage tourism development. The tourist experience survey conducted by this research offers valuable insight into the services that were made available to the tourists during their visit to AlUla.

Although the results of this research can be valuable for heritage tourism developments in Saudi cities, the Gulf region and other cities worldwide, they focus more on AlUla region in Saudi Arabia and will be more pertinent to Saudi heritage tourism.

The time limitation of 8 months for the entire research processed coupled with Covid restrictions, led to a reduction on the number of interviews and scope of tourist surveys.

However, the researcher has managed to acquire representative data from both the RCU, the community and a reasonable number of responses for the tourist survey which all enhance the validity and reliability of research findings.

1.7. Thesis Structure

This Research is divided into six chapters covering the following:

1.7.1. Chapter one: Introduction

This chapter identifies the research problem, questions, hypothesis, goals, scope and limitation on the topic of heritage tourism management approaches. The mentioned introduction is followed with the literature review, listing various approaches and defining their best practices. Reaching for the framework that identifies a sustainable adaptation that would be substantial to heritage tourism in AlUla. The methodology is briefly discussed identifying the methods used for data collection. Concluding with the results of and analyzation of the research.

1.7.2. Chapter two: Literature Review

The chapter examines different managerial approaches to heritage tourism specifically in world heritage sites (WHS). Discussing the Top-Down approach and its disregards to key stakeholders, Value based approach which considers all stakeholders making it a more sustainable approach in comparison to the former, Integrated approach which encompasses different approaches in

addition to considering resources and a higher level of community participation aiming to empower the community of the touristic destination. Furthermore, the research discusses the main objectives that need to be reached for a holistic heritage touristic development. Concluding the chapter with a critical perspective that establishes the most significant aspects effecting heritage tourism globally.

1.7.3. Chapter three: Case Study of AIUla

The chapter will cover the geographic location and specification of AIUla, including a brief history of the area and its development, afterwards it will detail the heritage of AIUla including the UNESCO listed heritage sites. Further on it will give a description of the touristic development that has been going on since the initiation of Winter in Tantoora and the global promotion of heritage tourism in AIUla.

1.7.4. Chapter four: Research Framework and Methodology

The chapter starts with highlighting the 6 objectives of heritage tourism management necessary to achieve a sustainable heritage tourism development. The objectives recognized through the preliminary data collection consist of Heritage protection and preservation, balance between heritage and tourism, establishing respect to the community, ensuring community benefit, providing versatile interpretation tools, and tourist satisfaction. The framework establishes the connection and intertwined nature of the objectives, in view of tourist satisfaction being a goal objective of any touristic development as it signifies its success. The research indicates the need to fulfill each of the objectives to reach not only a successful heritage tourism development but to ensure its sustainability.

The methodology utilizes a primary qualitative approach that is supplemented by quantitative instruments. The qualitative approach is in depth face to face interviews, held with experienced professionals and decision makers in the RCU. Additional interviews were held with key members of the community. The quantitative approach includes a survey for heritage site tourists. Before embarking on the primary methods for collecting research data, the researcher started with an exploratory approach using a focus group of various members of the RCU to collectively aid in identifying research informants and participants from the RCU as well as the community that would prove beneficial to the research.

1.7.5. Chapter five: Results and Analysis

The chapter provided the results of the qualitative and quantitative data collection. The collected data from the interviews were organized in clusters including themes and subthemes. The interviews with professionals from the RCU were divided under heritage, community and tourists. the interviews with community members were divided under the themes of change, participation and development. The tourist survey results were added in graphs and percentages covering the satisfaction level of their heritage tourism experience in AIUla and their overall experience. The collected data from the interviews were compressed into positional statements that are mentioned for each of the subthemes.

1.7.6. Chapter six: Discussion, Recommendation and Conclusion

Chapter 6 is the final chapter in the research. It will summaries the research, its findings and the results. The discussion will assess the meaning of the results of the data collection in reference to the research hypothesis and objectives. Recommendation will be submitted in reference to the outcome of the results analysis and findings. The research will be concluded with the significance of the study and its contribution in the field of heritage tourism management .

2. Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

This research aims to examine different managerial approaches to heritage tourism specifically in world heritage sites (WHS). It will look at the management policies and guidelines to better develop the management structure for successful collaboration between all stakeholders of the touristic development, to maintain a holistic sustainable heritage and cultural tourism development.

It will briefly discuss top-down pointing out what are the negative effects of this approach and why it is rarely used anymore in any type of tourism development globally. Value-based approach an approach that is used in different WHS. It includes the missing aspect of cooperation between different stakeholders and will see that the lack of emphasis on clear communication may divert the initial intension of stakeholder collaboration. Furthermore, the paper will discuss the integrated approach for heritage tourism management at WHS. This method encompasses all the aspects considered in previously discussed approaches and is more viable as a management method over the others.

The paper will conclude with discussing how heritage and cultural touristic development have a better chance of succeeding with 3 critical aspects considered. clearly identified touristic management policies in all of the following, the engagement and collaboration with the community, adequate conservation and protection for the heritage sites and providing the tourists with all needed services and reaching expectations to ensure their satisfaction during their visit. The development of such findings could be beneficial in inciting the development of a framework to further define heritage tourism management approaches, on a local and global scale. This chapter will cover the different heritage management approaches that have been studied from global world heritage sites.

2.2. Heritage Management Approaches

2.2.1. Top-Down Approach

Heritage tourism has traditionally relied on top-down approaches in management of these touristic sectors. It greatly disregards key stakeholders in the touristic developments specifically the community and the tourists both important contributors and beneficiaries of the touristic sector (Alazaizeh et al. 2016). We can see an example of that approach in the historic Chinese city of Macao (fig 3, Fig 4). Macao has always been a touristic destination, but in 2003 was added to the UNESCO world heritage site list and the number of tourists started to increase drastically. Even though when the city was being put up for nomination the management worked on conservation and preservation, that approach changed after being added to the listing. Management approach started focusing on maintaining the sites and trying to gain as much financial growth as possible.



Fig.3: Map of Macao China
(Chung et al. 2009)



Fig.4: Ruins of St. Paul, Macao,China
(Macatulad, 2019)



Fig.5 : Senado Square showing the Gentrification of Macao Historic Core Zone, China (Macatulad 2019)

They disregarded both the community and the tourist especially around heritage sites. This affected the spirit of the core zones of Macao by pushing out all local businesses and authentic shops, due to the rise in prices that happened with the gentrification of the area. As that was happening the tourist dissatisfaction started to rise mainly because of overcrowding of the heritage sites and the lack of interpretation tools. The authenticity of the culture and heritage was threatened and the spirit of the place was lost (Fig.5). Giving value to the community and heritage determines the amount of respect we are giving to that culture which should always be considered. (Imon, 2017).

Other situations of top-down approaches cause even more drastic issues for the community is the lack of governmental concern for displacement that usually happen for residents in areas that want to be used for tourism. This case has been observed in places like Umm Qais in Jordan and Hainan Province in China. Displacement is a large issue as it effects the community's bond, income, chances of benefiting for the development, and most importantly their homes. Even with

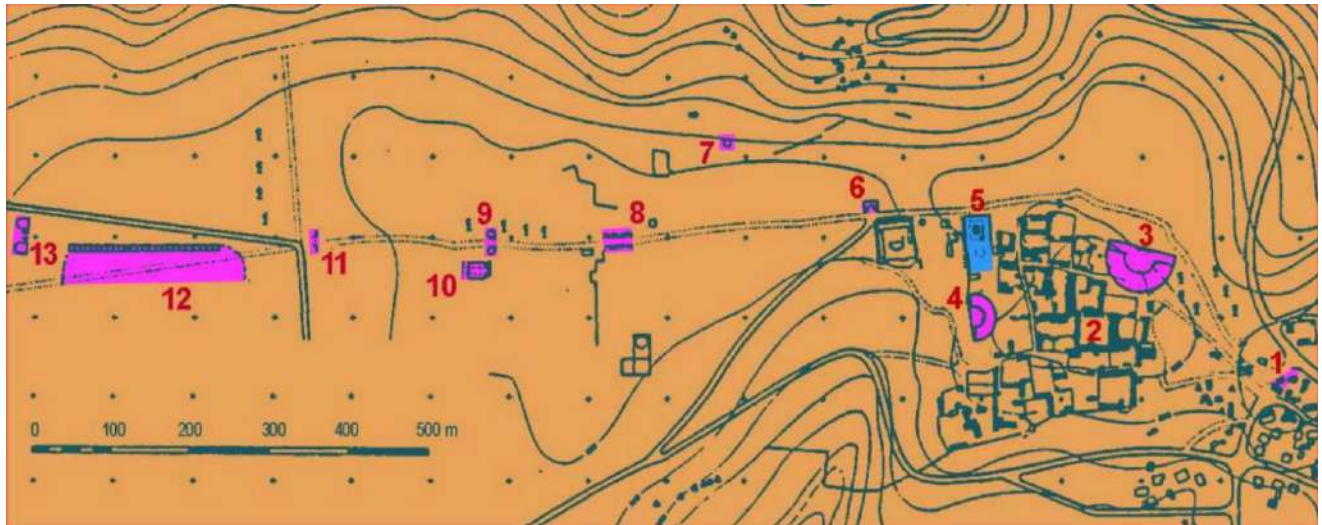


Fig.6 : Map of Umm Qais, Jordan, Numbered with newly developed tourist Facilities (Mustafa et al. 2018)

promises of compensation in majority of situations the compensations are not enough to relocate (Wang et al. 2007).

In Jordan at Umm Qais as can be seen in figure 6 the houses were demolished for touristic developments in their place, as well as the whole area being evacuated for touristic infrastructures. The new housing offered were too small for the family sizes and they had been removed from the agricultural lands they used for financial support. This dramatically affected the community's livelihoods and there was no response to their objections or concerns. These are just a few examples of the negative implications of top-down approaches in tourism. As we will keep seeing further on the support of the communities and the respect of the community living in cultural and heritage lands is an important aspect for a prosperous and sustainable touristic development (Mustafa et al. 2018). Top-down has been the traditional and leading way to manage tourism development through the modern history (Sahraiyan et al. 2019), to understand the difference and variation of heritage tourism managerial approaches the research will continue in studying other known approaches used in heritage tourism management including value based, and integration approach.

2.2.2. Value Based Approach

Value based tourism is one of many different approaches that can be used for heritage tourism (Alazaizeh et al. 2016). Value based tourism puts emphasis on the value different stakeholders put on the heritage site. To define the word value as it could vary in meaning, for the purpose of this research value will hold the place of significance with the definition of the positive characteristics or qualities of both tangible and intangible heritage (Ababneh 2016).

In this type of management approach, decisions are made based on stakeholder decisions and the satisfaction level of tourist and locals. The framework elements are based on identifying management objectives and correlating it within the associated indicators and in accordance formulating standards. Followed by holding the standards by monitoring indicators, and building of management action in accordance to the established standards (Alazaizeh et al. 2016).

This approach can be taken from the value considered by a specific set of stakeholders, in some cases this approach could also be called stakeholder collaboration. It could be seen as an ideal approach since tourism covers a broad spectrum of aspects to consider. In theory this should come to an approach that includes all needs of the touristic development and gives it a higher chance of sustainability. This approach considers identifying and legitimizing all stakeholders by involving them in the planning process. Stakeholders being all those who are affected by the development positively as well as negatively, and see the value in heritage and the need for its conservation (Aas et al. 2005). For clarification stakeholders in tourism are many but for the purpose of this research we will distribute them under 3 main key titles public sector, private sector and users (Fig.7) (Sahraiyan et al. 2019). A large part of the value-based approach is based on the involvement of the community, as well as their empowerment. Empowerment of the community is a process rather than an instant given opportunity, it is the ability to better their quality of life of the community by providing them the tools needed to raise their concerns and needs and be given the opportunity to have control over their lives and surroundings. Community empowerment helps strengthen their potential and provides them the power that all communities deserve to make changes and maintain the ability to better their lives how they see fit (ICISS, 2020).

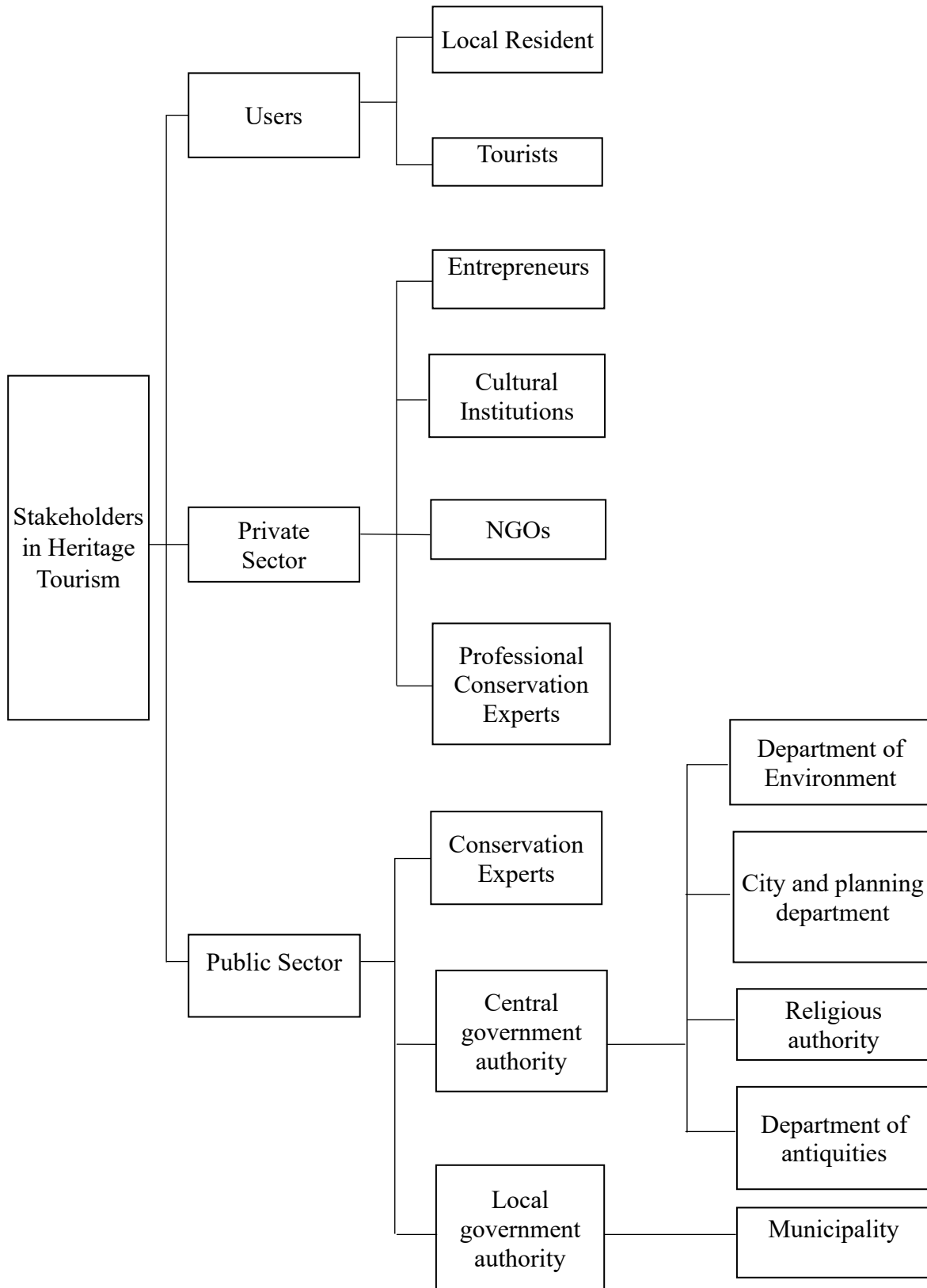


Fig.7: Stakeholder's diagram adapted from Sahraiyan et al. 2019.

The approach is expected to minimize conflict between the different stakeholders. To increase stakeholder's knowledge of the issues, with an objective of clarifying responsibilities, self-reliance and sense of shared ownership. The value-based approach is established by considering "why" each aspect of heritage is important be it tangible or intangible, from the perspective of all key stakeholders. This consideration holds up this approach as a more sustainable approach in the face of the traditional management approach which narrows the considerations during the process of decision making. The importance of this management approach comes from the positive outcomes that are seen in its various accommodation to a wider range of inputs which looks beyond physical fabric and economic gain. Bringing reservation on authenticity and meaning in regards to all culture and heritage (McClelland et al. 2013).

Value based reflects the actual nature of heritage as seen by a variation of people and organizations. The most valued aspect of the approach is having the ability to enhance community engagement, not only by the collection of knowledge and different points of views be it functional or spiritual, but with conservation practices as these points promote a sustainable touristic development. These attributes result to a higher quality outcome to cultural heritage (McClelland et al. 2013).

This approach has its own variation of negative aspects such as additional costs in planning and development, the pool of legitimate stakeholders, the capacity of participation for each stakeholder, conflicts between different stakeholders' values for tangible or intangible heritage. Even though this approach is about collaboration, it assumes that the involvement of all parties would balance the decision making, but there could be constraints in the distribution of resources and finalized decisions (Aas et al. 2005).

For this management approach to be successful there needs to be intense communication between different stakeholders and sectors. It was the used approach in Luang Prabang in Laos (Fig. 8, Fig. 9), through previous research done by Imon in 2017. During his research he found that the negative repercussions on the users were grand due to the effects they had on the authenticity and spirit of the place. All due to the lack of communication between different stakeholders (Aas, et. al., 2005).

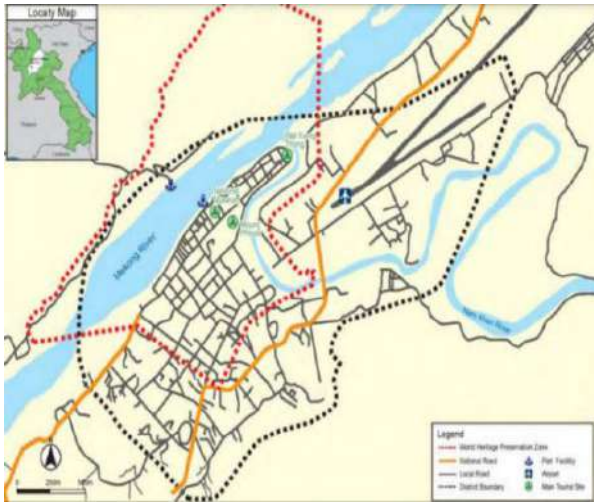


Fig.8: Map of Luang Prabang, Laos



Fig.9: Luang Prabang, Laos (khalid 2019)

Without communication the approach falls apart and the community and the touristic development get negatively affected, along with several other aspects that lacked due to the miss organization and specification of duties and responsibilities. They agreed on how they will gain the revenue for this, no agreement or steps towards implementation was taken from any specific party, causing a major fall back. A core principle of heritage tourism is to gain profits to help maintain and protect the heritage.

The local community was also disappointed in the amount of involvement in the touristic development. The Value based approach puts emphasis on stakeholder collaboration but nothing specified the amount of involvement each stakeholder has. In the case of Luang Prabang the community felt they could have invested more and been more engaged with the touristic sector. They had ended up finding themselves not consulted or invited into the discussion of major decisions in the development that did affect their lifestyles and future. With all these factors under consideration deciding on an approach for touristic management needs to be followed up and executed professionally. In the case of Luang Prabang it was not a successful execution to the approach (Aas, et. al., 2005). We will see within the next section that an integrated management approach would have been more viable for the below mentioned reasons.

2.2.3. Integrated Management Approach

An integrated management approach encompasses consideration from different approaches the most significant aspect of the integrated approach that distinguishes it from the value-based approach is its consideration to resources and needs by involving the community, and empowering them. (Fig. 10). This approach also puts high emphasis on community involvement through empowerment. The UNESCO guidelines for cultural heritage, sites management plans are a set of principles that help in the sustainability, protection, and development of cultural heritage for future generations. For an effective management plan there must be a clear established vision, principles, goals, strategies, actions, processes, and models. Management plans are a method of preserving outstanding universal value and managing activities including tourism, with the main object being to protect, preserve and develop the outstanding universal value. Protecting cultural assets is considered the core of sustainability for the outstanding universal values.

