Harnessing appreciative inquiry in tourism planning: towards a strategy for poverty alleviation in marginalised communities

Tamer M. Elsawy

Abstract

Purpose – *This study aims to apply the appreciative inquiry approach (AI) to develop a tourism strategy for poverty alleviation in marginalised communities. The focus is to provide practical insights for leveraging tourism to drive positive socio-economic change for the impoverished, using Rosetta, a port city in Egypt with cultural and historical significance, as a case study.*

Design/methodology/approach – *This qualitative applied study uses the four-D phases of AI and thematic analysis to strategise tourism development in Rosetta. Through interviews, focus groups and field visits, the study identifies tourism potential, stakeholder aspirations and actionable strategies for sustainable development. The approach prioritises a bottom-up, community-centric and stakeholder-involved process, aiming for inclusive and equitable growth.*

Findings – *The study revealed Rosetta's underutilised tourism potential, emphasising heritage tourism. Although tourism offers some economic benefits, its impact on alleviating poverty in Rosetta remains limited. A holistic strategy for tourism development in Rosetta is proposed for economic growth and poverty reduction, focusing on sustainable management, local empowerment, enhanced marketing, improved infrastructure and diversified tourism offerings.*

Originality/value – *While AI is not new in qualitative studies, the novelty of this study lies in its application to tourism planning for poverty alleviation in a marginalised community like Rosetta, introducing a comprehensive tourism strategy with an original framework applicable to comparable destinations. The study's significance is emphasised by providing actionable strategies for policymakers, valuable insights for practitioners and enriching the discourse and methodology on pro-poor tourism for academics, representing a step towards filling the gap between theoretical concepts and practical strategies.*

Keywords SDGs, Poverty-alleviation, Egypt, Policymaking, Appreciative-inquiry-approach, Small-tourism-cities

Paper type Case study

Tamer M. Elsawy is based at the Department of Tourism, Pharos University, Alexandria, Egypt.

1. Introduction

Poverty remains the most widespread social problem in developing countries, and despite attempts by national governments and international organisations, it continues unabated (Cobbinah, 2014). Thus, research into interventions to improve the well-being of the impoverished continues to be a priority (Cobbinah, 2014; UN, 2013). Poverty must be viewed as multidimensional so that, alongside its economic dimensions, poverty should be understood as being about inequality, a sense of powerlessness, insecurity and vulnerability (Chaichi, 2016; UNWTO & SNV, 2010).

Various studies have concluded that there is a strong connection between tourism and poverty reduction (e.g. Horák, Antwi Darkwah, & Verter, 2015; Holden, 2013; Zhang, Wang, & Yang, 2023), especially in developing countries (e.g. Bricker, Black, & Cottrell, 2013; Cobbinah, 2014; Truong, Hall, & Garry, 2014). This view has been strongly promoted by the World Tourism Organisation, which states that tourism is one of the most dynamic economic

activities of our time that can be more effectively harnessed to address the problems of poverty more directly (UNWTO & SNV, 2010). The World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO & IPSOS, 2019) surveyed 15 countries, finding that more than 50% of residents believed that tourism positively impacts wealth generation. A study by Garza-Rodriguez (2019) indicates a long-term relationship between tourism and poverty reduction. The study found that for every 1% increase in international tourism, household consumption per capita increases by 0.46%; hence, poverty decreases. However, Winters, Corral, & Mora (2013) contended that the main question is not whether the link exists but under what conditions it is strongest.

In the global pursuit of poverty alleviation, the role of tourism planning in marginalised communities has attracted considerable attention (Luo & Bao, 2019; Yu, Wang, & Marcouiller, 2019). The intersection of tourism and poverty reduction has led researchers and policymakers to explore the potential of tourism as a tool for fostering sustainable development. However, the crucial link between tourism growth and poverty reduction remains an intricate topic, necessitating a deeper exploration of its conditions (Chok, Macbeth, & Warren, 2007). According to Cobbinah (2014), understanding the application of tourism theory to poverty reduction and its outcomes is limited. Moreover, implementing pro-poor tourism (PPT) policies crafted from centralised administrative perspectives often fails to consider the diverse conditions and unique contexts of the communities to which such policies are directed (Lama, 2012; Srisantisuk, 2015). According to Knight (2015), because impoverished people can view poverty differently than others, deciding whether and how it could be alleviated through tourism depends on the perceptions of those impacted. All discourses and initiatives on PPT are of little value unless the realities on the ground, the voices, goals and aspirations of local people are fully taken into account (Pleumarom, 2012; Tasci, Semrad, & Yilmaz, 2013; Wen, Cai, & Li, 2021). Therefore, a deep investigation is needed in the targeted community to figure out how tourism planning can practically serve poverty alleviation.

Governments and development organisations worldwide embrace tourism-centric approaches for pro-poor development (Klytchnikova & Dorosh, 2013; Wen et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2023). According to Shah (2023), PPT advocates involving low-income households in tourism, creating new opportunities. However, despite the growing interest in PPT, regulatory policies governing its practice remain scarce across nations, leading to a gap between theory and practical implementation (Outterson, Selinger, & Whyte, 2011). The recognition of this limitation has prompted calls for a departure from the "one-size-fits-all" model in favour of tailored strategies that align with the diverse realities of marginalised communities (Srisantisuk, 2015). This perspective echoes the sentiment that a more nuanced approach to PPT is essential for its success (Yu et al., 2019).

With eradicating poverty as a core United Nations Sustainable Development Goal, investigating strategies for poverty reduction has gained prominence (Shah, 2023). Over the years, tourism has been touted as a catalyst for economic growth and poverty alleviation, especially in developing countries (Chok et al., 2007; Holden, 2013; Zhang et al., 2023). However, while much research has delved into the impacts of tourism on poverty alleviation (e.g. Ashley et al., 2001; Holland, Burian, & Dixey, 2003; Scheyvens, 2011; Cole, 2008; Attaalla, 2016), there remains a gap in the understanding of practical methodologies to achieve this goal, especially within developing nations (Cobbinah, 2014; Lama, 2012). Recognising tourism's potential as a tool for poverty alleviation (Zhang et al., 2023), the call for actionable strategies to maximise tourism benefits for local communities, including the most impoverished, becomes increasingly imperative.

Egypt, a prominent tourist destination, stands as an exemplar of where tourism policies have diversified the sector, yet questions remain about the extent of poverty reduction achieved through these strategies (Hassan, de Trafford, & Youssef, 2008). The tourism industry, involving around 70 sub-sectors, has always been a significant economic activity in Egypt and constitutes the sixth-largest source of foreign currency (OECD, 2018). The

labour force working in tourism stood at 1.8 million individuals, representing 6.3% of the total labour force and 7.2% of employment in Egypt. Around 74% of employees in tourism are full-time, with 26% working temporarily or part-time (OECD, 2018). However, executing policies necessitates a deeper understanding of the dynamics between tourism planning and poverty alleviation, especially within marginalised communities (Holden, 2013). According to Steiner (2006), Egypt's tourism industry has experienced significant growth and greatly impacted its economic development; however, the economic benefits tend to favour the elite in power who control the means of production. There are clear challenges in equitable economic distribution, stakeholder involvement, sustainability and addressing the cultural and social impacts of tourism (Ibrahim, 2009). Although it aims, among others, to reduce poverty and income disparities (OECD, 2018), the tourism strategy in Egypt is adopting a top-down approach (ENCC, 2013), with no representation in decision-making from the private sector or local communities (Ibrahim & Wall, 2016).

Based on the previous introduction, the central focus of this study is to bridge the gap between theoretical concepts and practical strategies for using tourism to alleviate poverty within marginalised communities, with a specific focus on Egypt. The central question of this study is: practically, how can tourism be used to alleviate poverty and stimulate economic progress within the marginalised community of Rosetta, Egypt, and what forms and related activities of tourism hold promise for improving the well-being of the impoverished populace?