Consideration shall be provided to the socio-economic needs of the area alongside the conservational aspects. A key factor in preservation and development of cultural heritage sites successfully is consideration and collaboration with the locals and users and coordination with national and international institutions. A key strategy and objective should be the participation of citizens. Another aspect of consideration should be the ability to implement action plans.

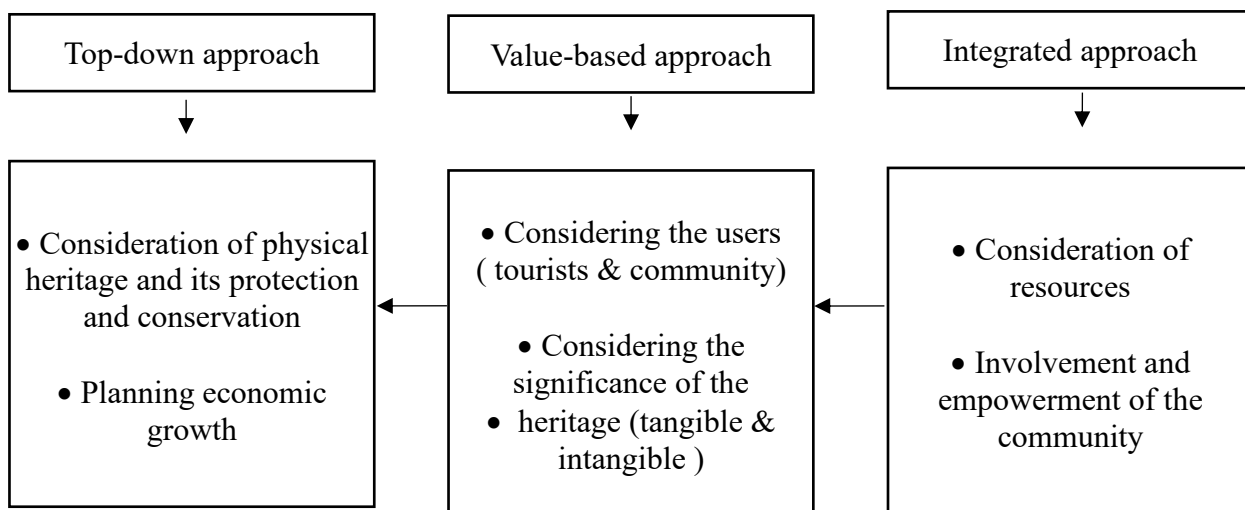


Fig.10: Differences between heritage tourism management approaches (Aas, et. al., 2005, McClelland et al. 2013, Alazaizeh et al. 2016).

Management plans should be seen as a tool that combines different dimensions, set objectives and provide set actions, all with the intention to set a viable management approach, all being features covered within the integrated approach, in most global cases using the integration approach has proven successful. (Canbolat 2020). For this study the research would identify the main goals to reach a holistic heritage tourism development. It will look at the main aspects in all different approaches and highlight the main objectives that need to be addressed, promoted, and focused on for a holistic outcome. The following discussion regarding heritage tourism management provides a synthese of the different approaches and articulates a critical perspective that would cover all the aspects and objectives to reach a holistic management approach.

2.3. Critical Perspective

The main aspects required to reach a holistic management approach can be classified under 3 key components in heritage tourism planning: 1- the Heritage, 2- the Community, 3- the Tourists.

Within heritage there needs to be 1- A focus on preservation of historical environments and cultural heritage sites. 2- Establishing a balance between use and protection, with the intention to mitigate the negative effects of tourism on WHS. The community, 1- Providing the community with the deserved respect by engaging them in decision making and participation within the touristic development. 2- Guaranteeing benefits for the community, economically and in their standard of living. The third aspect, the tourist, 1- Interpretation, heritage tourists highly value the availability of comprehensible and easy interpretation tools that increases their knowledge of historical cultural and natural heritage and the raising of tourist awareness of historical sites promotes the heritage protection. 2- Achieving tourist satisfaction, to maintain the continuing influx of visitors to the destination. (Canbolat 2020).

Each of the aspects when implemented thoroughly, it contributes in achieving the requirements needed for the other component's fulfillment. Policies need to be put in place that reinforce the consideration of all aspects to achieve a holistic management approach to heritage tourism (Fig11). According to the UN sustainable development agenda, international standards and other multilateral environmental agreement it is stated that "parties should ensure an appropriate and equitable balance between conservation, sustainability and development, so that world heritage properties can be protected through appropriate activities contributing to the social and economic development and the quality of life in our communities".

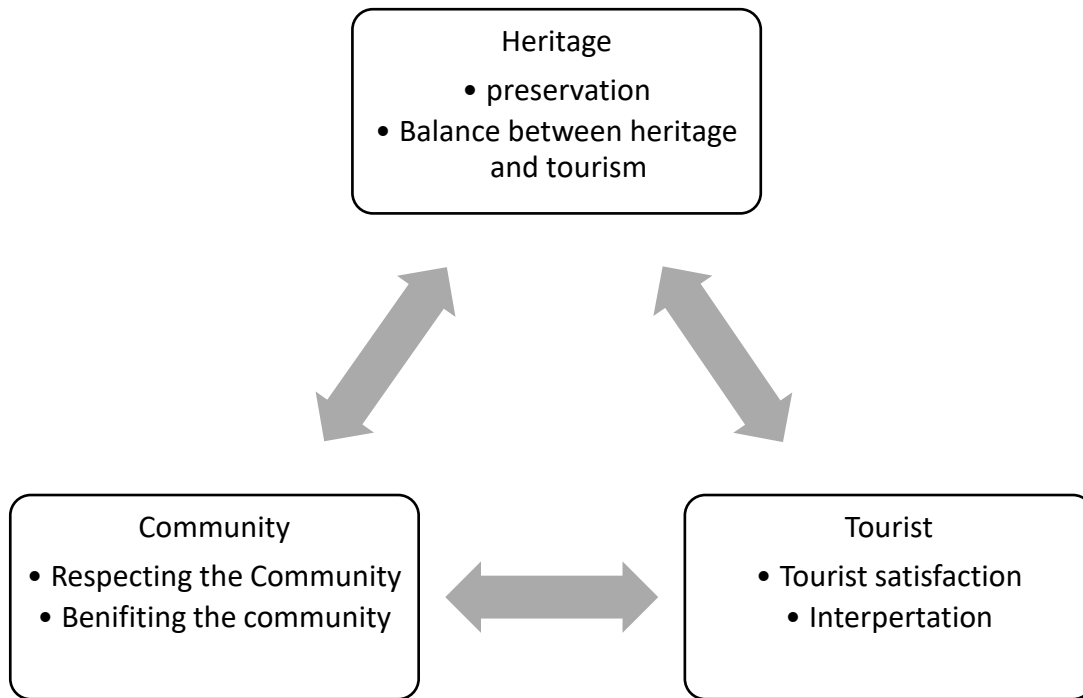


Fig.11: Significant aspects of a holistic management approach

There is great importance in the decision-making process in world heritage properties. Decision makers need to have a long-term perspective for the socioecological systems. There needs to be considerations to integration of conservation with management approaches in the planning framework to enhance the quality of life and wellbeing for those living around world heritage properties and linking the cultural and biological diversity with the conservation of cultural and natural heritage. The protection of the outstanding universal value of the world heritage property and fully claim the benefit for communities (UNESCO World Heritage Centre 2015).

Heritage tourism tends to have a negative impact on customs and traditions. Traditional activities are often affected or completely replaced by tourist related activities. The authentic heritage value that attracts the tourists gets compromised for commercial interest or just to accommodate the mass tourism. Rebuilding and redevelopment tend to affect the architectural and urban authenticity. It also effects the socioeconomics of the city as most businesses start focusing on tourist products rather than serving the local communities and their needs. A large number of locals get displaced with the switch into a hospitality mindset to accommodate all the

tourists with an increase in land demand, locals can't afford their housings or small businesses if they are not directed to the tourism industry (Imon 2017).

There is a strong relationship between a community and the natural heritage sites and cultural landscapes. Locals are an essential part of the culture and heritage of an area. They are natural contributors to the context of the area and thereby are an indispensable component of any tourism development. This makes residents lives have the potential to greatly improve with the rehabilitation of historic areas for tourism. The most cited benefit is economical either by being directly or indirectly effected by tourism. Although relationships between tourism and the local community isn't only defined by the economic aspects it also has effects on their lifestyle with opposition between the old and new (Millar 1989). Through all this data collected the significant aspects of heritage tourism management was concluded to be the following.

2.4. Significant Aspects to Heritage Tourism Management

Significant aspects of cultural heritage tourism management plans should be considered.

According to the international council of monument and sites this comes down to 6 significant aspects to consider in the delivering of any management plan in heritage tourism which are

2.4.1. Interpretation

The host community and the touristic visitor should gain an understanding and appreciation of the heritage significance whether in physical or cultural heritage. A management plan needs to provide various interpretation tools to reflect the importance and significance of the cultural heritage of a site. Interpretation gives the visitor an interesting experience while developing the knowledge of the importance of conserving history (ICOMOS 1999). Interpretation isn't just the passing of information but rather the way the information is said. It is revealing the information to the audience meaningfully to not only be understood but appreciated and remembered.

Influencing the visitor's appreciation to the value of the heritage and the importance of conservation and protection. The usage of educational activities that aim to convey meaning using firsthand experience by stimulating intellectual and emotional connection to the heritage with interactive and user-friendly exhibitions and multimedia programs to appreciate and understand the importance of its protection (Binoy 2001).

2.4.2. Balance between cultural heritage and tourism

Finding the balance between preserving cultural heritage and tourism might be the most important challenge in heritage management. Heritage management is based on the idea of how these outstanding universal value of heritage sites are used today to conserve it for future generations to have, understand and appreciate, as they are non-deniably the link between past and present (Millar 1989). Conflicts arise in finding this balance as heritage tourism profits from tourism to help gain the economic needs to continue protecting and conserving the heritage, but high tourism might as well be the cause in distress and degradation of a heritage site. Even after a plan is put in place for this consideration constant assessment should continue to evaluate the impact of tourism activities and developments on that particular location and its community (ICOMOS 1999). There is a necessary need to manage heritage tourism in a way that complement one another as tourism is needed to provide the financial support to maintain heritage sites. Heritage sites are there to be appreciated by visitors. The problem arises when tourism has a negative effect on the heritage and this has been the case in many heritage sites that attract mass tourism (Millar 1989).

Another part of the balance needed between tourism and heritage sites, is in conserving the site while developing facilities needed for the tourist satisfaction. Facilities such as services, centers, restrooms, restaurants and shops within core zones, but these need to be studied and managed in a way that doesn't disturb the surroundings or the heritage experience (Bowen et al. 2002).

2.4.3. Satisfaction of the tourist

Tourist satisfaction is greatly measured in regards to their expectations prior to visiting the destination, this makes it a subjective matter. There are aspects that play a role in satisfaction mainly under , leisure, culture, education and social interaction. Other attributes of the destination also effect the satisfaction level, being facilities, the experience and location uniqueness and its overall reputation. Tourist satisfaction is vital for the success of any tourism destination as satisfied tourist are part of the marketing considering they would either be eager to return or encourage others to visit (López-Guzmán et al. 2018).

Another aspect that tends to be problematic to tourist satisfaction in WHS is overcrowding. Management needs to consider the capacity of locations as visitor should be able to have an optimal experience as they take their time and take in their surroundings during their visits. This could be managed with constraints being allocated in circulation routes to minimize the

overcrowding and touristic impact on the nature of the place. Interpretation also plays a role to gain respect of any cultural restrictions, understanding the significance of a location and its cultural heritage gives the visitor the understanding to fully enjoy the experience and come out without causing harm to the physical fabric and gaining a satisfactory experience (ICOMOS 1999).

2.4.4. Respecting the community

The host community should be a major contributor in establishing goals, strategies, policies and protocols for the management, preservation, presentation and interpretation of their heritage resources. Promoting community participation is the highest form of respect that can be given to a community through any kind of development. The participation of a community in a touristic development is a contributing factor to their acceptance of tourism. When feeling included and respected it would reflect positively on their interaction with the tourists, displaying hospitality, leaving a positive impact on the visitors. The sense of being welcomed aids in achieving tourist satisfaction. The community needs to not only feel included but empowered by the touristic development, by means of education and support, giving them opportunities to be involved in various parts of the development including the management and decision making. If they determine the restriction of any location, knowledge, activities, beliefs or practices from the touristic sector it should be respected and followed as they wish (ICOMOS, 1999). The respect of the community can also be reflected in providing them with the job opportunities that give authenticity to the touristic experience, either with knowledge or small businesses to cater for the tourist. This also would reflect onto the satisfaction of the tourist in being provided with a holistic experience. Another factor that represents the respect to the community would be in not exploiting the resources especially those that the local community use for their traditions or livelihood, but keep it in all considerations throughout the development (UNESCO World Heritage Centre 2015).

2.4.5. Benefiting the host community

Benefiting the host community can be part of respecting the community, but due to the importance and need to emphasize the community interest it was split to two separate objectives. Measures should be put down for the distribution of touristic gains within the community, region or country to raise the socio-economic growth. As these touristic developments should provide the host community with economic, social and cultural benefits through education, training and

employment opportunities, just as some of the economic benefits should go to the protection and conservation of the cultural heritage sites. Enhancing the skill set of the local community to be a vital part of the touristic sector should be a main goal in the development of any management plan (ICOMOS 1999). Not only should the benefits revolve on financial gain, but it includes providing adequate infrastructure and services to better their quality of life(UNESCO World Heritage Centre 2015).

2.4.6. Promotion to enhance protection

Promotion of touristic program should provide the visitor with enough information of the location and its characteristics for the encouragement of appropriate behavior, also the protection of authenticity should be considered in the promotion of location and activities. There should be adequate promotion for proper distribution of tourists to encourage them to visit places other than the main attraction to relief pressure on protected areas and give everyone a chance to experience wider areas including natural heritage, and the promotion of authentic crafts that return revenue to the community and ensures integrity (ICOMOS 1999). There is a high need to mitigate the impact of tourism on the heritage sites. This can be done by promotion of protection. Promotion of protection would be the key alongside interpretation to explain to the tourist the importance of conservation and protection of heritage sites. This would also give a sense of respect and pride to the local community and enhance their chances of having a sustainable touristic development. Without the protected heritage there is no cultural and heritage tourism, and without directing that understanding to the users it is harder to implement (Jamieson 2000). Moving forward in this research the paper will study AIUla touristic development These discussed points are determined to be the promptest features of a holistic heritage tourism development and we will move forward with this research by using the methodology to discover how much of it is being implemented within Al Ula touristic development plan and what modifications can be made to encompass them and reach a more holistic touristic sector.

3. Chapter three: Case Study of AlUla

3.1. Geography of AlUla

AlUla is a strategically located valley with a vast inland plain in the northwest of the Arab peninsula. AlUla's location resulted in its importance and success throughout history as it's protected by mountains from the east and west, making it a striking oasis surrounded by outstanding rock formations of sandstone mountains. AlUla's location generated its importance as it connects the north of the peninsula with the south, keeping it an important location through historical eras (Bay 2014, Rigot 2009). Enveloped in this valley resides the archeological site of Hejer followed 22 Km to the south with the town of AlUla, it also includes flourishing green oases that are scattered according to underground waterflow (AFAlUla, 2019).

Farming was achievable in the region due to the early development of hydro agricultural systems . Over 100 wells dating back to the first century BC were found all over AlUla region, these wells were provided by water from aquifers by the use of qanat a water collection method that distributes water after collecting them from the bases of mountains or plateaus using gravity and calculated slopes that move them through channels to various fields and wells (Fig. 13). The wells collected large amounts due to their sizes that averaged at 17m deep and 7m wide, and were able to preserve the water for up to a year, this was crucial to sustain human settlements and the viability of substantial farming that is still functional till modern days. AlUla's harsh geography and climate makes it a hard location to thrive in, but due to it being a main point in the frankincense rout which connects it to the outside world (Fig.14), and its settler's adaptation to its environments it prospered into “ a pocket of humanity in a hostile environment” (Rigot, 2009) . AlUla is immersed in the history of the peninsula dating back to the 9th century BC when it was the capital of the Dadan kingdom all the way to present day as the first UNESCO listed site in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia due to the preserved natural and man-made monuments it houses.

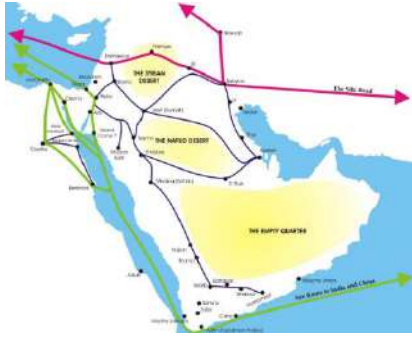


Fig 12 . Historical frankincense trading route (Bay, 2014)

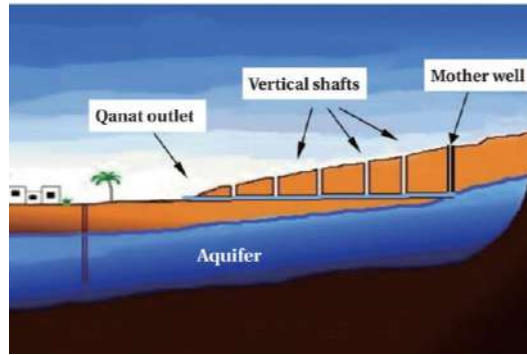


Fig13 . The Engineering of a Qanat as used in AIUla
Illustration by céline marquaie

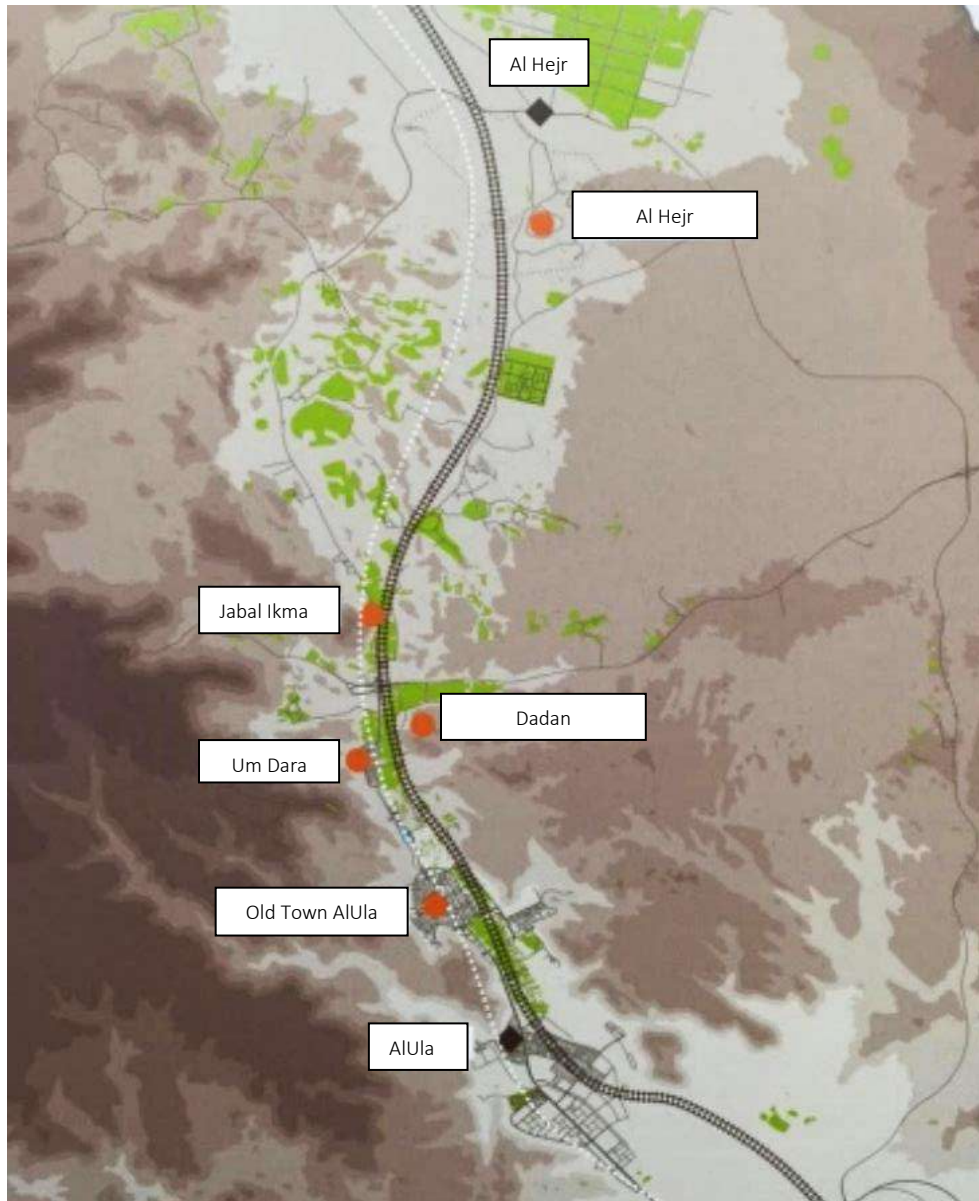


Fig 14. Map Of the valley of AIUla highlighting important locations (RCU, 2019)

3.2. AlUla Historical Background

The history of the area has been uncovered through wall scriptures dating all the way back to the final king of Babylon with writings found to be in both Aramic and Taymanitic. Historically known as Dadan, AlUla has the majority of inscriptions in the peninsula, through these scripts the history of the area was unraveled (Macdonolds, 2019). Proof of civilization in AlUla dates back prior to the uncovered scriptures reaching all the way to 200,000 BC with the unearthing of stone tools used in the Paleolithic period. Traces of settlements in the area such as tombs from the bronze age estimated to be from around 5000-2000 BC (Fig.). The valley housed the capital of the Dadan and Lihyan kingdoms between the 9th century and the 2nd century. Developing the frankincense road to trade with Egypt and Mesopotamia promoted its connection from the west to the east. The Dadan kingdom developed its water management that works on collecting water for agriculture a system that made the base for its aquifer reserves used till today (Sadig, 2009). AlUla is currently most known for Hejer the tombs carved within mountains which were engraved by the Nabataean Kingdome in the 1st century BC these are the rock cut tombs. Al Hejer are a continuation of the tombs carved in Petra, Jordan as it is also known as Petra’s little sister. Previous to the Islamic period the city was known as Dadan, with AlUla being first mentioned with this title in 630 AD by the prophet Mohammed. The importance of AlUla in the Islamic period and during the ottoman presence increased as the Hejaz railway was developed for pilgrimage and trade (Sadig, 2009).

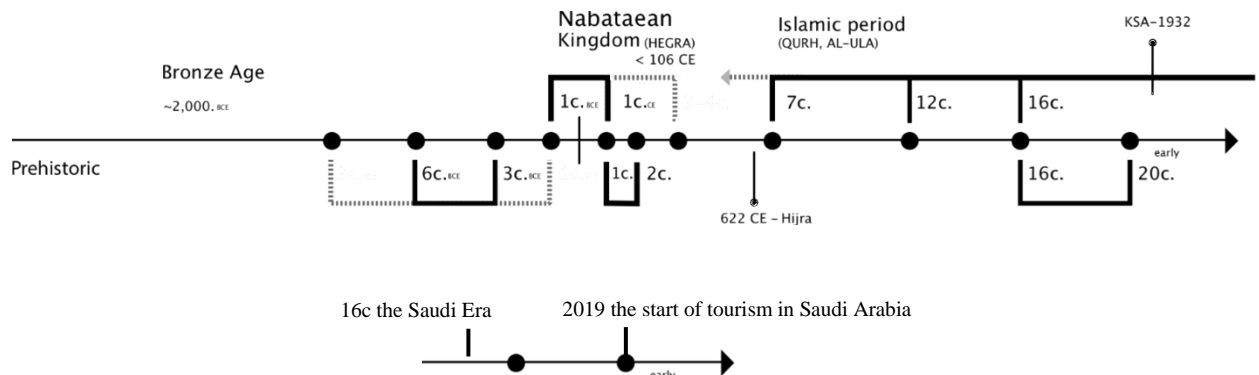


Fig 15. Time line of civilizations in AlUla through history
RCU, 2019



Fig 16. Traces of settlements in AlUla dating back to the bronze age
AlUla Wonders of Arabia



Fig 17. Necropolis of Jabal al-Khraymat, Hejra
Yann Arthus-Bertrand, 2019

3.3. The heritage value of AlUla

The archeological site of Hejer is located approximately 22 km north the town of AlUla, it is the first to be registered in the UNESCO heritage site within the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of Al Hejer comes from the remarkably preserved monumental tombs and other monuments from the Nabateen civilization that is seen today, dating back to the first century BC (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2008). Housing 4 large necropolises that are home to 111 Nabateen tombs, these necropolises include Jabal al Mahjar (Fig,) , Qasr al Bint (Fig,), Qasr alfarid tombs an individually standing cropped mountain with 19 tombs (Fig,), and the largest of the 4 Jabal al Khuraymat (Fig,). The Tombs are decorated in their traditional manners all carved meticulously in sandstone mountains (Al-Nasif, 1981).



Fig 18. Necropolis of Qasr Al-Bint, Hejra
Hubert Raguet ,2018



Fig 19. Necropolis of Qasr Al-Farid, Luca Locatelli ,2021

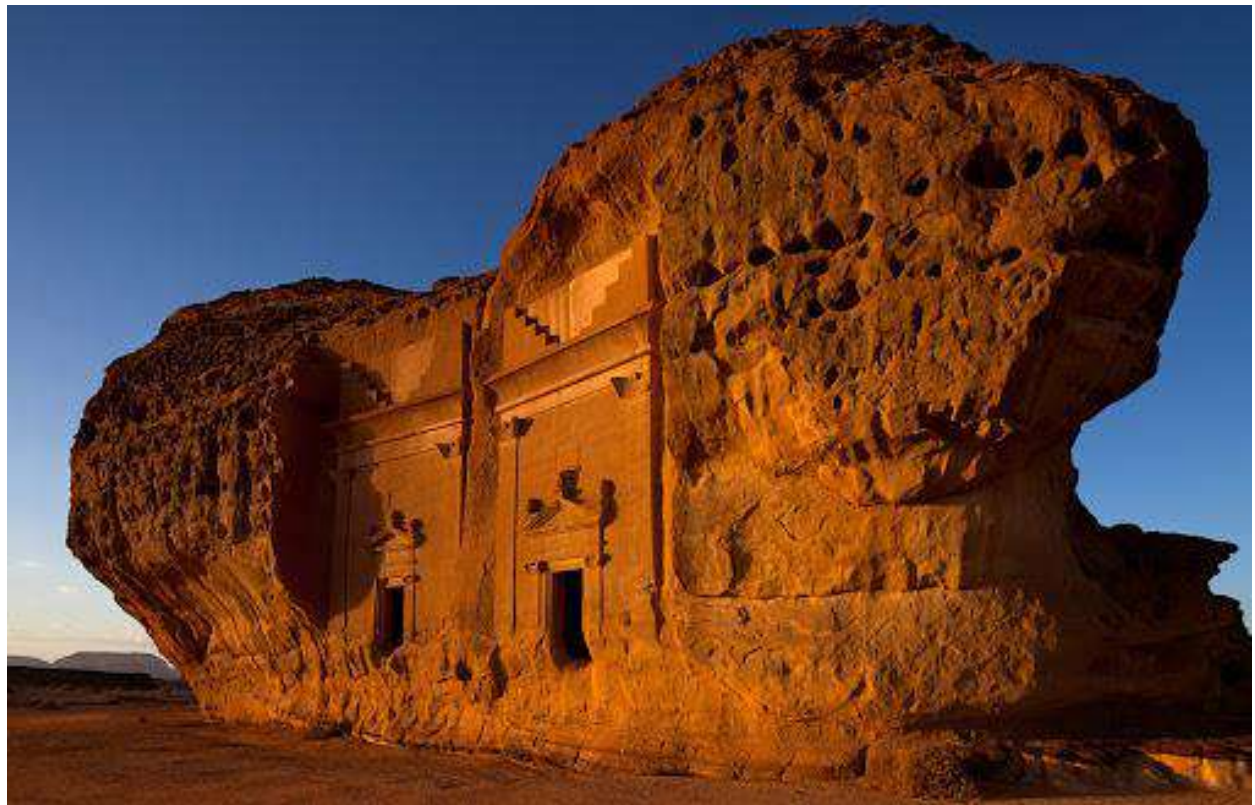


Fig 20. Necropolis of Jabal Al-Mahjar, Richard T. Bryant 2014

The designs of the façade are inspired by Greek and roman architecture due to their rule over the area in the first century BC. The Nabateen elite carved their family tombs with decorative inscriptions and symbols from the sandstone façades to reflect the family status. These tombs have been preserved unharmed by the effects of erosion through centuries. On higher parts of the same mountains small rectangular pits can be found carved in the mountains making simple graves for the less influential. Inside the cutout mountains tombs various spaces can be found as well as cut out rectangular space in the inside of the walls (Fig, 23, Fig, 24), archeologists have determined that there is not a specific way of use for the tomb's interior as the deceased are laid out wherever there is space (Alsuhailani, 2019). On the exterior parts above the entrances the decorations hold inscriptions naming the owners, their king and the builder as well as antitheft laws, surrounded by ornaments and designs with religious symbolism(Fig,22).

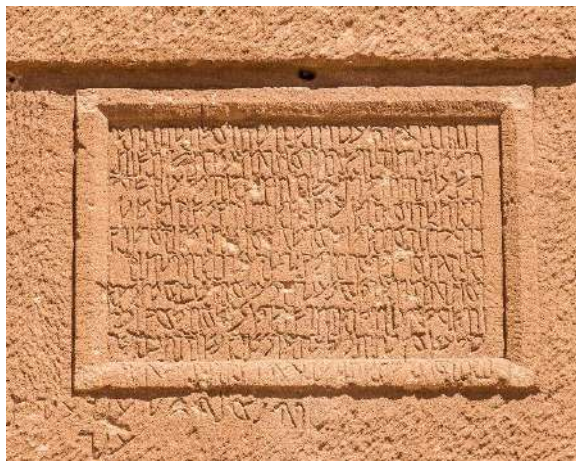


Fig 21. Dedication in Latin to Emperor Marcus Aurelius of Rome, Roman fort, Hejra RCU, 2019



Fig 22. decorative sculptures above tomb entrance in AIUla, Richard T. Bryant 2014

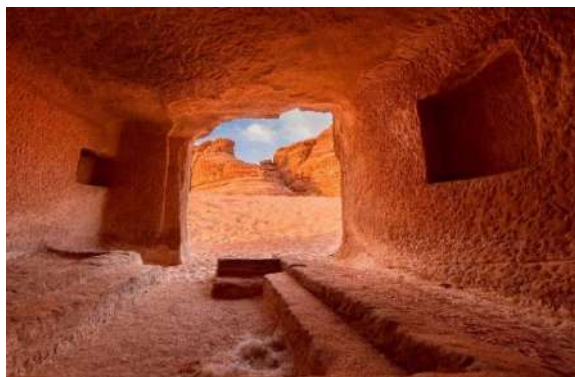


Fig 23. Interior images of the tombs in AIUla. (RCU. 2019)



Fig 24 . Interior images of the tombs in AIUla. (RCU. 2019)



Fig 25. Al Diwan AIUla, Richard T. Bryant
2014



Fig 26. Tourists observing a ditty alter near Al
Diwan AIUla, Author

The tombs are not the only UNESCO worth heritage in Hejer the Nabateen also worked on the carving of other spaces within the mountains the most prominent known one being Al Diwan (Fig, 25). Al Diwan is a meeting chambers for religious brotherhoods; these chambers usually surrounded by decorative carvings into the sandstone symbolizing various ditties worshipped at the time. The prevailing council chamber being Al Diwan is found North east of the archeological site at Jabal Ithlib, a 40 m long corridor adjacent to it, with a dozen religious shrines dedicated to various ditties carved into the sandstone walls (Fig 26). Along with their architectural and engineering excellence the Nabateen’s mastery of hydraulic techniques for water collection holds testimony to its civilization, with 130 artificial wells demonstrating their capabilities as they are still used today (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2008).

The UNESCO listed zone also holds 2 built structures within its inscription. 18 meters high stands the Ottoman fort of Al Ula, the fort is located at the top of stairs carved mountain surrounded by the old town of AIUla, built to protect the pilgrimage route as well as the residential units it overlooks.

The other prevailing structure of the Islamic period is the Hejaz railway connecting Damascus and Jerusalem to Makkah and Medina. The railway was of great importance for the Ottoman empire, as it eased their connection to intensify their political rule on the region.

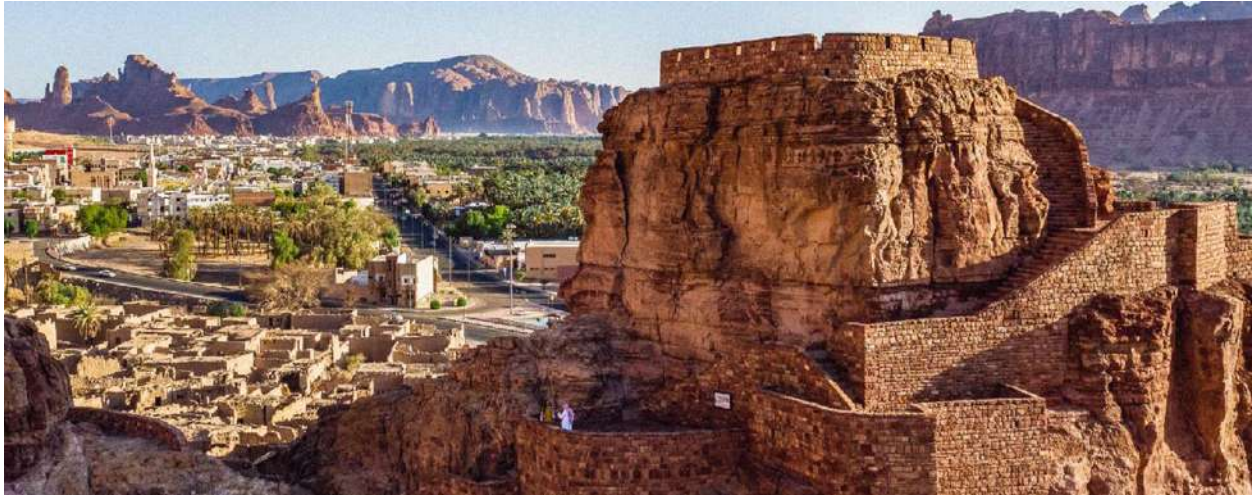


Fig 27. Othman Fort in AlUla, Ali Al Suhaimi



Fig 28. Hejaz railway Train station in AlUla, Eric Lafforgue 2017



Fig 29. Visitor Assembly Zone at the historic railway prior to entering Hejer

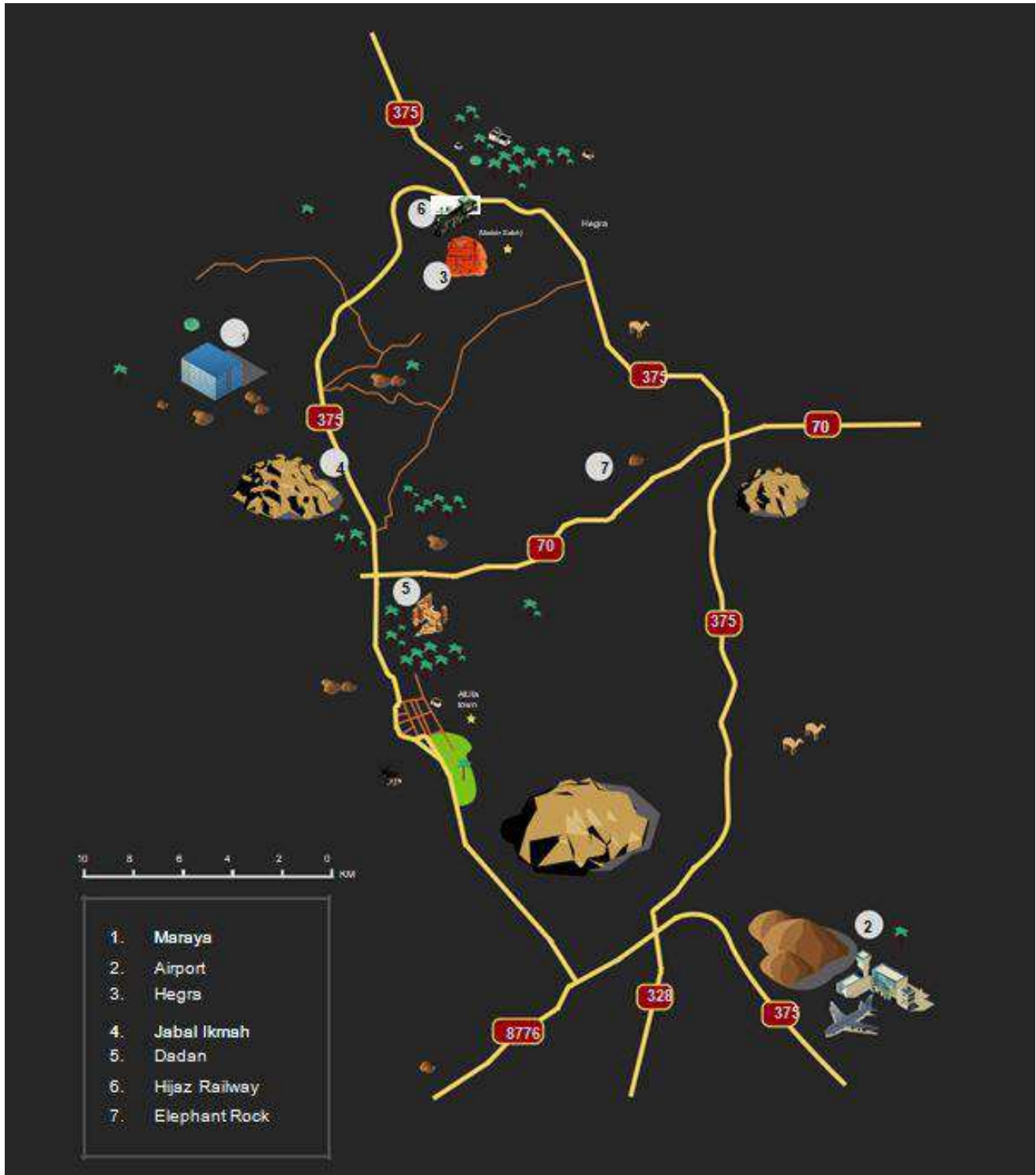


Fig 30. touristic map of AlUla (RCU, 2020)

3.4. The Community of AIUla

Today AIUla is home to some 64,000 residents, majority's education level averages at a high school degree. Prior to the development of the touristic sector in Saudi, agriculture was the leading industry of the area, with minor tourism that wouldn't be economically beneficial from its scarcity (Rigot 2019, AFAIUla 2020). Being a traditionally conservative community, the socioeconomics of the city is built on men working in governmental sectors or in farming and most women would only engage in teaching jobs . Leisure time for the community of AIUla was based on socializing within the larger family unit, with the men gathering at the farms and the women in their private quarters (al-Awaji, 1971). The introduction of modern life with its technology and mass production has been a major influence on the dwindling of farming within the community in recent years, as well as weakening the practice of traditional crafts which were becoming endangered of being lost (Saleh, 1998).

Since the development of the royal commission of AIUla and promotion of heritage tourism in the city, the population has thrived within the touristic sector. Large numbers of scholarship nationally and internationally have been offered to the community in hospitality and tourism. Various training programs have been offered to community members to engage in tourism and be part of the heritage tourism development (RCU). The socio economics of AIUla has switched its dependency to tourism. The RCU plans to empower and collaborate with the community of AIUla to be a major influencer and part of the heritage tourism development. Aiming to improve the quality of life of those living in AIUla. The RCU speaks of implementing Community based tourism (CBT) to maximize local economic benefit alongside the safekeeping of the natural and cultural environment, and providing the highest level of satisfaction within the touristic experience (UNWTO, 2020).