In answering these questions, this study addresses the emergent role of the appreciative inquiry approach (AI) as a guiding framework for effective poverty-alleviating tourism planning. By leveraging the insights of the AI approach, which is rapidly gaining traction in community development contexts (Demeshane & Nel, 2018), this research seeks to unearth practical strategies for enhancing the well-being of impoverished communities. To date, scarce empirical studies have used AI principles in PPT development (e.g. Lama, 2012), and no such studies have been conducted within the context of developing and Arab countries.

Through a comprehensive analysis of interviews, focus groups, field visits and existing literature, this paper seeks to answer a crucial question regarding the mechanisms through which tourism planning can best serve marginalised communities. In doing so, it sheds light on the role of local stakeholders, the identification of poverty-linked tourism products and services and the segments within the tourism value chain that hold the most potential for pro-poor outcomes. By merging theory with practice, in addition to an in-depth examination of marginalised communities' needs and aspirations, this study aims to provide valuable insights for policymakers, planners, practitioners and researchers seeking to harness the power of tourism planning in the fight against poverty.

2. Literature review

2.1 Tourism and poverty alleviation

Globally, a lot of researchers studied the role and importance of tourism in poverty alleviation (Ashley et al., 2001; Holland, Burian, & Dixey, 2003; Chok et al., 2007; Cole, 2008; Attaalla, 2016; Manwa & Manwa, 2014; Luvanga & Shitundu, 2003; Scheyvens, 2011; Schilcher, 2007), whereas scarce studies discussed how to bring this role to action.

The United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) introduced the Sustainable Tourism – Eliminating Poverty programme, offering seven mechanisms to benefit the impoverished through tourism, including employment, supply of goods and services, direct sales, small enterprise development, revenue redistribution, voluntary support and infrastructure investment (UNWTO, 2004). This programme provides a framework for addressing poverty through tourism but requires further exploration and implementation.

Despite the growing acknowledgement of tourism's potential for sustainable development, its practical application in poverty alleviation is still being explored by various organizations

and governments (Mekawy, 2012; Spenceley & Meyer, 2012). Zhao and Ritchie (2007) introduced a research framework for anti-poverty tourism, offering guidelines for its study but stopping short of providing direct poverty solutions. Studies like Croes (2014) and Garza-Rodriguez (2019) have investigated the relationship between tourism development and poverty reduction, offering varying findings based on different country contexts. According to Croes (2014), a 1% increase in international tourism earnings is correlated with a 1.23% decrease in the poverty rate in Nicaragua. Croes, however, found little proof of a long-term link between tourism and eradicating poverty in Costa Rica. Musavengane, Siakwah, and Leonard (2019) examined the progress of sub-Saharan African cities in promoting pro-poor economies through PPT. Their findings suggested that PPT does not fully benefit the vulnerable groups it aims to help, primarily because of perceived shortcomings in urban governance systems, which often align with national governance practices. Matei and Caraba's (2010) research in Romania highlights how tourism is often viewed as a solution for small-town problems. Still, many lack the necessary infrastructure, resources, qualified workforce and robust services for tourism growth. Fonseca and Ramos (2012) expressed a similar view in their study of peripheral areas in Portugal. Anderson's (2014) study in rural Tanzania underscores cultural tourism's substantial impact on improving livelihoods. Given the residents' limited skills, the study advocates for community-level training programmes to facilitate local employment in tourism.

Tourism development is increasingly recognised as a tool for economic growth and poverty alleviation (Mao, 2015). Sharma, Mohapatra, and Giri (2021) found a causal relationship between tourism development and poverty reduction in India. Because tourism can offer potential benefits to a local destination, it is regarded as a poverty reduction method in marginalised communities, which has attracted considerable attention in recent years in developing countries (Keovilay, 2012). However, the level of activation of the role of tourism in fighting poverty is not the same around the globe.

Holland, Burian, & Dixey (2003) suggested that when tourism is planned, the focus may be on expanding the national tourism product rather than addressing the growth potential of poor areas. This could be due to the quicker returns from existing resorts and urban areas. Devereux (2001) noted that marginalised areas may have little political priority for government officials, and redistributing resources to remote areas would require a strategic political choice. Thus, many developing-world secondary cities do not receive the same attention and investment as capital cities and metropolises (Santoro, Runde, Frigenti, & Ciarlo, 2018). Additionally, in remote regions of developing nations, bureaucrats and planners often lack an understanding of effective tourism decision-making processes. They sometimes wrongly perceive locals as uneducated and too ignorant to participate (Cole, 2008).

In alignment with this perspective, some studies suggest that the relationship between tourism development and poverty reduction is complex and often constrained by various factors. Blake, Arbache, Sinclair, and Teles (2008) argue that tourism development may not reduce poverty due to earnings leakage and unequal distribution, with benefits often directed to foreign and local elites. Dimitrov, Kraseta, Dimitrov, and Parvanov (2018) specifically highlight the potential negative impact of tourism in Bulgaria, where it may contribute to poverty by attracting low-price-seeking customers. Koens and Thomas (2016) emphasise that efforts to alleviate poverty through micro-business development in South African township tourism face challenges due to narrow social networks and uneven power distribution among stakeholders. In summary, these studies collectively question the assumption that tourism development necessarily leads to poverty reduction, pointing to the need for nuanced considerations of local contexts and challenges.

A study by Eraqi (2007) in Egypt found positive economic and socio-cultural impacts of tourism, such as job creation, investment and cultural exchange. However, it also highlighted downsides, including adverse effects on the Egyptian way of life, inflation, cultural identity damage and overcrowding at tourist sites, with respondents doubting that

tourism contributed to the skill development of locals. Another study by Mekawy (2012) investigated stakeholder attitudes towards slum tourism's potential to improve living conditions in Egypt, highlighting positive sentiments among residents but varying opinions on appropriate pro-poor products. Based on the findings, authorities should develop suitable slum tourism products and typologies as a planning threshold to enhance the living conditions of dwellers. However, there remains a lack of prioritisation for such research and planning approaches within Egyptian contexts (Mekawy, 2012).

Academic research on the connection between tourism development and poverty reduction still lacks depth, with conflicting information on whether tourism benefits the impoverished (Shah, 2023; Sharma et al., 2021). A call is made for multi-country studies to contribute significantly to this literature (Shah, 2023). According to Mao (2015), tourism's contribution to poverty reduction varies widely from one destination to another. Concerns are also raised about potential social, economic, cultural and environmental side effects of tourism in impoverished areas (Zhang et al., 2023). According to Lama (2012), a lack of tourism planning can negatively impact the host community.

2.2 Empowering communities in tourism: pro-poor and participatory approaches

Participatory approaches involving local communities are preferred for sustainable development, as engaging local people in planning is crucial to ensuring equitable benefit sharing (Lama, 2012). Thus, initiatives that develop tourism from the bottom up, such as "community-based tourism", "PPT" and "alternative tourism", have attracted attention (Cole, 2008). Various studies (e.g. Cole, 2006; Chok et al., 2007; Sheate & Partidário, 2010) emphasise the importance of effective participation from the host community, a sense of proprietorship, involvement in decision-making, community empowerment, knowledge sharing and capacity building for tourism to contribute to poverty eradication. Local communities' participation in tourism depends on government policies (Mao, 2015). Therefore, inadequate tourism planning and management can result in unequal benefit distribution, exacerbating the wealth gap (Lama, 2012).

The concept of PPT aims to create opportunities for the impoverished within the tourism sector (Chok et al., 2007), which incorporates mechanisms to unlock these opportunities at all levels and scales of operation (Chaichi, 2016). However, it is acknowledged that tourism should be part of a broader strategy for poverty reduction rather than pursued in isolation (Chok et al., 2007). The studies reviewed highlight diverse initiatives by the private sector, government and civil society to enhance PPT, generating benefits like economic gains, livelihood improvements and empowerment in decision-making for the impoverished. The Gambia, South Africa, Ecuador and Nepal are instances of how tourism could be made more pro-poor (UNWTO, 2004).