3.4.1. Community Involvement in Heritage tourism of AIUla

The RCU has launched a variety of programs and initiatives to support the community of AIUla. The first one was the scholarship program that started in 2018, sending local students to study for diplomas, bachelors and master degrees in fields that would help in the development of their city. Another program the RCU has developed is the Rawee program training and educating locals of the community interested in seeking involvement in tourism through visitor interaction and interpretation. The Rawee is a crucial element of the heritage tourism as heritage sites are not

accessible without one of these certified tour guides as they are expected to not only share the information about the heritage but protect it and ensure its safeguarding.

The “Hamaya” program initiated by the RCU in 2018 who’s members have reached over 4000 in 2020, focuses on educating the members of the community on the heritage value of AIUla and the importance of conservation and protection. The aim of the program is to share the knowledge and awareness throughout the community and work as ambassadors for the AIUla tourism and its heritage.

The restoration of an old girl’s school near the old town is managed by the RCU to educate community members of all ages in the traditional crafts and arts of AIUla. The school provides a variation of programs and expertise from within the community and under the direction of the prince’s foundation school of traditional arts. The princess foundation school provide a yearlong program in learning the skills and arts under one of the traditional crafts of AIUla.

AIUla design studio is a public service consultation launched by the RCU to provide the residents of the city with free design and architectural consultations to renovate or build the urban realm of AIUla. AIUla Design Studio offers design solutions for the community to grow their city in a way that preserves its heritage authenticity and urban fabric as it contributes to the quality of life in AIUla.

The date festival was launched in 2020 to promote and market AIUla date farms, it involved providing packaging and marketing campaigns by RCU for all farms located in AIUla as a method to promote the city and familiarize the Kingdome with AIUla’s agricultural products. With a plan to be a recurring event to promote AIUla farms and products and be a main attraction point for both national and international tourism.



Fig 31. Tour guide explaining the carvings in hejra
(Author)

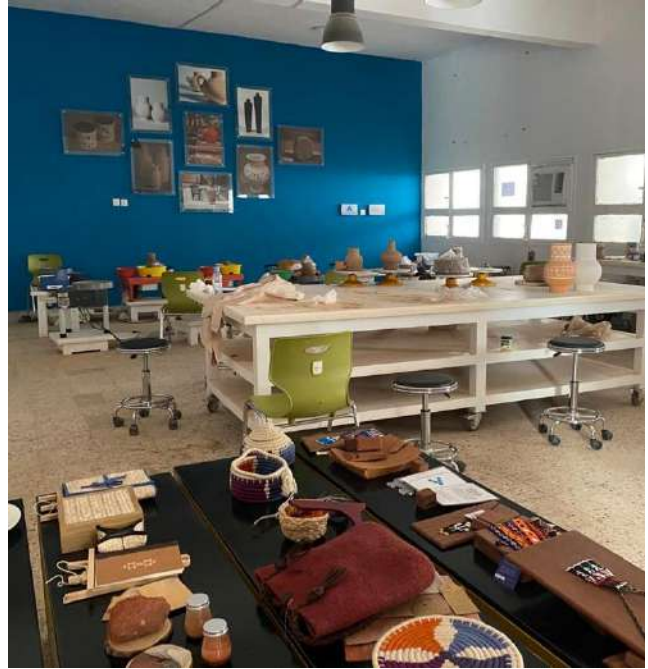


Fig 32. Workspace in the vocational school
(Author)



Fig 33. Date Festival
(RCU, 2019)

3.5. The Launch of AIUla tourism

In 2017 the Royal Commission of AIUla (RCU) was established with the objective of developing AIUla into a cultural, heritage and natural tourism destination globally, with sustainable development aiming to diversify the economy and involving the community. The strategies developed to reach their objectives include 3 main pillars; 1- local community art and culture, 2- tourism and natural heritage 3-diversifying the economy (UNWTO, 2020).

The tourism in AIUla started with the initiation of Winter in Tantoora a seasonal festival to celebrate the arrival of the winter months. The festival named after a sundial built into the oldtown. The Tantoora sundial has been used for generation by the farming community of AIUla to specify the beginning of winter to highlight the season of planting and distribution of water. Winter in Tantoora started on the 21st of December 2018. During the 12 following weeks of its initiation AIUla was home to a variation of activities. The festival, including concerts, art shows, hot air balloon festival, horse races and other sporting activities in addition to the heritage tourism and the developments in the old town, with pop ups of international cuisine and local markets. Accommodations within AIUla during the festival season vary between campsites, luxury trailers, resorts and hotels, some temporary other permanent, with many more developments in the planning and building phase (SeeraGroup, 2019).

Tantoora Festival found great success during its first winter in 2018, and it exceeded it during its second season in 2019. Even with Covid restrictions AIUla was made available during the winter of 2020. With a travel ban implemented on the kingdom, national tourism increased and AIUla found itself with a larger number of tourists visiting then the previous years at around 50,000 individuals, majority being Saudi residents exploring the wonders of AIUla (RCU, 2021).

4. Chapter Four: Research framework and Methodology

4.1. Research Framework

Through the analytical study of the literature and UNESCO policy documentation for heritage tourism management the researcher determined the 3 components that are of the upmost importance in heritage tourism management when adopting a managerial approach and formulating the objectives of the development. The first component being the heritage which covers promoting the protection of the heritage and balancing between heritage and tourism. The second component is the community, accentuating the importance of respecting them and ensuring community benefit. The last component being the tourists, providing them with interpretation tools and achieving their satisfaction being the objectives. Given that tourists are the targeted group in any touristic sector, providing them with a satisfactory experience is the intended outcome, which is used to determine a successful heritage tourism development. The literature proved that to reach tourist satisfaction the previous 5 objectives need to be acknowledged and established within the managerial policy. Nonetheless, most of the objectives are interlinked and to reach any one of them, one or more need to be implemented adequately. Based on this critical perspective the framework was designed to better understand and formulate a suitable managerial approach accordingly. The synthesis will detail more explanation of the intertwined nature of the components and their objectives and will correlate it into a clear graph that will help in the development of the methodology used for the primary data collection. The 6 highlighted objectives are very much intertwined and overlapping. Balancing between heritage and tourism comes from managerial policies, if policies are proficiently set to reach the objective, it would include satisfactory interpretation, and support in maintaining and protecting the heritage. Promotion of protection and preservation of the heritage also supports in maintaining and protecting the heritage, providing a fulfilling experience of the local culture and heritage, leading to tourist satisfaction. Benefiting the community by providing them jobs and opportunities in the touristic sector, reflects respect to the community that would be mirrored back in their interaction with the tourist, as most objectives it would lead to tourist satisfaction. Providing jobs for the community within the touristic sector ensures an authentic experience that would be reflected in the satisfaction level of the tourists. Interpretation also holds a strong place linking the objectives, as it can be seen that it supports protection and conservation of the heritage and providing jobs to local community members to ensure the authenticity of the

experience. Tourist satisfaction is an important objective of heritage tourism management as it leads to economic growth and the sustainability of the development, which provides financial prosperity to the community as well as the development to put back in maintaining and protecting the heritage itself.

The diagram below provides a visual explanation how a main objective of any heritage tourism development is tourist satisfaction, as it is the economical generator for the protection of the heritage and the benefiting of the community. It further expresses how management policies implemented successfully assist in advancing the other 4 objectives (benefiting the community, promotion for protection, interpretation and respecting the local community) that all eventually lead to tourist satisfaction. In Fig 34 it is clarified how each of the objectives helps in reaching tourist satisfaction. It is a clear and repetitive cycle that would ensure the sustainability and successes of any heritage tourism development, this conclusion was derived from the literature study, previous conclusions from heritage tourism developments at various WHS, and following the recommendations of UNESCO documentations and policies.

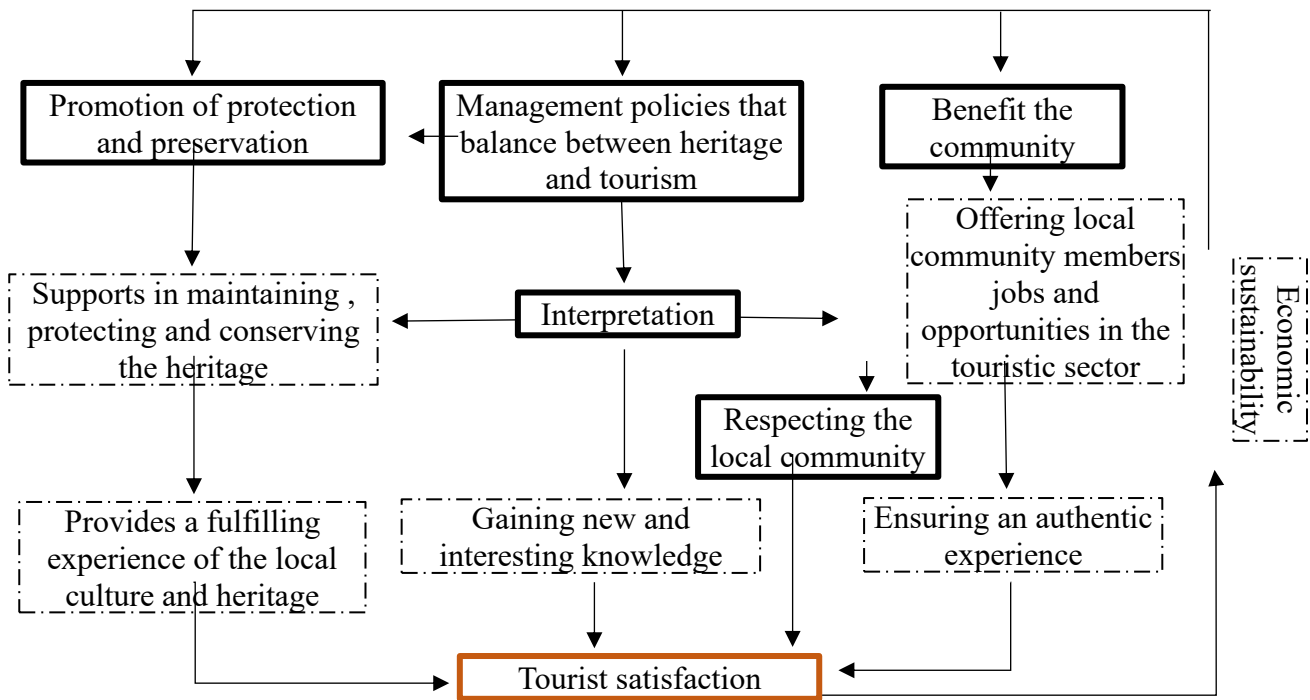


Fig. 34: Framework to reach holistic approach of heritage management (Author)

4.2. Methodology

4.2.1. Introduction

This research utilizes a primary qualitative approach that is supplemented by quantitative instruments. The qualitative approach is in depth face to face interviews, held with experienced professionals and decision makers in the RCU, to collect the needed information that is critical to the research goals. Additional interviews were held with key members of the community, to gather information on their perspective on the workings of the RCU. The quantitative approach includes a survey for heritage site tourists that can only be reached via online platforms.

Before embarking on the primary methods for collecting research data, the researcher started with an exploratory approach using a focus group of various members of the RCU, who can collectively identify research informants and participants. The goal of the focus group was to aid the researcher in determining key members of the RCU, as well as members of the community to participate with in-depth interviews.

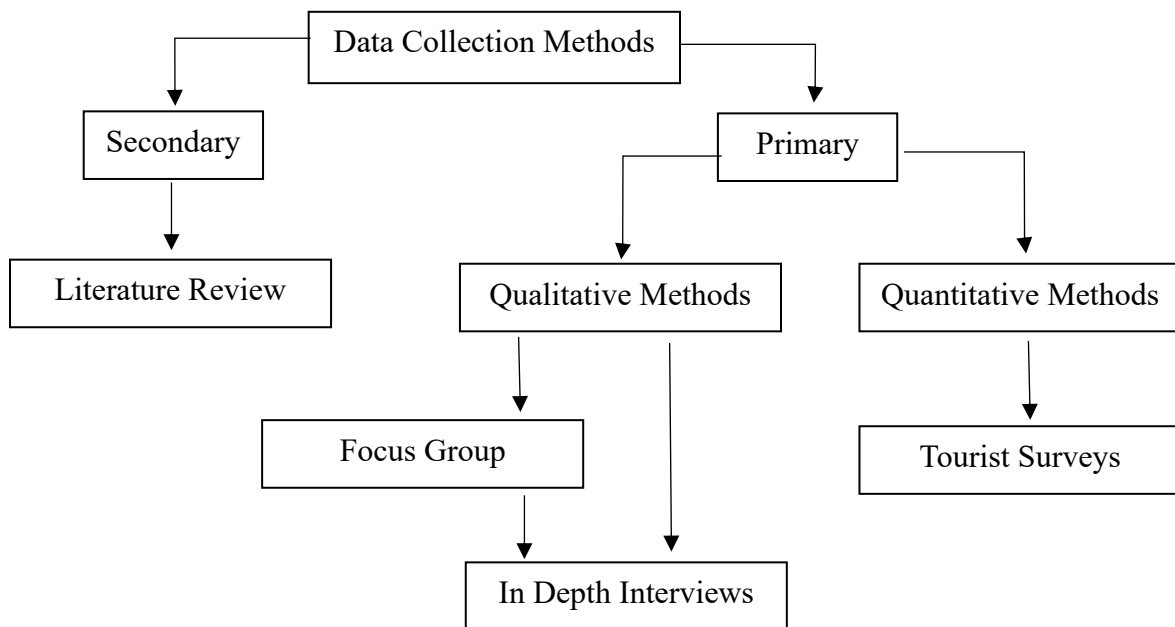


Fig 35: Research Methodology Diagram (Source: Author)

4.2.2. Focus Groups; Exploratory Stage

Focus groups provide a setting to gather specific data and are a known method for preliminary data collection, as they present a multitude of purposes while collecting input from a variation of participants or a specific target group (Dent, 2011). For this paper the researcher created an opportunity to conduct a focus group of different department managers within the RCU. The opportunity presented itself when the researcher was invited to join a social event while visiting AlUla, during which a good number of RCU professionals were in attendance. While discussing the research several professionals showed interest in the paper and agreed to engage in a focus group. The focus group participants were 5 managers from various departments including, destination marketing, economic and social development, site planning, finance, and an administrator. The focus group participants provided a clear road map and a list of the senior managers and executives who would be valuable to interview for the purpose of the research. They also discussed the workings of the RCU and critical issues related to planning for tourism which helped the researcher to design the interview questions.

4.2.3. Interviews; Primary Data Collection

The focus group meeting was very helpful to identify the list of experienced professionals and decision makers working in the RCU. The target number of participants were 13, and due to some difficulty and time restraint on their part the number of participants secured were 10. The breakdown of the interviews was with 5 professionals in key positions in RCU and another 5 local business owners from the community.

The protocol was developed based on the themes established from the literature review and the developed framework which included the community, covering supporting the community and benefiting the community, tourist with interpretation and tourist satisfaction and heritage with preservation and balance between heritage and tourism, as well as from the collection of data from the focus group discussion. The questions development was based on the issues that were raised from the literature review and study of global heritage tourism.

The protocol for all interviews started with a brief introduction that included, the researcher introducing themselves, their educational background and the institute and degree for which the research is being conducted. An introduction on the research was shared, that included the purpose of the research and the reason the individual was asked to participate. This was followed with the amount of time expected for the interview to take, and informing the participant of the

type of reporting that will come from the shared data. All Participants agreed to the audio recording of the interview for the benefit of the research. The questions designed for these interviews focused on the heritage management and involvement of the community within the development.

4.2.4. Interviews with Professionals

The 5 participants included a senior member of the site planning and development team, a senior in the location marketing team, a manager in the art and culture development department and, two executives within the RCU administration. The meetings were held in various locations in AIUla according to the participants preference. All participants showed great interest in the research and opted to give the interview between an hour to two hours. After giving the brief introduction the participants were asked to share a brief about their department and their role within the RCU. The questions for the interview were grouped in accordance to the themes the researcher had identified as important aspects of heritage tourism management which are, heritage, the community and the tourists, even though some of them may overlap but for the benefit of the paper and to have a clearly defined protocol that cluster the questions under well-defined themes of heritage tourist and community. These themes each cover 3 questions, which can be found in the interview with professionals from the RCU protocol refer to appendix 1.

4.2.5. Interviews with Community Members

The focus group also helped in determining members of the community that work closely with heritage tourism or work with authentic crafts. The participants included 2 farm owners, a local artisan, a business owner and a manager within a company that works with tourists and the RCU. The number of participants was determined by reaching sufficiency and saturation, once it was clear that the same information was reached and repeated. Each interview took place in their farms or within their business location and lasted about an hour. The questions designed for the community were based more on their experience as residents of a city that has been recently developed for heritage tourism and their perception of the RCU, with a main focus on, the support and benefit they are gaining from the heritage tourism, their level of involvement within the developments and the authenticity they observe from the heritage tourism developments. The questions were clustered under change, support and participation and can be seen in the interview with community members of AIUla protocol refer to appendix 1.

4.2.6. Survey for Tourists

The survey was established to target the tourists that have visited AIUla for heritage tourism, it was based on convenient sampling. This approach was used as it was seen to be the most appropriate way reach a large number of participants globally. The survey was carried on google forms and shared through social media means, the questions for the survey were intended to conclude the satisfaction level of those who have visited AIUla for heritage tourism. As satisfaction level of tourists are a large part of determining the success level of a heritage tourism destination.

The survey followed a structured questionnaire protocol. The protocol started by highlighting the scope of the data critical to be collected from the visitors, in the case of this research it was their satisfaction level. To limit the answers in the desired scope the questions were designed to be close ended questions and answers were in the form of a 5-point scaling system or multiple choices. The questions were designed to target the specific attributes of AIUla, and the satisfaction level questions also constructed around those same attributes. Amongst the questions, participants were asked about their preference in types of tourism, their enjoyment and dissatisfaction of specific aspects of their touristic experience in AIUla, their experience with the tour guides providing them with the heritage tours, and the kinds of interactions they had with the locals of AIUla, and how pleasant were the interactions. Finally asking them to rate their overall touristic experience in AIUla. Below is the detailed survey questions and the answering options provided.

5. Chapter Five: Results and Analysis

The interviews were fully transcribed and the coding process was done manually rather than computerized to gain a deeper understanding of the issues discussed. As well, the range of issues discussed included social, economic and political aspects that warranted in-depth analytical understanding rather than the binary approach of coding software. The researcher consolidated the interview data into clusters by using an integrated approach utilizing Kidder's "Negative Case Analysis" method, and Neuman's pattern matching process or "Successive Approximation". The integration of these methods was crucial in outlining the positional statements which represent the collected interviewees shared data and reports into a unified narration (Kashef, 2008).

The coding started with the main clusters but as more notable distinctions emerged the addition of themes and subthemes were developed to accurately reflect the interviewees responses. This entailed a rigorous process of reading and rereading the data in order to categorize the subthemes and positional statements that express the majority of issues raised in the interviews.

5.1. Results and positional statements representing narratives of the Interviews with professionals

The analysis of the interviews concluded in the establishment of clusters that covered a number of themes, the clusters included: 1- Heritage, 2- The community, 3- Tourists.

Heritage, as it was one of the driving considerations developed from the framework. It specifically covers policies to conserve and maintain the city authenticity and heritage sites protection. Heritage included two themes; 1- policies of protection at UNESCO listed heritage sites, 2-policies of protection outside UNESCO listed heritage sites. The second cluster, the community, as a major stakeholder in the touristic development of AIUla, this cluster developed two major themes; 1- Community awareness and involvement, 2- Community benefits.

To accurately relate the different positional statements. Every theme was split into 2 subthemes for clarity during the analysis process which will be discussed further in the following part.

The final cluster is the tourists and touristic development, which consists of the themes; 1- Providing necessary services for tourists 2- Development of adequate infrastructure. The statements collected from the two previous clusters and their themes was found to encompass the information relating to touristic development therefore it will not be mentioned to avoid

redundancy and confusion. This affirms the mentioned interlinking and interwind nature of the heritage tourism aspects and objectives and the need to implement all to succeed in each.

Below is the graph clarifying how each of the clusters is nested within another and statements from within each could be positioned in 2 or 3 of the previously mentioned themes and statements, resulting in touristic developments lacking the need to be discussed separately as all its detailing will be mentioned within the other clusters.

This coding process was developed after constant additions and readjustments of the themes for the data collection, ultimately establishing the finalized clusters, themes and subthemes, from the RCU professionals who were interviewed.