Community-based tourism (CBT) is another approach that prioritises local control and involvement in defining development directions (Keovilay, 2012; Frenzel, 2013; Tasci et al., 2013). CBT involves planning, development and management by the community for the community (Horák et al., 2015; Tasci et al., 2013). Successful CBT projects can deliver long-term benefits to residents by using local resources (Lor, Kwa, & Donaldson, 2019). Additionally, the underused potential of cultural resources for developing local tourism sectors is highlighted (Kwiatek-Sołtys & Bajgier-Kowalska, 2019).

Safeguarding culture and using it as a product through integrated tourism policy can help capitalise on pre-existing features, ultimately decreasing poverty and contributing to development initiatives (Santoro et al., 2018). According to Wang, Gan, Chen, and Voda (2020), impoverished residents often live in areas rich in tourism resources, especially culture. Cultural elements are among the core resources that may serve as key reasons to visit a city (Kwiatek-Sołtys & Bajgier-Kowalska, 2019). Culture can include tangible (e.g. monuments, cities, architecture, infrastructure and rural landscapes) and intangible

components (e.g. language, religion, customs, traditions and rituals) (Santoro et al., 2018). Thus, tourism can develop in impoverished and marginal areas with few other export and diversification options. The advantages include, among others, job opportunities, the boosting of sales of different goods and services such as agricultural products and handicrafts, and cultural entertainment performed by locals, the majority of whom are impoverished (Luvanga & Shitundu, 2003).

However, it is crucial to recognise that barriers such as lack of skills, knowledge, ownership, capital and resources can hinder community participation in tourism, necessitating policy attention (Mao, 2015; Scheyvens, 2011). In addition, while tourism development can bring economic growth, job creation, improved public services, infrastructure development and cultural preservation to marginalised communities, it can also lead to negative consequences that may act against the efforts aimed at poverty alleviation, like displacement and resource competition (Holland, Burian, & Dixey, 2003), loss of access to resources, environmental degradation, loss of identity and immoral behaviour (Luvanga & Shitundu, 2003). Without more attention from policymakers to these challenges, wealthy people or elites will continue to benefit more from tourism than the poor (Mao, 2015). To address these challenges, diversifying the tourism product, developing niche products and ensuring stakeholders cooperation have been suggested (Devereux, 2001; Wen et al., 2021). A consensus exists in the literature that community involvement is essential for effective poverty alleviation through tourism (Cole, 2008). Additionally, preserving culture is emphasised to combat poverty and contribute to development (Santoro et al., 2018).

PPT and CBT strategies must focus on economic benefits, non-economic impacts and policy and process reform (Cobbinah, 2014; Wang et al., 2020). The non-economic include improving capacity by training and empowering the impoverished to take advantage of tourism opportunities (Cobbinah, 2014). In addition, Tasci et al. (2013) emphasised that when it comes to tourism development, it is essential to prioritise simplicity to address the challenges locals face in shifting from an agrarian economy to a service-based one.

Lama's research (2012) is one of the very few that explores the potential of AI processes to aid local participation in PPT planning in Nepal. The study used qualitative methods to uncover the perspectives of local participants. According to locals' views, the poorest individuals in the areas are likely to benefit less from tourism due to a lack of skills and capital. Despite this finding, the study also demonstrates that AI has the potential to become an excellent planning tool for promoting PPT.

In conclusion, the literature review highlights the importance of tourism as a potential tool for poverty alleviation while acknowledging the complexities and challenges involved in effectively implementing such strategies. PPT, CBT and cultural preservation are the main approaches to harnessing the potential of tourism for poverty reduction. However, further research and practical implementation are required to bridge the gap between theory and action in this critical development area.
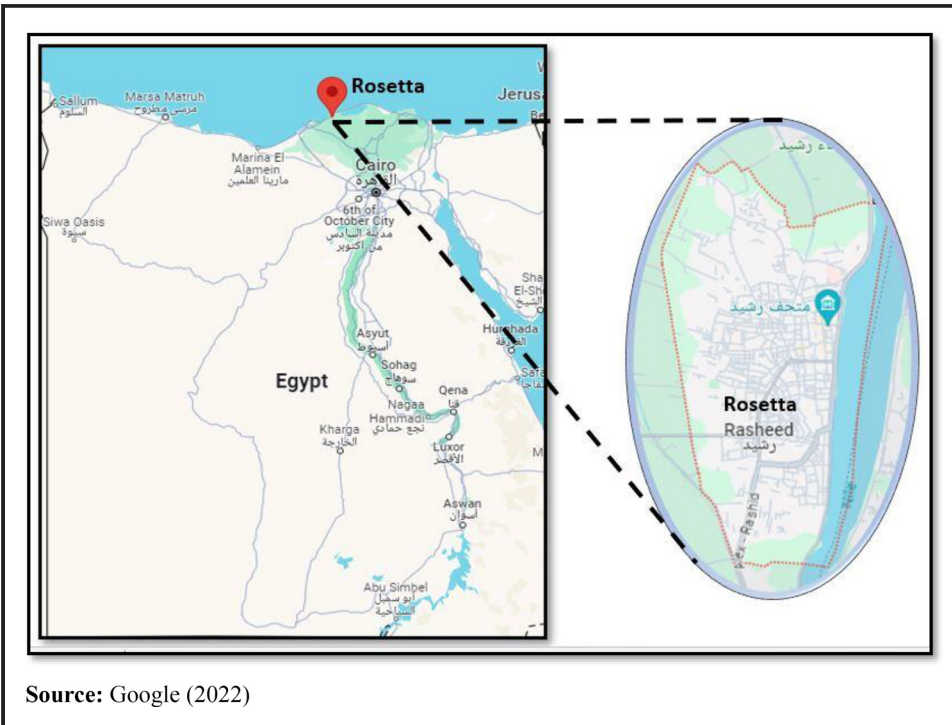
3. Research methodology

3.1 Study area

Rosetta, also known as Rashid in Arabic and Rosette in French, is a port city in Egypt with historical significance (Elsorady, 2012). Rosetta is located in the northern El Beheira Governorate, Lower Egypt, 65 km northeast of Alexandria (see Figure 1). The governorate has a population of 6,171,613, with more than 5 million living in rural areas (CAPMAS, 2017). This city is internationally known for the Rosetta Stone, which deciphered hieroglyphs (UN-HABITAT, 2006).

Rosetta has a rich heritage encompassing tangible and intangible elements, from ancient Egypt through the Greco-Roman, Coptic and Islamic eras (Ghodya, Azzam, & Maarouf, 2021) (see Figure 2). It holds economic potential in brickwork, fishing, shipbuilding, farming and

| **Figure 1** | Map illustrates Rosetta's location in Egypt |

Source: Google (2022)

traditional crafts (Abdelalim & Fahmy, 2017). However, this potential is hindered by the absence of specific industrial areas, the lack of an investment map and the closure of the harbour for a significant period each year due to sand accumulation as a result of sea currents, which led to high unemployment in regular employment (Abdelalim & Fahmy, 2017).

Efforts have been made to develop Rosetta as a tourist destination, with projects like seawater barriers and the preservation of historic buildings initiated (UN-HABITAT, 2006). Rosetta's potential as a prosperous city and its inclusion in national urban development policies have been acknowledged (UNESCO, 2019).

Despite its tourist city designation by Law 113/1986, Rosetta grappled with sanitation, rising groundwater levels affecting historic buildings and issues with informal peddlers and markets (Elsorady, 2012; UN-HABITAT, 2006). The city also suffers from poverty, social and economic problems, environmental challenges such as widespread pollution, and limited political participation among its residents (UN-HABITAT, 2006). Moreover, the city is ill-equipped to accommodate tourists due to limited hotel capacity, cleanliness issues and a shortage of recreational facilities (UN-HABITAT, 2006).