5.1.1. Cluster 1: Heritage (Planning for Protection and Conservation)

The 3 main interview questions under heritage got an assortment of responses covering different issues within heritage sites. Heritage being the main cluster covering the issue of planning for protection and conservation for the city as a whole. The themes under heritage were concluded to be Policies at UNESCO listed heritage sites and policies outside UNESCO listed heritage sites.

This separation was established after the researcher found that all participants talked particularly of either conservation of heritage specific to UNESCO protected sites or of the natural landscape or various parts of AIUla including touristic destinations and heritage spaces or structures within the city but ones that are not considered of outstanding universal value.

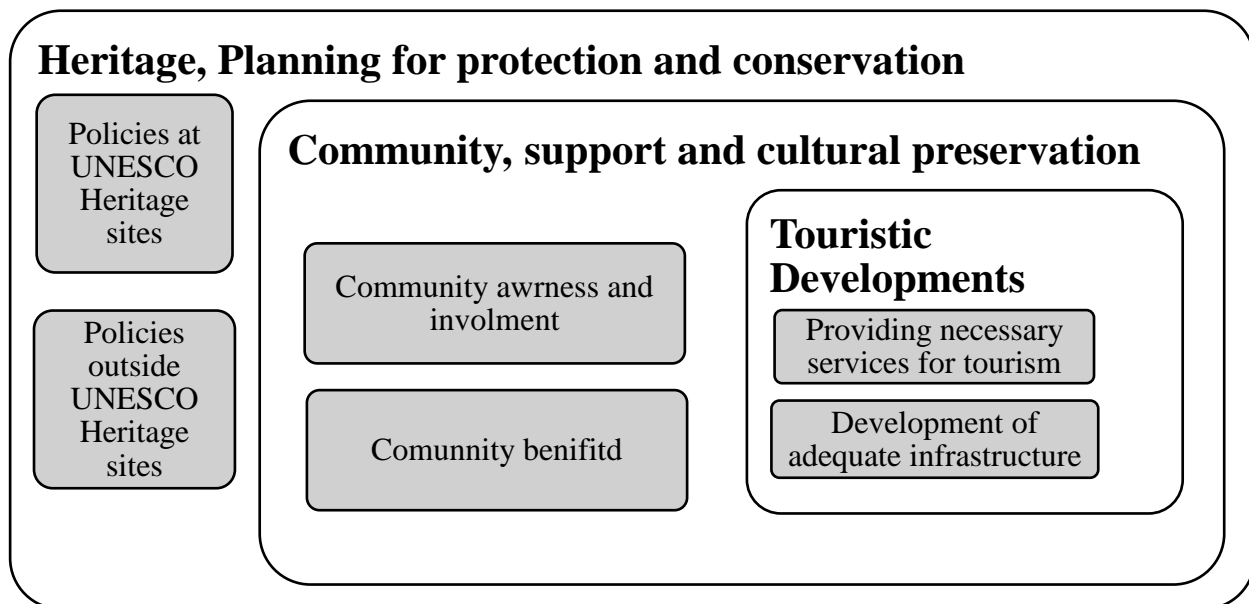


Fig 36. Clusters and themes derived from interview results (Developed by Author)

the interview narrative regarding the policies at UNESCO listed heritage sites branched into the subthemes of; 1-controlled tourism 2- development policies. Policies outside UNESCO listed heritage sites branched into; 1- touristic developments, 2- city developments. As can be seen in the graph below the detailing of the cluster and its themes and subthemes.

1. Heritage cluster; theme 1 policies at heritage sites

The first theme is divided into 1- controlled tourism at the heritage site and 2- development policies at the heritage sites. Table 1 on page 62 covers the participants responses regarding policies to protect the heritage of outstanding universal value in AIUla, discussing the policies developed to mitigating the effect of tourism at the heritage sites and other policies put in place for the conservation of the heritage for future generations as it is being developed for the comfort and satisfaction of the tourists.

The research combined the participants individual statements into positional statements that reflect the interviewees contribution and comments.

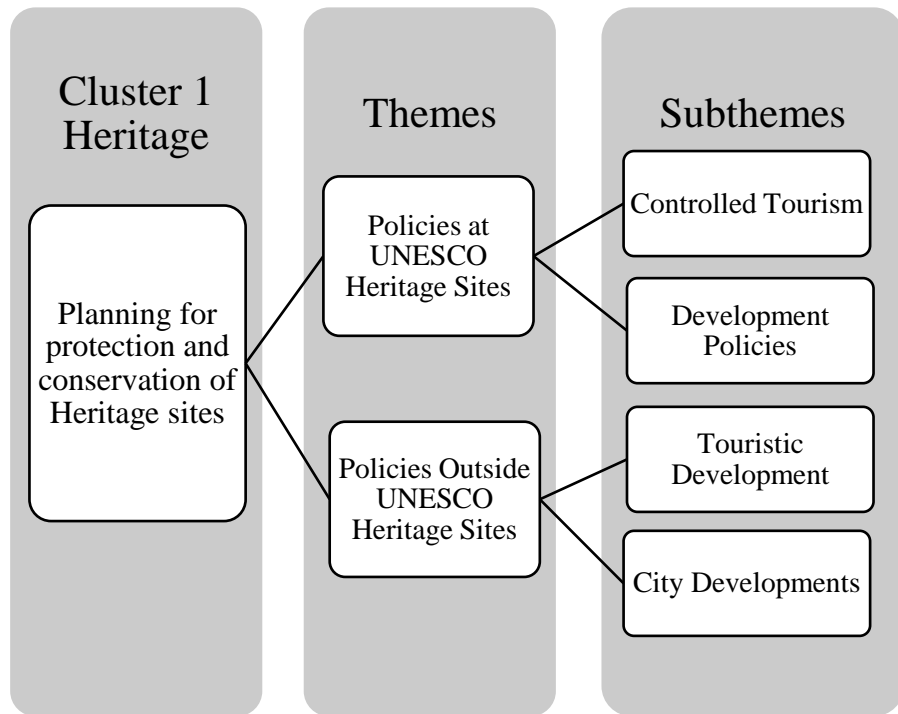


Fig 37. Cluster 1: Heritage, (Planning for Protection and Conservation)

- **Positional statements**

Controlled tourism: all participants mentioned “controlled tourism” as the key concept being used to mitigate the negative effects of tourism on a natural heritage location. It was highlighted that all visitors must be accompanied by a certified tourist guide to visit the heritage sites, and they are limiting the entrance by timing and number of visitors at a time to ensure no overcrowding or disturbance to the natural environment.

The controlled tourism method being used accomplishes the point of tourist satisfaction by illuminating the issue of overcrowding and using the most popular and preferred method of interpretation by mandating the availability of qualified and well-informed tourist guide.

Development policies: Each participant gave a response that covers policies from their field of expertise, but it all revolved around the idea that preservation conservation and authenticity is of great importance and is prioritized. Either to protect the heritage for future generation, or to ensure its safeguarding for economic growth and benefit, as well as to ensure tourist satisfaction and interest by providing authenticity.

2. Heritage cluster; theme 2 policies outside the UNESCO listed heritage sites

Considering the whole of AIUla as a historical city the maintaining of it and the development of the city caters to tourism and benefits the community, both important aspects for management of the heritage tourism of the city. The policies outside heritage listed zones are also expected to develop with authenticity and unity with the image of the city to succeed and be sustainable as a heritage touristic destination. For that the policies outside the UNESCO listed heritage sites are also of great importance and were constantly mentioned distinctively during the interviews.

This theme of policies outside UNESCO listed heritage sites was divided into the subthemes of 1-in touristic developments, 2- in residential developments, as both are distinct and have different policies and requirements. Table 2 on page 63 holed all the individual participant statements that were used to derive the following positional statements.

- **Positional Statements**

Tourist developments: Authenticity was the most recurring words when asked on the policies followed for touristic developments outside UNESCO heritage listed sites, even though the participants discussed the listed and unlisted zones as very different but one point was consistent the need to provide authenticity for the tourist experience to preserve the context of the city and to provide the tourists with the expected cultural experience during their visit to AIUla.

Tourist services are always designed in ways that don't conflict with their surroundings. The Maraya hall was the prime example used, describing how the structure was designed to reflect and merge within its own environment, designed to be modern and luxurious without standing out or effecting the natural landscape.

Residential developments: A guideline has been in the process for the past 2 years and was just finalized for the city of AlUla to reflect the city historically and provide a natural aesthetic that is modern but still holds to the spirit and reflects the soul of the place. The RCU is providing the whole city of AlUla with a design studio to help in providing plans and designs for any member of the community that is interested in building or renovating any structure within the city free of charge.

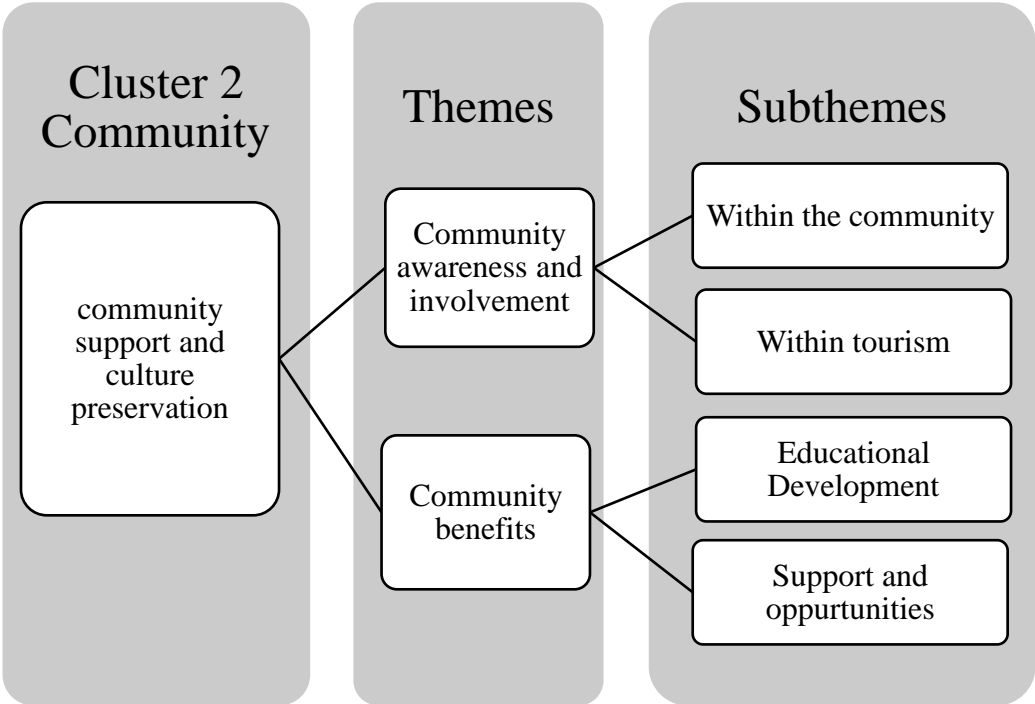


Fig 38. Cluster 2 Community, (Community support and cultural preservation)

5.1.2. Cluster 2: Community (Community support and cultural preservation)

Regarding community members the interviews had a repetitive theme around work opportunities, businesses development, education and authenticity of the arts. With the collected data from the interviews the themes were established to be; 1- Community awareness and involvement that composed of; 1-within their community 2- within tourism, and the second theme 2- Community benefits, composing of; 1- educational development, 2- support and opportunities, as clarified in the graph below.

1. Community Cluster: Theme 1 community awareness and involvement

Table 3 on page 64 categorizes the theme into subthemes under community awareness and involvement, as mentioned previously being 1-within the community and 2-within tourism. Within the community will discuss the issues of community awareness and how the RCU planned their involvement in raising awareness and adding to their knowledge of heritage as a whole and their heritage as locals of AIUla. Within tourism would enfold the involvement of the community with the tourist and their collaboration with the RCU to protect the heritage and raise awareness within tourism and providing interpretation tools.

- **Positional Statements**

Within the community: All participants discussed the Hamaya program as the main initiative to raise awareness within the community, the program is developed to educate volunteers on the importance of environmental sustainability and heritage protection, and to take that knowledge and distribute it within the rest of the community. Workshops and activities for the local population are also available with a main focus of teaching kids about the heritage of their city and the importance of protecting the environment

Within tourism: The rawee program was constantly being mentioned, set up to certify and equip tourist guides to educate the tourist on the history and culture of the city as well as the heritage and natural environment in AIUla. The rawee program is the leading interpretation tools available for tourists

2. Community cluster: Theme 2 Benefiting the community

The second theme Community benefits involves both subthemes of; 1- educational development and 2- support and opportunities. The positional statements stated below were derived from the participants individual inputs that are detailed in table 4 on page 65-66. Educational development

will specify the educational benefits being provided to the local community by RCU, while support and opportunities will go into further details of what can be provided for those with lands and businesses in and out of the touristic sector.

- **Positional statements**

Educational development: the community is being provided with abundance of educational support for the development of their various hospitality-based businesses or tourist activities and stores. Workshops, courses and other programs are being provided to whoever is interested in developing themselves to be part of the touristic sector. National and international scholarships are available for local members of the community as well as the vocational school that works on authentic cultural crafts in all its details and supports their graduates afterwards.

Support and opportunities: The RCU try to support all those working in tourism with their needs to start up or develop their businesses by promoting location of farms or providing tourist destinations that help the economy of the community such as the case with the date festival that was an international success to promote the local farmers and their crops.

Graduates of the vocational school are supported with free locations to open their booths or stores for the first year as well as financial management support and any other kind of needs they require to better their product and help them succeed.

Constant promotion of local activities that are managed by the community and reflect the nature or history of AIUla is being promoted as tourist activities and destinations. Priority in any employment opportunity is for locals from the community, this is managed with policies enforcing a high percentage of locals being employed in any business in AIUla

Cluster 1: Heritage (Planning for Protection and Conservation)		
Theme 1 :Policies at Heritage Sites		
p	Controlled Tourism	Development policies
1	Limiting access by controlling the number of tourists at a time Controlling the movement within the sites, managing the tourist by not providing open access and interactions within the site that would wither the naturally preserved	My priority focus is the landscape and the protection of it as it integrates the natural, the cultural and the heritage. Decisions need to be made around the concept of safeguarding the nature the heritage and the community The participant quoted the vision statement referring to the city as “A living museum” adding “which means we need to not impact the heritage and culture because a museum is about celebrating what existed and what exists conservation is our main goal” together with promoting the history and heritage authenticity.
2	Methods of controlled tourism have been put in place to ensure the safety of the heritage sites This control is meant for the overall protection of both heritage aspects and environmental aspects	The influx of profit is important as such profits are put back into the protection of the sites and further development of AIUla to boost tourism so policies are constantly put in place for the satisfaction of the tourists while protecting the heritage of the city. Both come hand in hand. In all development areas, respect of the context is of major importance, all new developments and renovations will have to follow the set criteria and policies of the zone.
3	Tickets are needed as well as guides for most activities which are controlled by the RCU	Further policies have been put in place to ensure authenticity of the experiences, mostly by recruiting local members of the community to work within the heritage sites
4	This participant didn't have much to share about tourism as she worked mostly with the development of local community in education and development of authenticity in local crafts	
5	Controlled tourism is the policy used for heritage sites. No heritage site can be visited without a qualified tourist guide approved by the RCU.	Up till 2021 building permits were seized due to the development of new policies to protect the authenticity of the city. Any development needed approvals from various departments to ensure the protection and preservation of the natural and cultural aspects of AIUla, this caused various issues to some business owners and community members as they didn't understand the major plan of the development of a heritage tourism and the importance of following strict policies and approvals from various departments

Table 1. Cluster 1: Heritage (Planning for Protection and Conservation)
Theme 1 :Policies at Heritage Sites)

Theme 2 Policies Outside Heritage Sites		
p	Touristic Developments	Residential Developments
1	When developing for tourism outside the heritage zones we still try to respect the landscape, such is the case as in the development of “Maraya hall” designed to have mirrored facades to reflect the natural surroundings rather than impose on them. All service structured are developed to integrate into the natural surroundings rather than impose on such surroundings Policies are developing to encourage business and farm owners to reflect the culture and heritage of their lands and crafts	In the context of the new city and the residential areas, there has been a restriction put in place on all developments, building or renovation. We are in the process of finalizing the residential zones of the city master plan and in accordance providing guidelines to preserve authenticity and cultural preservation of aesthetics as well as other characteristics that would reflect in the movement patterns within the city to maintain a genuine reflection of historical accuracy

2	The main goal is to construct and implement the theory of cultural landscape, integration between humans and the landscape they live in, inspired by the Nabateen through Hejer, they left their mark on the landscape of the place they are in, same with Dadan and the other areas where they left inscription on the walls, the tombs, the statues. Our vision for the master plan is that we also leave our legacy on the landscape of the area by maintaining it and allowing it to thrive, this is why we are focusing on policies that promote the revitalization of the oasis getting back to green as it used to be, integrate the community into the oasis as they are part of the oasis with their residence, like living in a village at the edge of a natural landscape. For these policies and guidelines are being developed and implemented for the whole of AIUla one zone at a time. The participant was enthusiastically speaking of how they enforced a night sky policy, banning the use of any strong lights to disrupt AIUla sky, to avoid light pollution distorting its night sky. “ It was an ongoing struggle to get GACA to agree to us using the minimal required lighting for the airport, just to ensure that tourists landing at night can get to experience the beauty of AIUla sky, which is rare in cities”	
3	The importance of hiring locals that understand and can explain the origins and cultural norms of activities is something we insure. Priority is always for locals with experience and development of their skills to engage with tourists	Permits are going to start being provided for those with proper reflection and historically sound spaces for renting them out to tourist such as bed and breakfast spots. Trying to incorporate the day to day lives of local community members into the experience of the visiting tourists is a goal we aim for.
4	At the artesian school we work on providing all the necessary knowledge for those interested to implement their craft in the most authentic way possible starting from the materials used all the way to the final products. We don't want tourist gift shops to be filled with made in China items when the crafts trade used to be a part of the culture of AIUla and its people.	
5	The participate discussed the importance of respecting the urban fabric of the city especially in touristic zones. She mentioned that for restoration in the old town they enforce traditional method and implementation, by using traditional materials and means to maintain the authenticity and preserve the authentic look of the area. Bringing up major development, it was highlighted that touristic structures that are necessary are designed in a way to avoid disrupting the landscape.	the planning team has established architectural guidelines to be followed and hired a design studio to collaborate with resident wanting to restore or build, to upholding the guidelines and sustain the urban fabric. The sizing of development within the residential zone will soon be lifted and permits will be given to all who intend to follow the guidelines.

Table 2. Cluster 1: Heritage (Planning for Protection and Conservation) Theme 2 Policies Outside

Cluster 2: Community (Community support and cultural preservation)		
Theme 1 Community awareness and involvement		
p	Within the community	Within tourism
1	The Hemaya program focused on the aspect of raising community awareness, by educating members of the community on the importance of preserving the heritage sites, and employing them to spread that knowledge to the rest of the community. Of course, at first they were not happy with the change in rules regarding heritage sites, but with the development of the Hemaya program they became more understanding and even appreciative of the protection policies that have been developing to protect the sites with the expected arrival of large number of tourists	The development of the rawee program to have guides that are more aware of the safety procedures obviously makes a huge positive effect on the touristic development of AIUla. They understand what is possible what isn't how to mitigate the effect of tourism on the heritage sites and preserve the natural landscape while giving the tourist the best experience and educate them on the history of the area.