As no detailed population statistics are available for Rosetta after 2006, the author estimated it by calculating the annual growth rate of 2.1% (Elsorady, 2012; UN-HABITAT, 2006), as shown in Tables 1 and 2.

Five slum areas in the old city centre (El-Kassara, Katkat, Abou El-Reesh, Ezbit Hassan Ali and Bhind Transformers) comprise a total area of 2.15 km^2 (Elsorady, 2012; UN-HABITAT, 2006). As shown in Table 2, the estimated population of slum areas in Rosetta in 2023 is 27,671, representing 28% of the city population.

3.1.1 Reasons behind the choice of study area. The choice of Rosetta as the study area is multifaceted, underpinned by its pressing challenges and immense potential, as follows:

Figure 2 Collection of images highlights Rosetta's diverse heritage and cultural assets
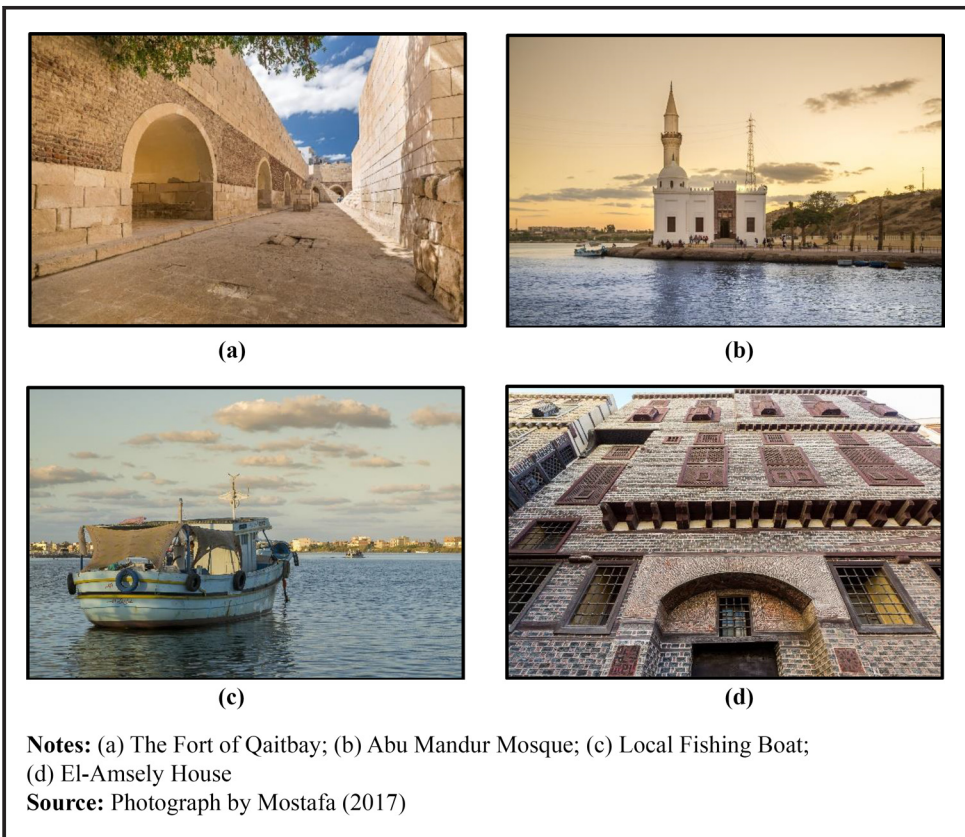

(a)

(b)

(c)

(d)

Notes: (a) The Fort of Qaitbay; (b) Abu Mandur Mosque; (c) Local Fishing Boat;
(d) El-Amsely House
Source: Photograph by Mostafa (2017)

Table 1 Estimated population of Rosetta for 2023

Study area	Male	Female	Total
Rosetta	49,673	47,747	97,420

Source: Author's own creation

Table 2 Estimated population of Rosetta's slum areas for 2023

Slum areas	Area in m²	Location	Male	Population Female	Total
El-Kassara	37,500	West	2,449	2,360	4,809
Katkat	42,000	West	2,959	2,845	5,804
Abou El-Reesh	48,000	North	2,965	2,851	5,816
Ezbit Hassan Ali	10,000	North	653	628	1,281
Bhind Transformers	77,000	South	5,079	4,882	9,961
Total	*214,500*		*14,105*	*13,566*	*27,671*

Source: Author's own creation

- Rosetta is characterised by a significant population living in poverty and facing marginalisation (Abdelalim & Fahmy, 2017; Elsorady, 2012), making it a relevant location for studying these issues.

- The city possesses a wealth of cultural assets and has potential for tourism development, particularly in heritage tourism (Ghodya et al., 2021; UNESCO, 2019).

- Despite its potential, Rosetta lacks a clear plan for tourism sector development, hindering its ability to fully utilise its historical and cultural treasures (UN-HABITAT, 2006).

- Rosetta's complex challenges and potential have drawn attention from researchers, both nationally and internationally, making it a valuable focal point for academic exploration (UN-HABITAT, 2006).

3.2 Methods

The study is primarily applied research, as it seeks to address a specific problem (poverty alleviation in a marginalised community) through the application of existing knowledge and approaches (PPT and AI) (Guest, Namey, & Mitchell, 2013; Krueger & Casey, 2014). In addition, it endeavours to inform decisions about policy and practice, and its primary outcome is the development of practical solutions, methodologies or strategies that can be directly applied to a particular context (Johnson & Christensen, 2020).

The research used qualitative methods for both data collection and analysis. Amin et al. (2020) suggest that qualitative approaches enable inclusive and collaborative research through partnerships and co-production, where participants become co-creators. This aligns with the study's purpose, especially as there is an increasing demand for greater involvement of local communities in development planning. Moreover, the literature on poverty and PPT has underscored the significance of employing a qualitative approach when conducting studies in these fields (Abd Halim, 2014).

In addition, this study used participatory research and the AI approach as a framework for the research, which is applied research that promotes the involvement of those whom the study is meant to benefit (Demeshane, 2015). This approach aims to combine action and thought, theory and practice while engaging others in the search for workable solutions to problems affecting individuals and their communities (Reason & Bradbury, 2007). Moreover, this approach assumes that every living system possesses untapped, vast and inspirational strengths that can be connected to promote change by bringing individuals together to create plans for the future (Schenck, Nel, & Louw, 2011).

3.2.1 The appreciative inquiry approach. AI is based on social constructionist theory as a qualitative and interpretive research methodology (Demeshane, 2015). It was introduced in the 1980s in the context of organisational development in the USA (Demeshane, 2015). It has since been used in various contexts, with researchers recently showing an increased interest in using it, particularly in community development (Demeshane & Nel, 2018).

In poverty reduction through tourism planning, AI is used with clear objectives. According to Lama (2012), these objectives include identifying local strengths, promoting community participation in planning and execution, strengthening local capacity and establishing local ownership within tourism development. However, integrating AI into tourism planning poses challenges. Lama (2012) highlights issues like political instability, socioeconomic disparities, illiteracy, alignment with government plans, gaining acceptance for new ideas, facilitator roles and limited financial resources as main hurdles. Overcoming these challenges is crucial for AI's use in PPT planning, with the potential to transform poverty reduction through tourism.

AI is an opportunity-centric approach rather than a problem-centric one (Boyd & Bright, 2007) that has the potential to alter and reframe community and organisational norms. It is a

large-scale investigation divided into four stages: discover, dream, design and destiny (Boyd & Bright, 2007). According to Whitney and Trosten-Bloom (2010), AI stands for inquiring, which denotes activities of investigation and discovery motivated by a desire to learn and in which openness to change is created. Furthermore, it must be a collaborative effort involving all the key players.