2	Involving the community within the protection of the heritage sites was crucial so two of our first developed programs in RCU were the Hamaya and the Rawee programs to ensure the understanding of locals about the significance of their city and its history. These programs are open and available for any local of AIUla to enroll in and participate.	This is exactly what the rawee program was developed for, RCU wanted to make sure that all certified guides are properly educated of their history and the heritage site significance.
3	Other than the Hamaya and rawee programs, the RCU works with any local that is interested in introducing any kind of activity within the heritage sites. We work with them to make sure that they are truly aware of the history and heritage. We work on various workshops that focuses specifically on encouraging members of the community to work with tourism to promote their culture and integrate within it the importance of their heritage and culture. Another way we work on raising awareness is by involving younger people in workshops and activities take place in various locations in AIUla to enjoy for free, such activities revolve around the heritage of their city, its value and the importance of its preservation	
4	This participant focused on the artesian school and authenticity of the crafts, which will be discussed in detail in the upcoming theme	
5	The Hamaya program was one of the first programs initiated by the RCU, it is rarely discussed how this program includes 4000 participants from the original 40000 inhabitants of AIUla, with just the job of raising awareness within their communities, the Hamaya is a paid volunteer job, to share the information and importance of the heritage of the city and its preservation and protection. The Hamaya also are expected to raise awareness of the natural environment and historical landscape of AIUla.	When it comes to the rawee program, any local can sign up but they would not become certified tour guides in RCU without being completely knowledgeable and knowing of the history of the city and the importance and significance of the natural and cultural heritage

Table 3. Cluster 2: Community (Community support and cultural preservation)

Theme 1 Community awareness and involvement

Theme 2 Community benefits		
P	Educational development	Supporting and opportunities
1	they have provided local farmers with farming experts to work with them in better farming techniques that would minimize water consumption in addition to produce higher quality crops.	Farming was an industry that was dying out in AIUla, even thou they had capabilities and the lands to work on them. The development of the tourism sector is helping in revitalizing the faring industry and providing opportunities for farm owners to use their lands for income in one way or another.
2	A variety of programs have been developed for the community of AIUla, in my opinion the most important and beneficial for the community is the scholarship program for national and international studies in any degree, bachelor, masters, PhD, or courses, within the hospitality sector.	Job opportunities are available for locals in every part of the touristic sector, a policy was established that enforces any company to have a percentage of locals when providing a service in AIUla. The RCU also equipped businesses as well as those that finished vocational programs by granting them shops or booths in the city, offering the location free of charge the first year, and priced depending on income afterwards.
3	Any business newly developed is being offered training in the required field to succeed We are providing a variety of workshops and internships for those interested and willing to be part of the	We scout for people with specific talents or interests and help them develop businesses such as star gazing guides and hiking guides. We provide them with the knowledge they lack to turn their hobbies into tourist-based businesses.

	tourism sector. We want the community to succeed, we aim at helping develop all their needed skills to be a productive and successful part of the tourism in AIUla.	We enforce rules that mandate companies to hire locals, especially when the position includes interaction with visitors to ensure a more authentic feel of AIUla and an understanding of its people. We offer locals with new businesses prime location, those who have trained with us previously get a free year in areas with high tourist traffic
4	the vocational school provides a yearlong program that focuses on the traditional methods, starting from the process of getting or making the materials used all the way to the delicate techniques used to finalize the products. Giving classes in all cultural craft that AIUla is known for by using materials from AIUla landscape, we teach them how to collect the right stones from the right locations, how to make the paints in the traditional way as it was done historically in the region and develop final products that can be used in our modern times Other than the full-time program we provide weekly workshops in some of the arts for anyone who is interested.	Those who join the programs at the vocational school gain priority in prime locations for their businesses free of charge for the first year. We promote the local crafts made by our students and other locals in tourist dense areas. only a small number of traditional artisans were known and practice, we provided them with jobs in the vocational school We provide a list of qualified artisans who work in traditional and authentic crafts to be part of tourist activities and workshops as well as jobs within the vocational school
5	interested farm owner are provided with workshops in business and management skills to develop their property for tourism.	The RCU's launched the date festivals, where they provided the farmers with packaging and marketing for their crops highlighting the dates. The date festival was a success and was promoted nationally as a yearly festival. The promotion of the date festival for not only on national level but international as well. It gained a lot of attention

Table 4. Cluster 2: Community (Community support and cultural preservation) Theme 2 Community benefits

5.2. Results and positional statements representing interview narratives of Community Members

The interviews with community members revolved around the changes the local community has been experiencing, their participation within the heritage tourism development and how they feel about it all. The answers revolved around the support and education that have been provided and the positive changes they have been experiencing. Which developed into the themes of: 1- change, 2-participation and 3-support. From the results cited subthemes evolved to reflect the responses and inputs collected and framed into positional statements covering all the main points of the collected information. The graph below shows the themes that emerged from the

interviews and the subthemes that were spoken about specifically within each of the themes by the participants.

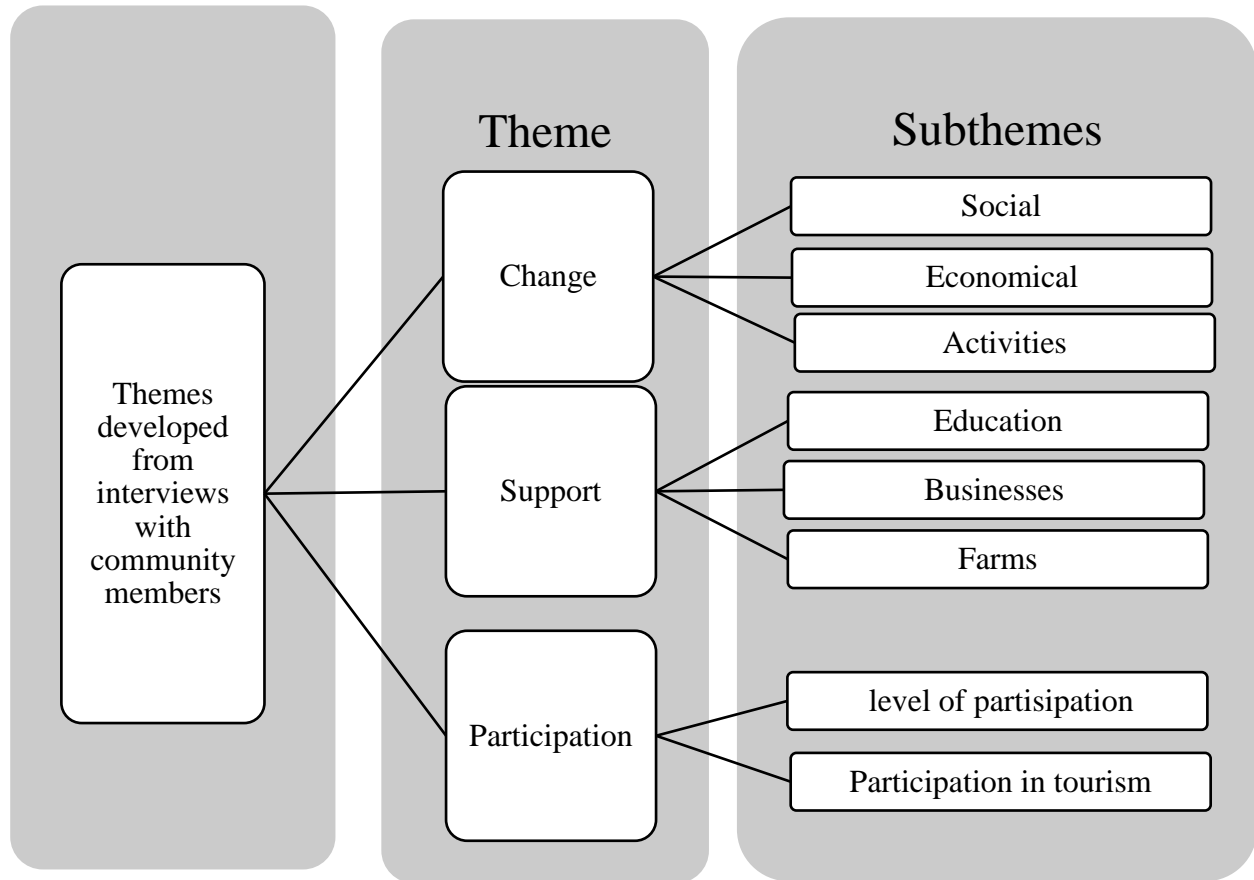


Fig 39. The themes established from the interviews with the community members (Developed by Author)

5.2.1. Theme 1: Change; the effect and outcome of change on the community of AIUla

Knowing that AIUla went from being a small farming community in a rural part of Saudi to a touristic destination promoted on a global level, the first of the themes for this set of interviews was clearly identified to be change. The subthemes were established by accumulating the most discussed issues in change happening within AIUla : 1- social 2- economical 3- activities and entertainment.

Table 5 on page 69 specifies the input of those participants from the community and their perspective of the effect of change within AIUla and composed positional statements providing an informative summery of the participants input on the change and how it has impacted their lives and the community around them.

- **Positional Statements**

Social changes: All participants agreed that the changes are positive, but highlighted that is not a unanimous opinion within the community They all went into detail about the controversy surrounding such social changes but that it's a generational issue and an issue with the acceptance of globalization of Saudi and the countries vision on a moderate country and accepts all freedoms. One of the participants pinpointed that the RCU are promoting changes that don't regard the community values and social norms

Economical changes: participants mentioned that before the RCU turned AIUla into a touristic destination, they had no jobs there were rarely jobs available for females, women had very few options to make money. And now they have a variety of options for economic gain.

All participants agree that the city has flourished with tourism and this economic growth has affected individuals greatly. The farm owners both reflected how their farms did not provide them any substantial financial gain, which has changed after the development.

A single participants pointed out the shortcomings of the management of the RCU by highlighting certain requirements which are crippling his income and success, although thou same requirements are discussed positively by the other participants as making a positive change that betters the environment and success of the tourism development.

Activities and entertainment: The changes brought with it a great deal of opportunities for the community of AIUla, not only financial but the joy of more available entertainment was reflected a few times within the interviewees responses, especially mentioning restaurants, events and education was also mentioned as activities " I'm really glad I got to experience the vocational school; I was always interested in art it was a hobby now I'm getting to learn the technical aspect of different art forms" said a participant

5.2.2. Theme 2: Support; The support given to the community of AIUla

When planning for heritage tourism within a city the community should have benefits of this endeavor, it is not always easy for them when sudden change arises and to have a successful touristic destination the participation of the community is of major importance. When community members find the support needed to better their lives and be part of tourism the chances of having their support and their positive interaction within tourism increases. For these reasons there was a focus on understanding what support has the community actually gained from the RCU to participate and to upgrade their living situation.

The subthemes were established from the main types of support that the participants have felt most important and incorporated in their everyday life, 1- Education 2- Business 3- Farm development. The table below details how each of the participants discussed how they have felt the support by the RCU and how it has impacted their lives and the lives of those around them.

- **Positional Statement**

Education: Majority of the participants were very grateful to the RCU and the opportunities they have provided them, the vocational program is known by almost everyone in the city, the educational opportunities are acknowledged and being used by any resident that shows interest. Training programs were mentioned to be provided in various fields as needed. The farms were supported with training for the employees provided by the RCU.

Business: It was stated how the RCU are very attentive to artists and artisans, providing them opportunities in the areas with highest visitors, providing them with the tools and skills they need to develop themselves and their work.

The 2 business owners discussed how they were provided spaces in the old town to sell their crafts. How the RCU encouraged them to participate by providing them free booths they also helped them by providing them with span machine to be able to serve the tourists more conveniently. They also mentioned how a large number of shops in the old town are owned by those who learned their skills from the vocational program run by RCU.

Between two farmers there was contradictory input of how helpful and supportive the RCU has been in development, training and support.

But there is a need to point out that the participant that was unsatisfied with the RCU's support was being contradictory in his statement.

Farm: Both farmers discussed how the RCU encouraged them to open their farms for visitors, and helped them with a structured plan to develop it into an attraction. One of the participants transferred his farm into a walking pathed garden featuring a fresh juice bar, with guides to explain each of the plants and their uses and history in addition to brief description of the history of farming in AlUla. and was promoted by RCU as one of the memorable farms to experience in AlUla.

One of the farms was encouraged by members of the RCU to become a restaurant to host visitors and provide them with an authentic experience, but according to the owner of the farm he felt

more restricted and unable to provide the needed changes for the development as they have requested it.

5.2.3. Theme 3: Participation; The level of participation by the community in tourism

there are different levels when it comes to community participation in any kind of development, this theme was developed to better understand the amount of participation AIUla community have within the touristic development of their city, their willingness to participate and the amount of satisfaction that is reflected from their participation.

The participation of the community is split into 2 subthemes the level of participation to understand and collect data on the level of participation granted within the development of the city as a touristic destination and the changes happening to the city, and the second subtheme understanding their participation within tourism and interaction with the tourist.

- **Positional Statement**

Level of participation: it is clearly reflected from the interviews that empowerment was the goal and is being achieved with the amount of support given to the community to develop. Most participants seemed satisfied with their involvement within the developments and the management of the RCU. None of the respondents confirmed attending any of the meetings mentioned to inform the community of developments and changes, even though they mentioned hearing that such meetings are happening, they did not show much interest in visiting the exhibition revealing AIUla master plan. One specific participant was disgruntled by the lack of collaboration requested from the community and highlighted that even though they are providing empowerment tools to community members they are lacking when it comes to informing and consulting with local members of the community who have worked in tourism previously and have a better understanding of the nature of AIUla and its community. The participant clarified how it was difficult to gain the information he needed from the RCU to discuss the required changes and developments requested from them to promote his farm and provide him with support for his establishment, specifying that there was a clear lack of coordination within the RCU when it came to existing establishments and their contact points.

Within Tourism: all participants agreed that the community has been deeply involved with the tourists. They feel they are provided with all the good opportunities and requested to be part of all aspects of the touristic development. One participant stressed on his dissatisfaction on how

the RCU are managing the involvement of the community in tourism by trying to educate them when he feels they have more to offer and should be asked rather than told.

Theme 1: Change; the effect and outcome of change on the community of AIUla			
P	Social Changes	Economic	Activities
1	There is a different level of acceptance between different age groups. Most people in their 20's and 30's have been happy with the changes in Al Ula, we are very happy with the development of our city. The older generations are not as accepting of change they want everything as it is as they always knew it, they don't think about the long-term benefits.	No one really knew our city before. Now with tourism we have so many visitors regularly coming which gave us so much more working opportunities and jobs available	It's wonderful, we barley had any restaurants before now we have options and international chains, of course it's positive, we have more services, jobs are more available and opportunities are endless. Developments are constantly increasing.
2	You know how people are in Saudi, and things are changing these changes are good, I think people are just in a general shock of the grand changes seeing women working, seeing women interacting with men even if it's on a professional level. But these changes are things the whole Kingdome is working on changing. we are becoming more accepting and if anything, this will help	Thanks to the tourism and the programs that have been offered we have been able to start our own business. Me and my sisters work on these crafts ourselves and support our family with our incomes and so many of our relatives and friends are also finding these kinds of benefits.	we have so many different developments now and we are very happy about it with the start of the festivals and the tourists not just in working opportunities but the infrastructure has been upgraded. We are finally like a real city with things to do and places to go, the activities the options the workshops so many opportunities
3	at first we felt things are not acceptable but little by little we started seeing the positive and accepting the changes. it's still all new to the community, but I see around me that everyone is happy with all the developments and visitors.	It would be so much more beneficial if the festivals were yearlong, because as it is now, my income is specified to high tourist which happens during the season. But I am still very grateful for this. The whole city most of the people now have generally more income and can provide better lives for their families	We always had our own activities that revolved around our families and friends, I guess the difference now is mostly for the younger kids who get to enjoy different things new things. Instead of feeling like we need to travel for certain activities, these activities are coming to us
4	The people of AIUla are conservative people they might not be openly objecting but they don't agree with the changes merely accepting that they are happening. these people's mentality is different they are very conservative, we will need time to change the mentality that has been around for 30 years of our lives. The changes came suddenly and organized music and	Of course, there has been an economical boost since the development of tourism, but not as much as expected also it feels like so much is being put to benefit others rather than the locals. I have been hiring locals only and providing them with locations in my farm to open booths, but the RCU are not	Yes there has been a lot of additions of activities in the city, but are these additions catering to the community, I don't think so. The young people might be enjoying it but these things don't go along with our traditions. Air balloon shows and concerts, this goes against the

	<p>festivals and allowed the mingling of both genders, and people are in shock, and a lot of the local families find it unacceptable.</p> <p>We have been working for 2 years now and I get attacked a lot , don't expect that the mentality here has changed, you can find 30-year-old that have been brainwashed with the old system for 30 years you can't change that school of thought in a year or two, it will need time</p> <p>But I have hope in the new generation to break this cycle set by all previous generations, but it's all about time, we need a year or two more for people to realize what are the goals of the RCU.</p>	<p>financially helping. They request a lot of changes to my farm that I can't accommodate and they threatened to close my farm if I don't make the changes. I have to raise prices and this effect my local business and its harder for me to pay my employees. When tourism first started I hired over 20 staff members from the community but I had to keep cutting down because it's becoming unaffordable with the change and requirements the RCU are putting on me.</p>	<p>community's beliefs and values.</p>
5	<p>The city became lively, I think we never appreciated or understood the value of what we had, then the RCU came and we suddenly realized how much we have to offer. More businesses started opening, more people started visiting, we grew. for me I suddenly had more pride in where I came from and what I have. The city is growing it started having more opportunities more activities its was always beautiful but now it has the world eyes on it and started to see what it has to offer.</p> <p>The Saudi community always has concerns, and these changes are happening so fast but in the long run it will be beneficial for everyone and I think people are starting to realize this by now. Especially after the date festival so many farmers produced and sold a number of them were upset in the beginning with the RCU claiming they are here to help, not believing them, but they saw what they did and they gained the benefits and started to change their views. For me it has been the best thing that comes my way.</p>	<p>So many changes, we had our farms for generations, we grew different trees and plant but it was just a space we used for our own family functions. It was always beautiful but I think we didn't even appreciate what it could offer. After the tourism so many people like my family started opening their farms for the public, to enjoy to walk through to learn about different plants that grow in Al Ula. This gave us all great opportunities to develop and use what we have and turn it into an income while sharing it with the world. I run the farm and I love it, the RCU helped me in designing different areas and provided me with all the needed support they made it so easy and constantly refer tourists to come and visit it.</p>	<p>We barley had much restaurants or public activities to participate in. Life revolved around socializing with family in our private spaces. Now there is so much to do. One of my favorite things is that I get to meet people from all over and it's so interesting. It's hard to believe how cocooned before to how life is like now.</p>

Table 5. Theme 1: Change; the effect and outcome of change on the community of AIUla

Theme 2: Support; The support given to the community of AIUla

P	Education	Businesses	Farm Development
1	<p>Training programs are being provided in a lot of different fields with job opportunities after completion. This gave me the opportunity to do what I am doing now. I had graduated from high school a few years ago and I never thought I would be able to do more or support myself have own income. But thanks to the opportunities provided to train I was able to get the job working with tourists and having something to do.</p>	<p>I don't know much about businesses changing. More locals are opening stores, restaurants and other services I see that, and appreciate it, as it makes life easier and fuller.</p>	<p>It's nice to see all these private farms that used to be ignored and closed up open for everyone and being able to enjoy these places. People that didn't own farms like my family didn't have much access to these places, just a few used to be public but not very nice places. Now we can enjoy so many of them and they have been upgraded and became really nice and enjoyable.</p>
2	<p>The training school for crafts is one of the best things that happened to us, my sister took a year there specializing in jewelry making and then we worked with her to make jewelry and started selling them, it's a family business now. They provided the training for her and the equipment, helped her in providing what we needed for the business afterwards, and once we were ready they offered us this booth to start selling and in this location (old town) the business is going great and the booth is also free now since it's our first year working on this, these are the kind of things the RCU offers they have been very helpful.</p>		
3	<p>last year I was part of the seasonal festival with a job I was not very confident with my crafts, but I was able to work a job within tourism and service, when the RCU found out that I work with art and make products they requested that I start selling and offered me a booth in the middle of one of the heritage sites that all tourists visit, they also gave me a span machine to make it easier. They help me do the financial calculations and promote my work. They pushed me to sell my products before I was even confident in them. Now I'm doing so good. Without the RCU starting to promote AIUla and make it known I would have not been able to reach to this situation.</p>		
4	<p>The RCU offered training of my employees but I didn't feel it was sufficient, I brought in a trainer myself that was able to be more detailed and give them longer courses explaining and teaching them everything from welcoming to understanding all aspects of the farms and the history of AIUla. The RCU constantly offers workshops but I am a farmer I don't want to sit in a lecture and hear someone talk to me about things I already know I don't</p>	<p>The RCU keeps contacting me to make changes to my farm they mention how much they would love to have my location as a tourist destination but I don't find the requirements they ask for feasible or realistic, they want more walkways more lighting more arrangements, this would crowd the place and in my opinion make it less authentic also it is all too expensive for me to make these changes, they wanted me to add smoking to my farm which is something I don't agree with as I don't think my community would accept or approve. I am not getting any financial support and that's okay but they are not providing any other kind of support either, I wanted to build structures to provide various spaces but they wouldn't provide me with</p>	

	<p>think they support in education in the correct manner that is actually needed, they can do more.</p>	<p>permits. Getting the permits, I required was a large hassle as I kept contacting various offices within the RCU who kept diverting me to other departments, this kept happening for a while till I just went to their main office and still that did no good, eventually I got contacted by the head of some department asking me why I didn't reach out to her, even though I did, there was so much confusion within the communication and clear directions on who is in charge of what. They might have a good vision but I don't feel it is a realistic. I support all these changes greatly but I feel my inputs are greatly sidetracked and I think that how a lot of the farm owners feel as well, we are told what to do and how to do it, this might be a great method when dealing with some of the farms as they have never worked in this field or with tourist and are actually building up from zero, but in the case of other places like mine and the other farms that have been hosted tourism since before the development and start of the season, they should have asked our opinions or inputs as we know how things work, they might know tourism and are professionals in the field, but we know our farm our culture and our people. And the consideration of small things that mater greatly to the community could have a greater impact</p>
5	<p>My brother has been provided with the opportunity to study abroad with a full scholarship. This was never something we thought was possible before but as we opened our farm for visitors he got interested in learning how to manage such a business. I also know about the vocational school that teaches different crafts which has rented a part of our farm to provide some of those students a location to sell or display their work paid for by the school itself.</p>	<p>So many changes, we had our farms for generations, we grew different trees and plant but it was just a space we used for our own family functions. It was always beautiful but I think we didn't even appreciate what it could offer. After the tourism so many people like my family started opening their farms for the public, to enjoy to walk through to learn about different plants that grow in Al Ula. This gave us all great opportunities to develop and use what we have and turn it into an income while sharing it with the world. I run the farm and I love it, the RCU helped me in designing different areas and provided me with all the needed support they made it so easy and constantly refer tourists to come and visit it.</p>

Table 6. Theme 2: Support; The support given to the community of AlUla

Theme 3: Participation; The level of participation by the community in tourism		
	Level of participation	In tourism
1	<p>The job requires me to collect tourists input and see how successful most destinations and activities are from the tourist's point of view. I know there are sometimes meetings and councils to discuss changes of areas and developments in neighborhoods, I haven't attended any of them and honestly I don't know where this information is shared, I just know it does happen.</p> <p>I have not visited the exhibition where they are revealing AIUla's masterplan, it wasn't something I considered</p>	<p>All jobs interacting with tourist are by locals. Maybe the upper management are not locals to the community but within the tourism sector the people I interact with and the people the tourist interact with are usually people from AIUla. I have noticed that the RCU are very deterrent in keeping the community the face of the tourism sector in AIUla</p>
2	<p>The vocational school is where we got all the main information on how to start our business and through it we applied to sell our products and get our booth. We are really trusting the professionals as we do see how great it's all going and it has affected us positively. They constantly presented us with good opportunities and provided what is needed.</p>	<p>Our store location is in the middle of old town so interaction with tourists is what we do.</p>
3	<p>I know they are opening an exhibition in Maraya and they have it available for any local to go visit and see what are the plans for AIUla development, but personally I haven't visited it. I think it would be amazing if we could have tourism open all through the year not just during the season since this is my main and only income.</p>	<p>first season I got work with the touristic sector in service, this year I was asked to participate with my art offering me a location to sell</p>
4	<p>The participant was disappointed in not being involved in the planning phase and only asked to be involved later on by opening his farm and told what to do with it. He was eager about being part of the planning of the heritage tourism and collaborating with the officials and RCU but whenever he tried to reach out they sent him through a different department and couldn't establish any useful communication with the RCU, he mentioned how he and others from the local community especially the older generations have a lot to offer, have a different deeper perspective of the city, heritage and culture that is being disregarded, also adding that involving them might have reflected in their enthusiasm with the touristic development in the city. He specified how the RCU involved who they</p>	<p>Yes they are asking us to open for tourism and to be part of the touristic development, but they want it under their own conditions and that isn't the best way to do it. It is not our nature to do things the way they are requesting them. I think they are bringing too many outsiders to run the touristic activities and to try to teach us and inform us on how to deal with our businesses, we know how to do all this, we have been doing them for generations. We need different types of support.</p>

	<p>considered community leaders which were the head of the tribes of AlUla, but he voiced his opinion that the heads of tribes don't share or discuss issues with the community " I don't even know who these called sheikhs are, these statuses don't mean much anymore and they are not the type that will share or ask others". He found that the RCU missed the target with their idea of involving the community with the planning phases, when they could have reached out to the whole community via social media, and that could have made the development more authentic and more empowering for the residents of AlUla. He does agree like everyone else that throughout the developments locals have been getting more opportunities and benefits, he just didn't see any effort to involve the community or even inform them.</p>	
<p>5</p>	<p>It feels like the whole city is part of the tourism of AlUla, I only see locals working within tourism. The management is not local but I can't deny they are putting so much effort in obtaining the community as the main source to provide the touristic development with the authenticity expected from a location promoted for heritage tourism.</p>	<p>they encouraged us to participate in the season by opening the farm to tourists. it was very pleasing to see the efforts they put when it came to local farms the support they gave for us to engage and be part of the tourism of our city. Feeling so hands on made so much difference in the encouragement of the community to be part of tourism and to have pride of all the changes.</p>

(Table 7. Theme 3: Participation; The level of participation by the community in tourism)

5.3.Result of Tourist Surveys

The number of survey respondents reached 117 between the 1st of April to the 15th of April, 86 of whom were eligible to be considered due to their recent visit to AlUla for heritage tourism, with a variation of ages between 18 to 55. The researcher also recognizes the chance of gender bias as the survey respondents were 86% female. The survey focuses on the satisfaction of tourists as it is a key component that highlights the success of any touristic development. The satisfaction level is detriment by the availability of clear and easy interpretation tools, availability of adequate services, a sense of the place through interaction with community members.

Question	# eligible respondants (n=86)	Responses			
Age	100% (n=86)	18-35	56.7%	35-55	43.3%
Gender	100% (n=86)	Male	13.9%	Female	86.1%
Resident of Saudi	100% (n=86)	Yes	89.6%	No	10.4%

Fig 40. The Demographic of Eligible Survey Participants (Source: Author)

Included in the demographic section of the survey was an inquiry about the participants preference when traveling for tourism. This was added to understand the type of activities the participants prefer, as it may affect their satisfaction levels if they are bias to a certain type of tourism. The results found that most participants are nearly equal in what are the reasons they would choose a specific location for tourism.

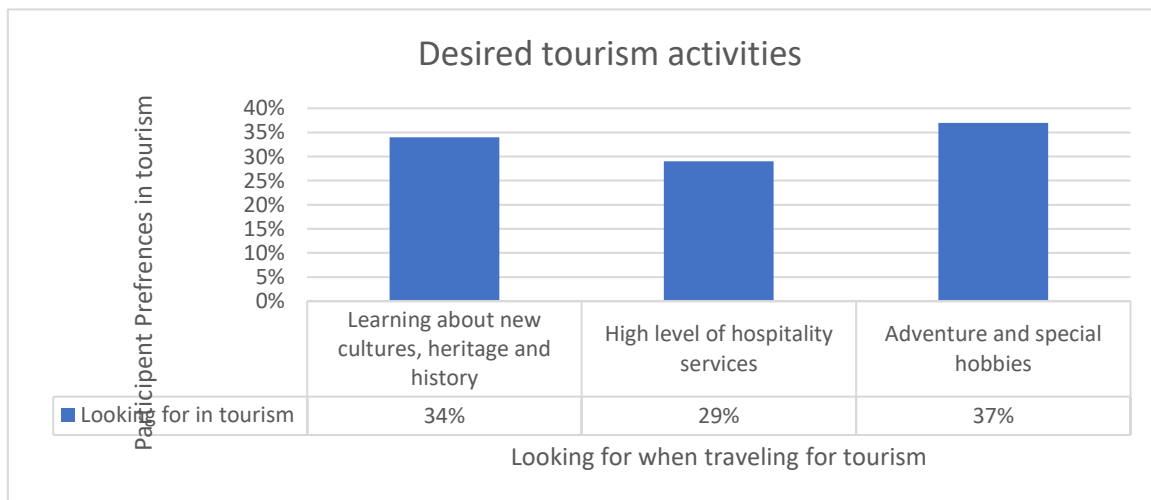


Fig 41. Percentage of survey participants preference when traveling for tourism (Source: Author)

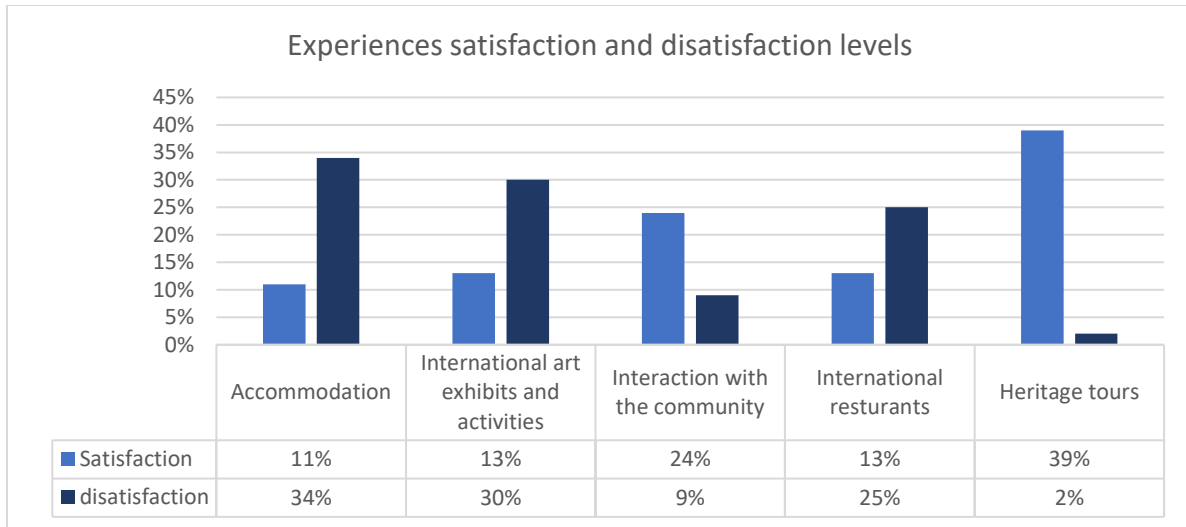


Fig 42. Graphs of satisfaction and dissatisfaction of tourists (Source: Author)

Participants were given the option to select what they enjoyed in their visit to AIUla, as well as what they disliked of their experience. Fig 41 shows that the heritage tours lead as the most satisfactory experience followed by the interaction with community members.

Accommodations was the most displeasing along with the art and music festivals being a close second.

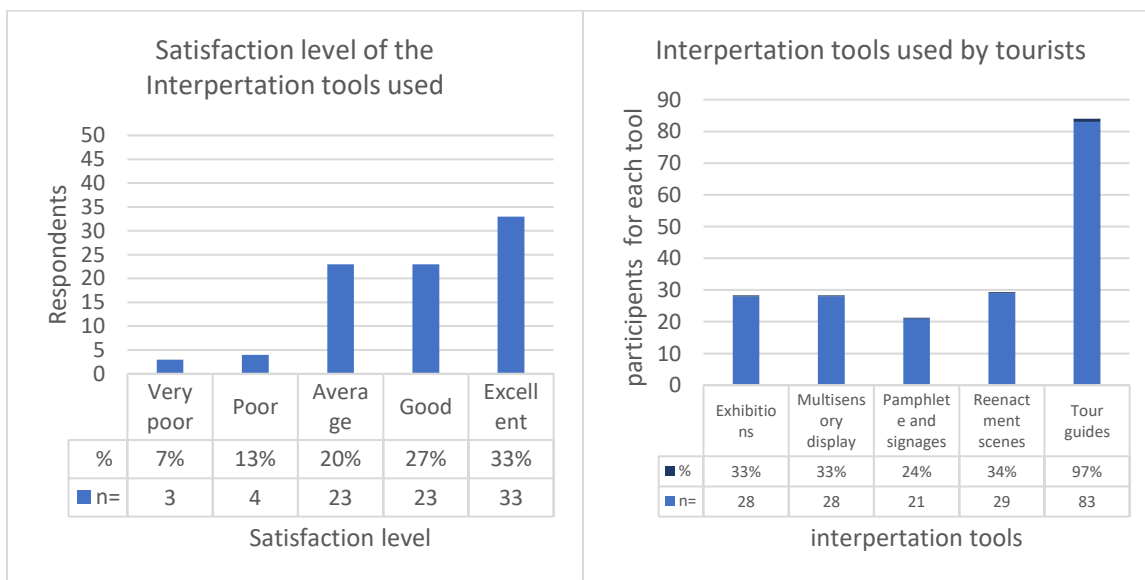


Fig 43. Satisfaction levels of interpretation tools (Source: Author)

Fig 44. Used interpretation tools by tourists (Source: Author)

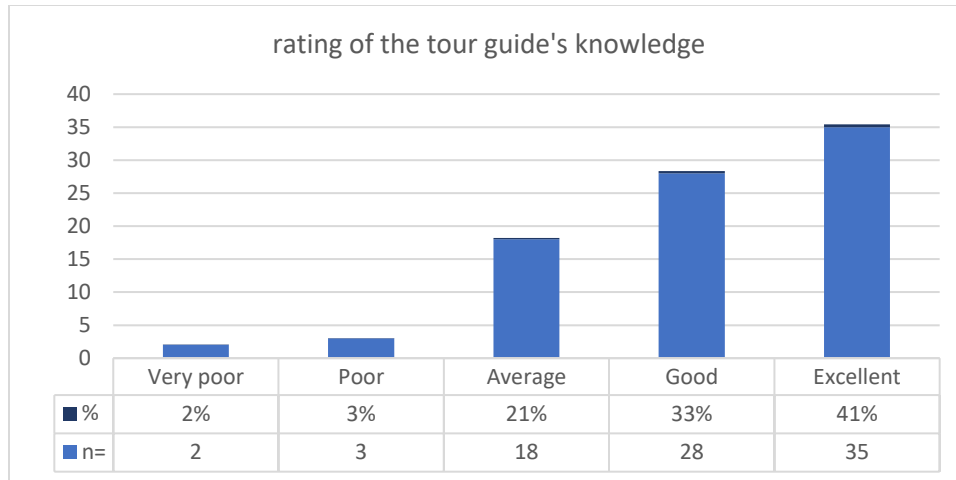


Fig 45. Rating of tour guides knowledge (Source: Author)

The survey collected information on the interpretation tools available and used by the visitors of AIUla and their remarks on them . Tour guides are the main interpretation method used in AIUla as visitors may not access any heritage zone without the presence of a tour guide, so the research acquired how the tourist rate the knowledge provided by the tour guide.

Tourist guides are used by 97% of the participants, towering in percentage over the rest of the provided interpretation tools, 80% of participants rated the interpretation tools as average and above with excellent being the highest at 33%. Rating the tour guides knowledge with 74% between good and excellent

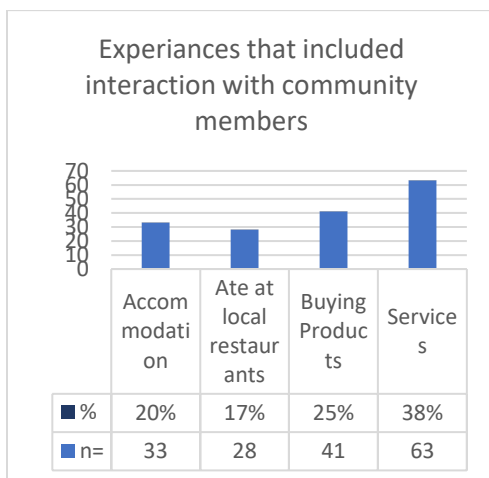


Fig 46. Interactive experiences with community members (Source: Author)

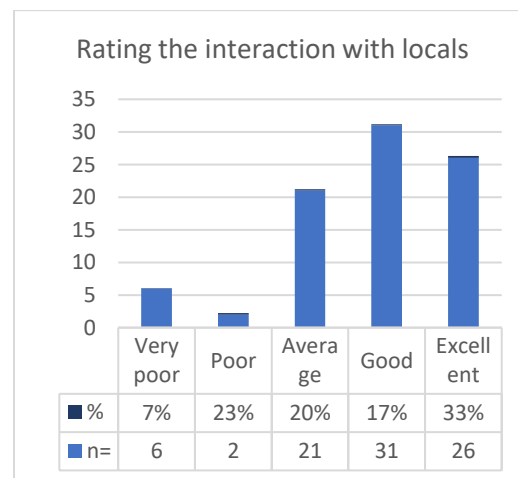


Fig 47. Rating interaction with community members (Source: Author)

To understand the experience that tourists get with interaction with locals, the survey included a section to acquire about when did they get to interact and how did they rate the interaction. Service providers such as tour guides and drivers were the highest percentage at 38% with trading interactions being a second at 25%. Eating at local restaurant was experienced by only 17% of the participants and renting a room, house or a farm from a local was only experienced by 20%. Majority participants rated the experience above average with only 8 participants rating it poor and very poor.

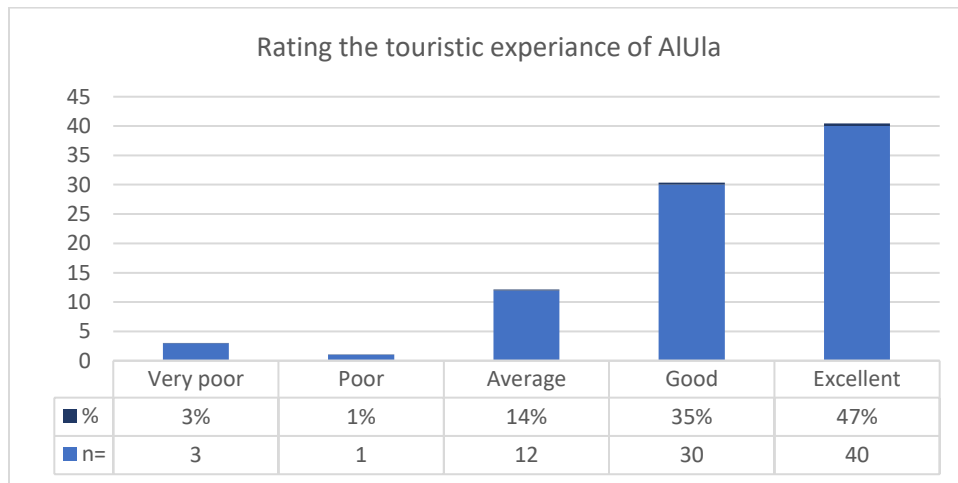


Fig 48. Rating the overall touristic experiance of AIUla (Source: Author)

The final question of the survey requested the rating of the overall touristic experiance in AIUla. With 4% of participants rating the experiance below average and 82% collectively good and excellent, with excellent being the highest percentage of responses.

6. Chapter Six: Discussion, Recommendation and Conclusion

6.1. Discussion

The research started with detailing 3 managerial approaches to heritage tourism 1-top-down approach, 2- value based approach, and 3- integrated approach. Through the study of heritage tourism destinations that have adopted one of these 3 approaches, it was found that the integrated approach has the highest chance of sustaining a successful heritage tourism development. A framework was established using the collected data from the literature, concluding the key components and critical aspects within heritage tourism that need to be addressed to reach a holistic heritage tourism development. The research identified the key components to be 1-the heritage, 2- the community, 3- the tourists.

The results of the in-depth interviews with the professionals and community members supported the indications that the RCU aimed at following an integrated management approach. It can be demonstrated in the correlation between the identified key components and the policies used in the development of heritage tourism in AIUla. However, it was evident that community involvement and participation did not match the expectations of a fully integrated approach to heritage tourism. the RCU has neglected indispensable stages within the participation process especially when it applies by disregarding the importance of informing and consulting community members with knowledge and interest in the development of tourism in AIUla. Community participation usually entails the consulting and collaborating with the community and then empowering them. This exclusion draws a characteristic of the top-down approach. this was evident from the collected primary data through in-depth interviews. The RCU offered a support framework that was perceived by professionals as critical with little or sufficient community involvement. Regardless the RCU targeted the empowerment of the community and pursued it with a degree of success.