A significant concern of AI, one of the participatory action research approaches, is how to gain community support, engage various stakeholders to work towards a shared vision, foster a sense of empowerment among participants and maximise their fullest potential by utilising their shared experience to the max (Boyd & Bright, 2007; Demeshane, 2015). The idea is that when involving locals, they gain a sense of ownership of the development plans and help sustain the processes of change and development (Demeshane, 2015). AI is, therefore, a capacity-focused framework assuming that all communities, regardless of how poor they are, have skills and capacities that allow them to contribute to sustainable and positive social changes (Demeshane, 2015).

3.2.2 Data collection, sample size and sampling technique. The author used the semi-structured interview method and the focus group discussion method to collect data, which was used in an interrelated manner according to each stage of data collection and analysis, as explained later. The semi-structured interview allows issues to be explored in depth (Lama, 2012; Leal Londoño, 2015) and with sufficient flexibility (Cobbinah, 2014). The focus group discussion is a qualitative approach to thoroughly understanding social issues, gathering data from a purposefully selected group rather than a statistically representative sample of the broader population. Twelve participants strike a balance, offering a variety of perspectives without causing disorder or fragmentation (Nyumba, Wilson, Derrick, & Mukherjee, 2018).

According to Gill and Baillie (2018), focus groups complement other methods like interviews by confirming, extending or enriching understanding and offering alternative insights. Thus, the two-stage primary research, employing interviews and focus group discussions, had distinct yet complementary purposes in understanding the tourism landscape in Rosetta. One-on-one interviews explored individual perspectives, serving as the initial data collection for subsequent focus group discussions. In the second stage, focus groups refined and validated interview findings, engaging participants in collective sense-making and consensus-building. This collaborative approach ensured accuracy and depth in the identified themes.

A qualitative, semi-structured interview was carried out between July and September 2023. In this interview, 53 participants from the Rosetta region were included, primarily from the five slum areas and surrounding areas. These selected areas were targeted due to their marginalised socio-economic conditions, poverty and strategic proximity to the city's heritage and historical sites. This geographical proximity raises the potential for the residents of these areas to derive benefits from tourism activities.

The survey sample was selected purposefully and non-probabilistically, considering the research objectives (Babbie, 2008; Cobbinah, 2014). The selection involved specific criteria targeting various groups, such as individuals with experience in community development, local issues and tourism activity, including those owning or working in local tourist establishments, offering complementary services or products to tourists, representatives of local NGOs involved in tourism development, and well-informed local leaders about the area's potential and challenges. This heterogeneous sample was chosen to gather diverse insights and obtain a comprehensive view. Initially, local leaders nominated the first group of interview participants, and subsequent participants were selected using the snowballing technique, i.e. nomination by interviewees (Lama, 2012; Babbie, 2008). The sample size was determined using saturation and data richness principles, which means the author stopped collecting data when new insights stopped emerging. Given the qualitative nature of the research, achieving saturation with a relatively smaller sample size is expected

(Cobbinah, 2014). The composition and number of interviews and focus group discussions in each area are summarised in Table 3.

Moreover, there were six focus group discussions involving 9 to 12 representatives from the same localities, according to their availability at the time of the session. Each session lasted approximately 120 min, encompassing a 15-min opening and a 10-min conclusion. Five representatives were purposefully selected from the larger pool of interview participants due to their active engagement and extensive experience, and they participated in all iterations of group discussions. The other seven participants were not part of the initial one-on-one interviews, and they were not the same individuals across the six focus group discussions to capture a broad range of insights and experiences. They were also drawn from the five slum areas and surrounding areas of the study, representing diverse segments, including residents, community leaders, representatives from local businesses and individuals in the tourism sector, to encourage diverse viewpoints and allow for a more robust validation of the emerging themes, as each group contributed distinct insights and feedback during the analysis process.

Organised thematically, sessions progressed from discovery to dream, design and destiny phases, as will be discussed in detail later, fostering dynamic and evolving discussions with unique perspectives contributed at different stages of the research process.

In addition, three separate field visits were organised and executed at the five locations to help explore themes that were not covered during the interviews.

3.2.3 Ethical considerations. Anonymity was promised to each participant both during data collection and afterwards. Participation was voluntary, and participants were informed they could withdraw their consent whenever they wanted. Only 18 years of age or older were asked to take part.

4. Data analysis and interpretation

The participants' verbal comments and elaborations were recorded and then transcribed for analysis. The interviews and discussions were in Arabic and then tabulated and translated by the author into English from the original Arabic text. Next, a content analysis was done to pinpoint themes and attributes. The author used the Web-based software "Delve" for coding and transcript analysis. For data analysis, the author embraced the thematic analysis method, following its six distinct phases outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). Thematic analysis entails reviewing a data set (e.g. interview transcripts) to identify patterns in meaning and derive themes. It is a flexible approach applicable across various social science fields, allowing researchers to generate new insights from data. Notably, it is accessible for novice researchers and can inform policy development (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In the data-analysis phase, a bottom-up inductive approach was primarily used,

Table 3 Distribution of the interviews and focus group discussions					
		Interviews		*Focus group discussions	
Location	Targeted respondent groups	# of participants	%	# of participants	%
El-Kassara	● Households	9	16.98	2	16.67
Katkat	● Local leaders	10	18.86	2	16.67
Abou El-Reesh	● Local business owners/managers	12	22.65	3	25
Ezbit Hassan Ali	● Local NGOs	4	7.55	1	8.33
Bhind Transformers		18	33.96	4	33.33
	Total	53	100	12	100

Note: *Focus group participant numbers and percentages represent the average across the six sessions conducted
Source: Author's own creation

advancing from the specific to the general and involving coding the data without fitting it into a pre-existing coding frame (Nel, 2018).

According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis takes six phases. 1) Get familiar with the data by reading the transcripts carefully and looking for potential themes and patterns. 2) Generate an initial code list that represents key content or ideas (semantic or latent) within the data (Tuckett, 2005). 3) By refocusing the analysis on a broader scale, find themes by grouping the initial codes into probable themes and assembling all the pertinent coded data extracts within the found themes. Some codes might develop into major themes, others might become sub-themes and yet others might be discarded. 4) Examine the candidate themes to ensure that the data of each theme coheres meaningfully and that there is a clear difference between themes. It is possible to find themes lacking data support or being too diverse while identifying the potential merging of separate themes. At this point, you should have a clear understanding of your various themes, including how they relate to one another and the larger story they convey. 5) Re-arrange the generated data extracts for each theme in a logical and internally consistent manner and include a narrative describing what makes each extract noteworthy and why. 6) The final analysis and conclusion.

The purpose of thematic analysis is to convey the research data's complexity convincingly, using quotes to support ideas and make arguments about research questions.

The following (Table 4) summarises the processes followed by the author to ensure the credibility and rigour of the results based on Guba's model of trustworthiness that has been used by various relevant studies (e.g. Amin et al., 2020; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Leal Londoño, 2015; Nel, 2018).

5. How the four-D phases of appreciative inquiry were applied

The initial step involves a thoughtful identification of the research subject, which centres on using AI to develop a tourism strategy for alleviating poverty in Rosetta, a marginalised community in Egypt. The emphasis is on deriving practical insights for fostering positive socio-economic change. This will be achieved through the engagement of local representatives in the study area. This might take the form of focus group discussions or one-on-one interviews. The author used both forms for better results (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2010). To address the study questions, open-ended interview and focus group discussion questions were formulated (see Appendixes 1 and 2) using insights from relevant existing literature (e.g. Cobbinah, 2014; ENCC, 2013; Lama, 2012; Schenck et al., 2011; UNWTO & SNV, 2010; Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2010).

Table 4 Trustworthiness of the results		
Factor	Technique	Process
Credibility	Prolonged engagement	In addition to multiple visits to the area of study, the author spent a week as a resident and was involved in various field visits with the assistance of a friend from the local community before conducting the interviews. This assisted him in learning about the culture and social settings and establishing relationships and ties with the locals, which facilitated trust and understanding between the author and the locals
Transferability	Thick description	The author went beyond describing the responses in detail by adding his interpretation to infer meaning. In addition, he made an argument for the claims he presented
Dependability	Inquiry audit	The author requested assistance from two researcher colleagues who were not involved in this study to evaluate the study's processes and findings, assess their accuracy and determine whether or not the results, interpretations and conclusions are related to the collected data
Confirmability	Triangulation of sources	The author was eager to include respondents with diverse perspectives and profiles by using a heterogeneous survey sample in five key locations within the study area and surroundings to facilitate a deeper understanding and ensure the confirmability of the findings

Source: Author's own creation

Thus, the author applied the four-D phases of AI by embedding one-on-one interviews and focus group discussions for data collection and the thematic analysis method for data analysis and interpretation. The interview and focus group sessions were structured to cover all four Ds of AI. However, the emphasis on each phase varied between the two modes of data collection (see Figure 3).
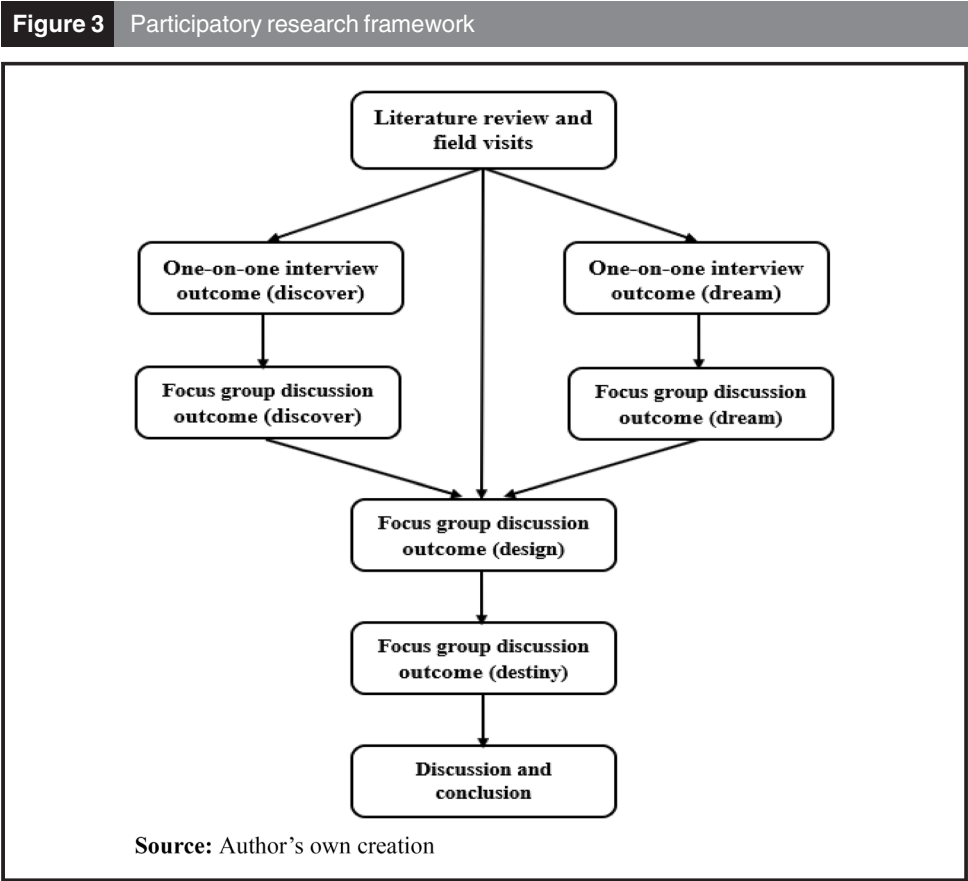
The one-on-one interviews primarily focused on the "discover" and "dream" phases. During these interview sessions, participants were encouraged to share their perspectives on the current state of tourism in Rosetta (discover) and to express their aspirations and visions for the future (dream) (both phases were addressed during the same interview session for each participant).

And then two focus group discussions were held (one session discussed the discover phase and one session discussed the dream phase) based on the preliminary interview results to involve the participants in the analysis process and gain their consensus on the priorities.

In the design and destiny phases, requiring participants with substantial awareness, the author exclusively used focus group discussions, building on the findings of the discover and dream phases (derived from interviews and group discussions). These sessions extended exploration into the "design" and "destiny" phases. Participants, having been introduced to the preliminary results, engaged in discussions aimed at designing actionable strategies (design) across three sessions and discussing the potential implementation and challenges of the proposed strategies (destiny) over one session.

6. Findings

As the focus of this study is to harness the AI approach in tourism planning to develop a strategy for poverty alleviation in Rosetta, in an attempt to bridge the gap between

Figure 3 Participatory research framework

Source: Author's own creation

theoretical concepts and practical strategies for using tourism to alleviate poverty, the author structured the findings around the four-D phases of the AI approach: discover, dream, design and destiny, integrating insights from thematic analysis and stakeholder engagement. This allowed for a more organised and seamless presentation of the results.
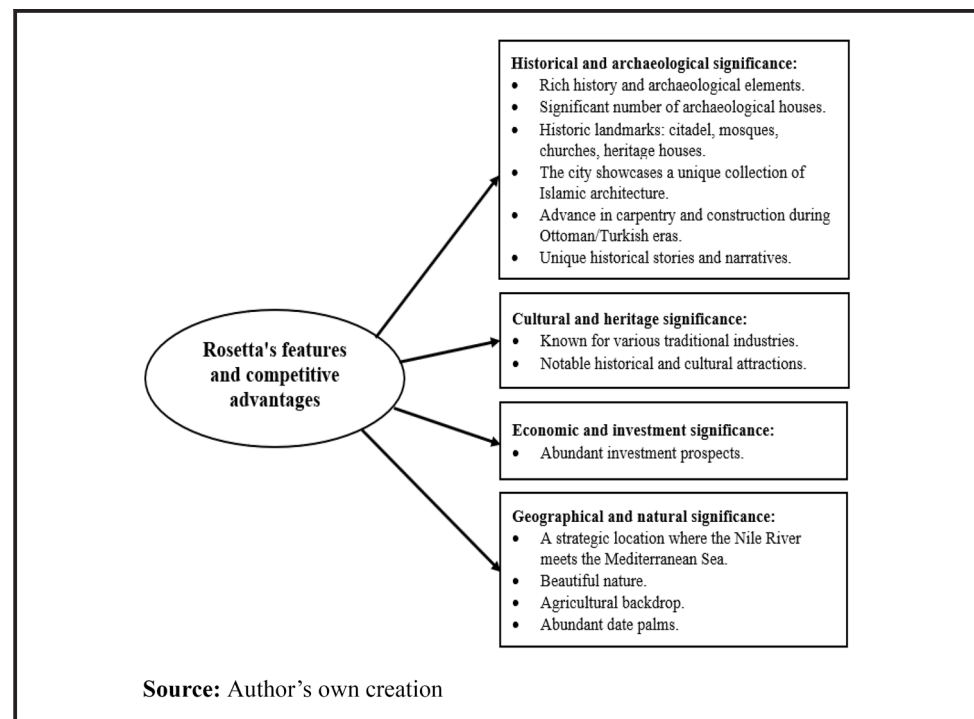
6.1 Discover phase

It refers to the "appreciation" stage, to discover the best of what is and what has been (Schenck et al., 2011). It helps feature community best practices, stories, strengths and the circumstances that were present during their earlier achievements (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2010). Although weaknesses and challenges were acknowledged, success-enhancing factors were the main focus.

The data extracted from the one-on-one interviews has been thematically analysed, and preliminary results have been used as an entry point for the focus group discussion, where the author acquainted the participants with the analysis process and results, urging them to refine it and determine the priorities.