In regards to the key components of heritage tourism needed to achieve a holistic management approach, the RCU seemed to acknowledge all the important aspects and initiated various policies and programs addressing them. Based on the in-depth interviews conducted with RCU professionals and community members, The following analytical discussion examines the RCU different programs and approaches to mangling the heritage tourism program at AIUla. it highlights the various strategies that meet or fall short of the expectations of a holistic managerial approach to heritage tourism.

1-The Heritage

- **Preservation:** To ensure the preservation of the natural heritage, programs were initiated such as the Hamaya program and the Rawee programs. The rawee providing guided tours to oversee the visitation of tourists mitigates any unfavorable actions from visitors that would result in damage to the heritage. while the Hamaya raises the community awareness and understanding regarding the preservation and protection of the natural heritage, to ensure the protection, conservation and maintenance of heritage sites.
- **Balance between heritage and tourism:** The balance was significantly achieved as they adopted the policy of controlled tourism, using time and date stamped tickets to enter any of the heritage sites so minimize overcrowding as a method of protection for the heritage from degradation and deterioration. The Rawee program also provided a method of balance by providing tourists with the chance to see, learn, and experience the heritage sites, without causing overcrowding or inducing deterioration overtime. With the addition of controlling the movements of the tourists within the heritage sites, by guiding them through and giving them the best experience without harming or disturbing the heritage.

2-The Community

- **Benefiting the Community:** 1-The socioeconomic growth of AlUla was clearly reflected in assuring majority of jobs were given to community members. 2-Higher educational opportunities were provided to AlUla community with scholarships in a variety of hospitality management sectors aiming to empower the younger generation in taking control of tourism in their city. 3-The vocational school provided all community member with the chance to learn any of the traditional crafts of their culture and furthering this by supporting them afterwards with opportunities in tourist dense zones of the city to open businesses. 4-The Prioritizing of locals in all available job opportunities. 5-Providing workshops to enhance business and management skills for those with establishments catering to tourism. 6-Providing financial compensation for all those participating in any of the programs offered including the Rawee programs, the Hamaya program as well as students of the vocational school. 7-Encouraging members of the community with special interests and skills to start up tourist activities and providing them with support by promoting them to the visitors. 8-Encouraging farm owners to open their farms for tourism and providing them with the needed information on development requirements and educating them

on farming methods 9- promote farm productions by initiating the date festival that was a global event.

- Respecting the community: The RCU reflected aspect of respecting the community by: 1- maintaining policies that require locals from the community to be able to represent themselves by means of holding positions where they get to interact with tourists such as tourist guides. 2- Providing local business owners with the prime locations for tourism. 3-Working on the empowerment of the local community with educational opportunities and support, as well as providing them with the necessary knowledge in hospitality. 4-The policies followed focused on the empowerment of the community to develop and gain all the needed knowledge to be able to sustain the benefits to the community on a permanent basis. This was done by enhancing their capabilities and providing them with the needed tools and knowledge for a long-term effect on their development.

The interview analysis reflected in noticeable lack of community participation in identifying the capability of those in the community to contribute with their knowledge in heritage and culture. Rather the RCU assumed the role of dictating and determining what the local community needs without considering what they have to offer in terms of experience and insight on the community and history of AlUla. It is worth mentioning that the method used to manage community participation was highly appreciated by those who needed that level of assistance such as new business owners without prior experience, whereas it had an opposite effect on those with experience in tourism and cultural and historical knowledge of the area, who were highly interested in being involved.

3- The Tourists

- Tourist Satisfaction: Tourist satisfaction was apparent from survey result. 1-The feeling of authenticity was reflected in the heritage development by providing policies to retain the architectural integrity of the city. 2-Providing the tourists with all needed services without disruption of the aesthetics and spirit of the place. 3-achievement of authenticity and connection to the cultural heritage by providing community members as tour guides.
- Interpretation: The Rawee program is the primary interpretation tool used in AlUla, 1- focusing on training local community members to be certified tour guides. 2-ensuring the availability of a Rawee with all tourists visiting the heritage sites.3- Using controlled tourism to ensure an ideal

experience. 4-In addition to the tour guides other tools are provided to enhance the experience such as interactive multimedia technology, signages, structures containing historic information. As can be clarified in the following diagram, the RCU focused on establishing a number of programs based on education for the community in fields that are directed to the protection of the local cultural, and the natural heritage. The programs provide the foundation for the sustainability of a successful heritage tourism development, and contribute to the protection of the heritage and the development of the community, which advances the achievement of the key components to develop a holistic heritage tourism development.

The below diagram provides detailed reflection on how the policies and programs developed by the RCU directly effect in reaching the 6 objectives needed for a sustainable heritage tourism development. It highlights the building polices and educational programs pouring into the achievement of the objectives.

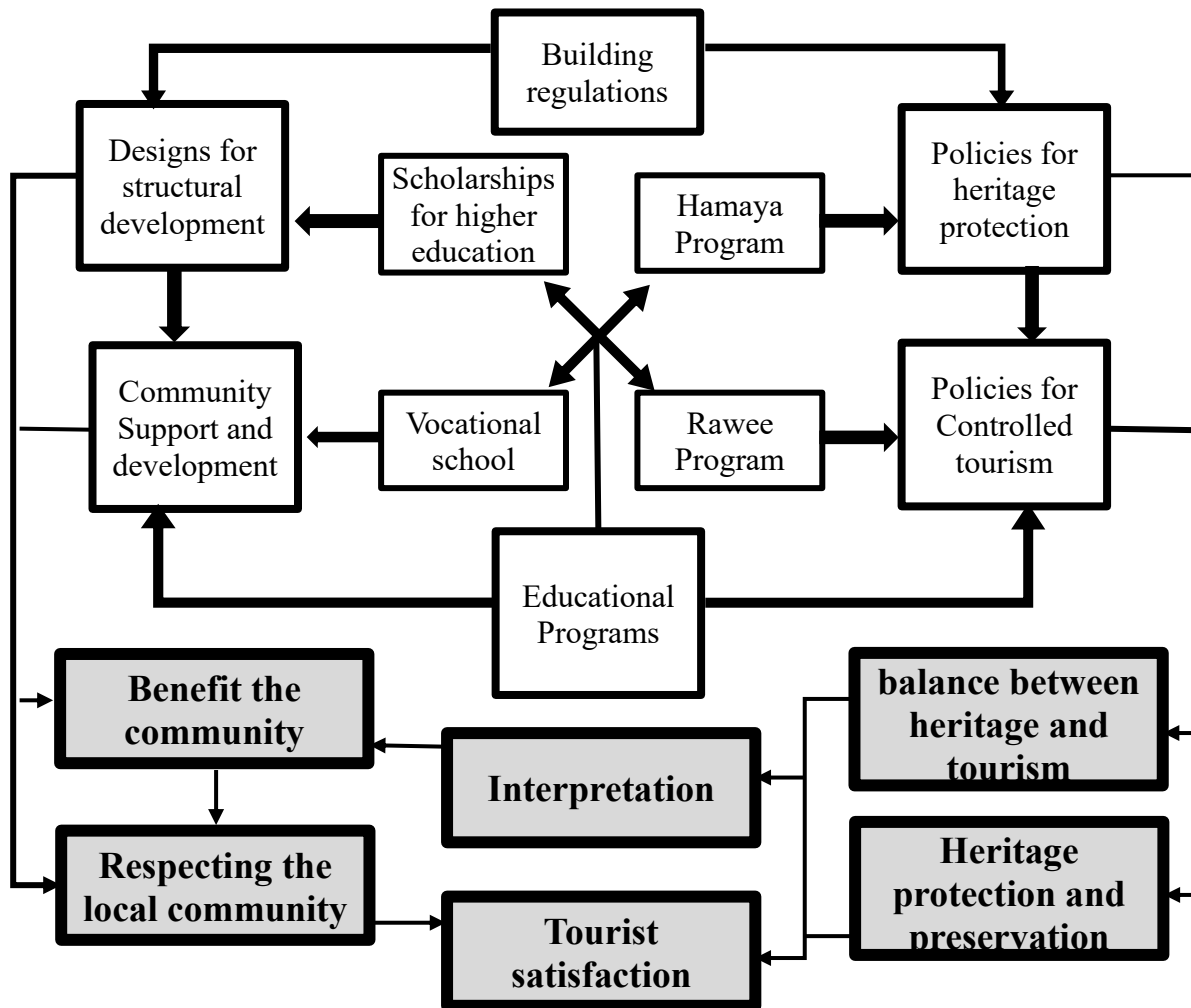


Fig 49. Programs and policies and their relation to the key components of heritage tourism (Source: Author)

To detail the policies used to ensure a satisfactory heritage tourism experience table 8 was devised with clear description of the methods used and policies established to reach key areas of tourist satisfaction.

Areas of satisfaction	RCU policies aimed at reaching a satisfactory tourist experience
effective Interpretation tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main focus in interpretation are trained tour guides that are required to escort all visitors to heritage sites. • Availability of a variation of interpretation tools such as pamphlets, multimedia interactive phone applications, and signages throughout the sites. • Providing information zones in existing structures without Permanente effects to the historic fabric
Gratifying experience at heritage sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Controlling overcrowding by ticket methods using time stamps to ensure an acceptable number of visitors at a time. • Providing various interpretation tools. • Providing the needed services in innovative designs without disturbing the natural environment . • Providing authentic cultural experience through historically accurate renovations and developments that are noninvasive or disturbing to the environment
Authentic cultural and natural experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation and protection of heritage for history. • Respecting cultural and natural landscape. • Local guides that have knowledge in both cultural and historic background. • Ensuring authenticity in all developments around the city by using historical methods in building and using natural martials from the environment as it was done in the past. • Providing knowledgeable tour guides from the local community.
interesting activities &experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing activities that have no harm or effect on the heritage within the heritage sites, such as the balloon festival for a bird’s eye view of the city and heritage. • Stargazing to enjoy the night sky with minimum artificial city lights. • Renovating heritage points in authentic manner to reflect the historical aesthetics and provide uses for tourism such as the development of AIUla old town. • Designing unintrusive structures while providing tourism activities for visitors such as the Maraya hall and Friday market and the development of AIUla old town

Table 8. RCU policies aimed at reaching a satisfactory tourist experience

Table 9 details the programs and policies implemented by RCU to benefit the community and protect the natural and cultural heritage of the city, while addressing the components needed to achieve a sustainable heritage tourism development.

Policies and programs implemented by RCU to benefit AIUla and its community		
Programs and policies	Policies Impact on the Community	Policies Impact on the Heritage
Rawee Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing education and job opportunities • Being in a position to represent their community and culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing interpretation tools for tourists • Understanding and appreciating the heritage and encouraging its protection and conservation
Controlled tourism	Providing jobs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimizing over crowding Protection of the heritage
Hamaya Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides income and respect to the cultural and natural landscape • Paid program to learn about the importance of preservation and conservation and spreading the knowledge in the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preserving the heritage for future generation and insuring the sustainability of the heritage tourism
City Development Guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing free services of a design studio to renovate or build structures in the city be in business or residential • support in the means and direction to develop the city 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preserving the spirit of the city and the historical experience for the visitors Protecting the spirit of the city & its heritage by reducing developmental effects & respecting the continuation of the historical context in AIUla
Higher education support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing the community with the chance to earn better income with higher degrees and specialization • Empowering the community by providing them the chance to develop themselves and reach higher positions and opportunities to gain the most of the development of AIUla and the heritage tourism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing the chance to local members of the community to learn more in heritage and its preservation and tourism and its management • Education will always be the source of understanding and appreciation of the heritage and its preservation and ensure sustainability of the tourism it attracts
Local craft Development and support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing income opportunities to local members of the community • Empowering members of the community to start small businesses providing them with all the support needed to begin a business from scratch 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing authentic products at heritage zones local crafts made by locals in traditional ways in a professional manner • Teaching the authentic manner of production starting from raw material to final product

Table 9. Policies and programs implemented by RCU to benefit AIUla and its community.

6.2.Recommendation:

After concluding the study, the researcher found a few aspects that would enhance the heritage touristic development in AIUla

- 1- Using a wider platform to reach the community and simplifying access to the information and plans of any future development. A practical means for this would be using social media accounts or a website specific to information directed to the local community of AIUla. Having it in constant update with the latest news on the developments, as well as all the requirements, regulations and policies that members of the community should be aware of. Such a platform would be efficient and accessible to everyone, in contrast with the current website that focuses on the promotion of AIUla for heritage tourism, and including general information about community participation, as this merging causes difficulty in acquiring any specific information directed or needed by the community.
- 2- Organizing a clear administration to be the point of contact between the RCU and the community. to ease the process of collecting information for the community members interested in participating within the touristic sector, as well as being used for inquiry, suggestions and concerns from the community. Such an establishment would give the sense of ownership to the community on the heritage touristic development if proved dependable and managed effectively. Having a physical location for meetings, workshops and any kind of community participation, managed by the local community for themselves would be a point of strength and empowerment. A community that feels they are in control of their city are more willing to be welcoming and appreciative of what they have. it would increase the feeling of pride and success and make them work harder to maintain and sustain the development of tourism rather than grow resentful of the changes imposed on them.
- 3- Increasing the focus on community participation with the methods advised above, giving the community clear roles and promoting the need for community engagements in all aspects of the touristic sector for the sustainability of the development. Working on the younger generations and building their pride and empowering them to understand the importance of their contributions and participation to maintain the tourism in the city and allow it to reach its highest potentials in the future.

6.3. Conclusion

The aim of this research has been to understand the factors that affect the sustainability of a heritage tourism development. It studied global management approaches to heritage tourism, and focusing on the development of AIUla Saudi Arabia. The primary data collected during this research shows that the management approach put emphasis on the heritage protection, balancing between its development and tourism, ensures the benefit of the community in ways that provide them with respect, and offers various interpretation tools and have showed high satisfaction levels from the results indicated by the survey.

It has been reflected through the interviews that the approach used in AIUla can be recognized as an integrated approach with some top-down characteristics. Due to the policies used, the community is highly regarded and emphasis is put on their benefit and participation in the touristic sector by focusing their efforts on empowering them to be able to sustain the heritage tourism in their city. Though the managerial approach to heritage tourism in AIUla lacks in participation of the community in the planning stages, the RCU has been focusing on empowering the community to develop themselves and educating the future generation by paving the road to a successful heritage touristic development.

In understanding the top-down approach used in AIUla heritage tourism development, we have to regard that tourism in the kingdom is a new sector, and heritage tourism of this scale has only been activated for the past 3 years in AIUla. The education, training and support of those living in AIUla changes the perception of top-down approaches being a failing approach to tourism as highlighted and repeated in the literature chapter.

This research provided new insight on the understanding of top-down approach in heritage tourism, in correlation to community empowerment. Empowering of the community may be the missing factor in previously studied top-down approaches of heritage tourism. The study reflected the community gratitude to the received support and encouragement given to the them to develop and learn all the aspects involved in the touristic development of AIUla as a heritage tourism development. Nonetheless the research needs to take into account that some within the community felt they had more to offer in terms of knowledge and insight on AIUla.

The survey results prove high satisfaction levels, even with tourists being disappointed with accommodation, they found the overall experience of heritage tourism in AIUla above expectations and that was reflected in the survey results.

The fact that the touristic sector in AIUla has only been established for 3 years puts limitation to the study, as it's hard to predict the sustainability, in theory the empowerment factor is more sustainable than only involving the community through participation, as they give them the tools to help their growth and contribute in all future advancements in the heritage tourism sector.

One of the objectives of the study was to provide recommendations to enhance the development of the heritage tourism management of AIUla, but with the unfolding of a new perspective to top-down approach strengthened with empowerment, the research should be followed by a deeper study acknowledging the advantage of empowerment of the community over involvement. In the beginning stages of the data collection, it was assumed that the management of the heritage tourism development only focused on informing and involving the community in minor issues in the development. But after concluding the research it is believed that the managerial approach used in AIUla is well thought through. Empowerment of the community seems to be an important factor that was greatly emphasized by the RCU policies and programs provided. Also, the sustainability of the heritage tourism in AIUla also surpasses the limitation of this research as it will take a few more years of tourism in the Kingdom to be able to properly conclude the success level of the endeavor.

The objectives of the research included an aim to extend guidelines and recommendations for achieving sustainable heritage tourism management for AIUla. Through the collected results it was found that the RCU covered and added to the expectation of the research framework, by including the empowering of the community and providing effective tools to encourage their interests and ambition. This type of considerations has a further outlook on the sustainability of heritage tourism in the long-term perspective.

Further studies need to be done to investigate heritage tourism managerial approaches that consider and put emphasis on community empowerment. Studies of this type usually are reviewed every few years to add update and study the results on longer periods of time that can last up to over 10 years. With such a newly developed heritage tourism sector in AIUla, and the Kingdom as a whole, it will take years to evaluate such a development of this magnitude especially with the consideration of the social aspect and the massive cultural changes in the Kingdom as a whole.

Appendix 1

Interview with professionals from the RCU protocol

Heritage

How do you maintain the authenticity of the place while developing the structures and services required to satisfy the tourists and cater to their need?

What methods are being used by RCU to raise awareness to both the community and tourists to the importance of conservation and preservation of heritage sites?

What are the steps being taken to ensure authenticity of the heritage touristic experience?

Tourists

What interpretation tools are used within heritage tourism sites to raise awareness and educate the visitors about heritage and the need to protect and conserve it?

When heritage sites are promoted for tourism they receive large numbers of tourist and that tends to affect the heritage sites, what are the strategies being followed to mitigate the negative effects of tourism and protect the sites?

How are issues of overcrowding at heritage sites being controlled?

Community

What are the areas the RCU has emphasized to promote local crafts?

What kind of involvement are offered to the community to be part of the touristic development?

Was the local community engaged in the heritage tourism development? What the level of involvement they participated in?

Interview with community members of AIUla protocol

Change

How do you see the changes since the RCU was established and started on the developments in AIUla?

How do you feel about AIUla becoming a very well-known touristic destination?

Do you see that the new developments for tourists have disrupted the authenticity of the place?

Support

What has the RCU offered the community?

Was it easy to access any needed information from the RCU?

In what way has the RCU affected the lives of those living in AIUla?

Participation

Were you constantly informed and involved within touristic developments for heritage tourism?

Have you been able to enjoy any of the touristic activities?

Have you visited the launch of the master plan to learn more about the city masterplan development for heritage tourism?

Tourist Survey

1- Have you visited AIUla Saudi Arabia, in the past 3 year?

Yes

No

2- Which of the age groups do you belong to?

18-35

36-55

Above 55

3- Specify your gender

Female

Male

4- Are you a resident of Saudi Arabia?

Yes

No

5- What do you look for when traveling for tourism?

- Learning about new cultures, heritage and history
- High level of hospitality services
- Adventure and special hobbies

6- Which of the following have you enjoyed the most during your visit to AIUla?

- The heritage tours
- The accommodations
- The art and music festivals
- The interaction with the local community
- The international restaurants

7-Which of the following you disliked about your visit to AIUla?

- The heritage tours
- The accommodations
- The lack of entertainment variation
- The interaction with the local community
- The international restaurants

8-How would you rate the tourist guidance you received in AIUla?

Poor 1 2 3 4 5 excellent

9-What where the tools available to learn about the culture and heritage of AIUla?

- Tourist guides
- Multi-sensory display
- Reenactment scenes
- Pamphlet and signages
- Exhibitions

10-How would you rate the knowledge of the tour guides during your visit to AIUla?

Poor 1 2 3 4 5 excellent

11-Which activities reflect your interaction with the local community of AIUla?

- Buying products and goods
- Service suppliers (tour guides, drivers, etc.)
- Accommodations (renting places from individuals such as rooms, houses, farms)
- Ate at local restaurants

12-How would you rate your interaction with the community of AIUla?

Poor 1 2 3 4 5 excellent

13-How would you rate your overall visit to AIUla? Poor 1 2 3 4 5 excellent

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