The "discover" phase data revealed the respondents' thoughts on various aspects, including the attractiveness of the area and the factors contributing to a favourable scenario regarding tourism benefits for the impoverished and local involvement. Following are the three key themes identified through thematic analysis of the collected data after it had been discussed and refined during the focus group discussion session.

6.1.1 Rosetta's features and competitive advantages. The research findings unveiled how locals perceive various facets of Rosetta's competitive advantages, including its historical, cultural, geographical, natural and economic aspects (see Figure 4). Still, according to participants, these advantages were better used in the past. Rosetta's history showcases economic prosperity, with opulent European-style hotels in the 1940s hosting foreign merchants and visitors. Historically, it stood as a significant global maritime hub and a vital

Figure 4	Data structure showcases theme 6.1.1, derived inductively from the results

Source: Author's own creation

gateway to the Mediterranean Sea. The city's economy flourished by providing a variety of goods and services to foreign visitors. Notably, it established early examples of excellent public facilities, including a quarantine facility in 1247 that attracted consuls and visitors during epidemics. "My grandfather once told me that in the 1940s, there were many European-style luxury hotels with spas and cafes, serving foreign merchants and trade convoys [. . .]".

You can sense from the way they talk about their city that the people of Rosetta take great pride in the city's cultural and historical importance. "[. . .] this city should have a much higher tourist status than the current one, given its rich history and archaeological importance [. . .]". The respondents agreed that numerous factors and attractions can attract both national and foreign visitors to Rosetta if supported by favourable conditions. For example, Rosetta is known for yacht and fishing boat manufacturing. It features archaeological houses, date palms and Islamic architecture reflecting Ottoman and Turkish-era advancements. "Rosetta's prime location between river and sea, great connectivity via an international coastal road, picturesque palm-lined landscapes, diverse monuments, and over 40 km of beautiful Nile and sea beaches present varied tourism investment prospects".

Moreover, the city contains a unique group of Islamic buildings. It is known that it is the second-largest city after Cairo in terms of the size of Islamic monuments. The city includes 22 ancient houses, 10 mosques, a bathhouse, a mill, an ancient gate, a castle and the remains of an ancient wall.
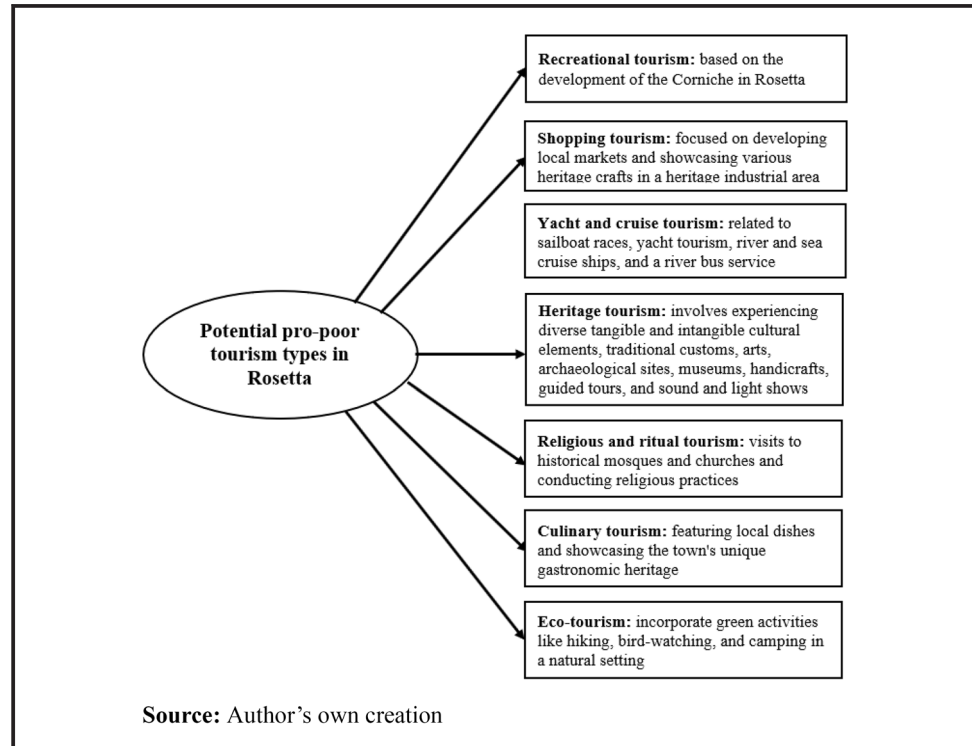
Various historical tales, notably those of Zubaida bint al-Bawab and Hussein Arab Bey's house, serve as attractions to entice tourists to Rosetta. Zubaida, a notable Rosetta woman, married the French campaign commander after a captivating love story. On the other hand, Hussein Arab Bey's house, with its unique features and historical significance, has been transformed into a museum showcasing Rosetta's history during the Ottoman era. Notable exhibits, including a replica of the Rosetta Stone and the marriage document of the French leader Mino and Zubaida, make this museum a compelling visit, telling the captivating tales of Rasheed, the Valiant City. "Rosetta possesses captivating historical tales with the potential to draw nostalgic tourists and history enthusiasts in large numbers [. . .]".

6.1.2 Potential types of tourism in Rosetta with pro-poor characteristics. The participants concurred on the need to leverage existing resources and assets by developing specific seven types of tourism (recreational, shopping, heritage, yacht, cruise, religious, culinary and eco-tourism), all of which have great potential and benefits for the impoverished (see Figure 5). For example, the potential for transforming the Rosetta Promenade (Corniche) into a thriving recreational tourist attraction was emphasised, showcasing how proper development could create enjoyable experiences for visitors and generate significant income opportunities within the local community. "We have a distinctive Corniche that can be used to spend enjoyable times by visitors with some attention to its infrastructure and facilities, and it is capable of providing many income opportunities for workers in cafes, restaurants, bazaars, boats, cruises, and others".

Another promising avenue for the upliftment of the local populace involves establishing a heritage industrial area in Rosetta affiliated with the museum, serving both shopping and heritage tourism, and showcasing various heritage crafts such as baskets, mats, ropes, pottery, traditional salted fish (feseekh), clothing, pottery and more. Additionally, the necessity of creating a dedicated centre for traditional crafts was emphasised, aiming to impart skills to a new generation and revive ancient craftsmanship that is at risk of disappearing. "Our aspiration is to create an industrial zone that includes workshops, factories, and local products that characterise Rosetta, as well as establishing a centre for traditional crafts to train a generation specialised in reviving ancient crafts that have or will disappear".

Yacht and cruise tourism are also identified as potential PPT types based on the participants' insights and the context of Rosetta's unique features, particularly considering

Source: Author's own creation

that Rosetta has historically served as a prominent international maritime centre and a crucial entry point to the Mediterranean Sea. This aligns with the suggestion by UNWTO (2002) that developing new tourism products, such as cruise and safari tourism, can complement mainstream packages and bring benefits to both the destination and the impoverished local communities.

Furthermore, the participants advocated for the promotion of heritage tourism, attracting tourists with an affinity for the past, cultural diversity, traditional arts and historical narratives. Heritage tourism would encompass archaeological sites, museums, artefacts, guided tours and illuminating light shows depicting historical events. This type of tourism holds immense potential for poverty alleviation, as heritage tourists spend significantly, value the environment, support heritage preservation and respect local culture. "Rosetta is very suitable for heritage tourism as it is an open museum. Wherever you go, there is a historical monument, distinctive architecture, and a traditional lifestyle with the smell of authenticity [...]".

Similarly, culinary and eco-tourism can contribute significantly to the efforts of alleviating poverty, as both types of tourism are based on sustainability principles and the involvement of locals by favouring small-scale and locally owned enterprises. This can be done by introducing food festivals, cooking classes and contests, sustainable nature tours and camping in the nearby natural landscapes.

6.1.3 Opportunities for impoverished involvement in Rosetta's tourism products and related activities. The findings revealed that while tourism in Rosetta offers some economic benefit for the impoverished through the sale of handicrafts and local products to tourists, the overall impact on improving the city's residents' economic conditions is minimal. "[...] but overall, tourism in Rosetta proves largely ineffective in improving the economic circumstances of the city's inhabitants". This is evident from the fact that a significant number of young residents choose to emigrate or travel abroad, suggesting a lack of substantial economic opportunities stemming from tourism within the city. "[...] if tourism in

Rosetta had significant benefits, many of the city's youth, including myself, wouldn't have considered migrating or travelling abroad, both legally and illegally [. . .]".
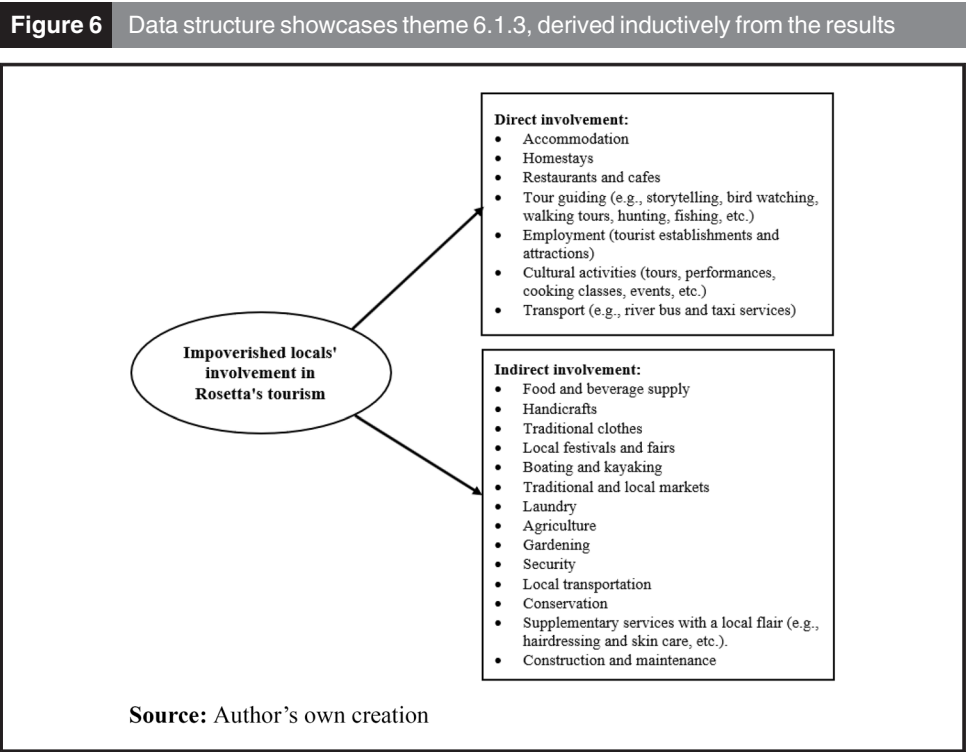
The existing livelihood options, centred around agriculture and fishing, are insufficient to sustain the population. Furthermore, the current tourism activity primarily benefits a limited group of individuals, such as restaurant owners, fish vendors, cafes and boat owners involved in sea and river trips.

However, the participants identified diverse opportunities for impoverished involvement in Rosetta's tourism sector, provided that the tourism industry is appropriately developed considering Rosetta's unique features and resources. These opportunities encompass both direct and indirect involvement, ranging from accommodation, cultural activities and employment to traditional markets, conservation efforts and supplementary services with a local touch. By engaging in these activities, individuals from impoverished backgrounds can potentially contribute to and benefit from the growth of tourism in Rosetta (see Figure 6).

6.2 Dream phase

Generating words, ideas, stories and visual depictions of the kind of future people envision is part of this phase, which aims to help participants develop high-calibre visions based on their competitive advantages (Schenck et al., 2011). Therefore, to initiate the Dream phase, one-on-one interview participants were prompted to reflect on the strengths and positive aspects of Rosetta identified in the Discover phase. This reflection aimed to create a positive foundation for envisioning the city's future as a thriving tourism destination.

The dream phase's focus group discussions were dynamic and structured to facilitate the envisioning process. The author ensured a focused and productive dialogue by actively managing time, redirecting discussions if needed and dedicating 15–20 min to each specific activity or stage. Communicating this time frame at the outset promoted commitment and active participation, fostering a sense of urgency and engagement throughout the dream phase. The following steps outline the procedures that took place:

Figure 6 Data structure showcases theme 6.1.3, derived inductively from the results

Direct involvement:
- Accommodation
- Homestays
- Restaurants and cafes
- Tour guiding (e.g., storytelling, bird watching, walking tours, hunting, fishing, etc.)
- Employment (tourist establishments and attractions)
- Cultural activities (tours, performances, cooking classes, events, etc.)
- Transport (e.g., river bus and taxi services)

Impoverished locals' involvement in Rosetta's tourism

Indirect involvement:
- Food and beverage supply
- Handicrafts
- Traditional clothes
- Local festivals and fairs
- Boating and kayaking
- Traditional and local markets
- Laundry
- Agriculture
- Gardening
- Security
- Local transportation
- Conservation
- Supplementary services with a local flair (e.g., hairdressing and skin care, etc.).
- Construction and maintenance

Source: Author's own creation

- *Thematic analysis presentation*: Similar to the previous phase, related data generated from one-on-one interviews were thematically analysed to extract initial findings, which were then presented in the subsequent focus group discussion for the dream phase. This iterative process allowed participants to review and prioritise the identified strengths and aspirations based on their insights.

- *Group brainstorming*: Participants engaged in a structured group brainstorming session where they were encouraged to share their aspirations and ideas for the future of Rosetta. The author used techniques such as mind mapping and affinity diagrams to visually represent the emerging themes and connections.

- *Interactive discussions*: The author facilitated interactive discussions among participants, encouraging them to articulate their individual visions and engage in dialogue with others. The emphasis was on collaborative vision-building, ensuring that diverse perspectives were considered and integrated.

- *Prioritisation activities*: Following the generation of visions, participants were involved in activities to prioritise and refine the key elements. This has included voting on the most impactful ideas, discussing feasibility and identifying common priorities that resonated with the group.

- *Synthesis of collective vision*: The author synthesised the collective vision by capturing key themes, goals and aspirations articulated by participants. This synthesis served as the basis for developing actionable objectives and strategies in the subsequent design phase.

- *Feedback loop*: The dream phase incorporated a feedback loop where participants had the opportunity to review and provide input on the evolving vision. This iterative process ensured that the collective vision accurately represented the aspirations of the community.

Participants in this phase announced their ambition to be heard and have a say in how their city's resources are used, as they are the most knowledgeable about their circumstances and needs. "We understand our city's strengths, weaknesses, and needs better than anyone else, making us the most aware of what will benefit us".

Participants agreed that to maximise local benefits from tourism, there is a need for support from officials and all stakeholders to ease procedures, provide funding and offer training and technical support. "Many low-income individuals lack the means and skills to start small tourism ventures. Overcoming regulatory challenges for licences and acquiring guidance on pricing, promotion, and market access (nationally and internationally) requires support from officials and all involved parties".

The primary visitors to Rosetta are domestic tourists, notably from school and university trips. The majority of visitors hail from nearby cities in Beheira Governorate and Alexandria due to the city's proximity. However, the number of foreign tourists, the majority from Asian and European markets, remains limited and does not align with Rosetta's historical and cultural importance. Regrettably, Rosetta is presently ill-equipped to adequately accommodate even its national tourists. "Rosetta is currently not qualified to receive national visitors, let alone the most demanding and difficult-to-please foreign tourists". Thus, participants agreed that their aspiration is for a clean, well-structured and accessible Rosetta capable of attracting and accommodating both national and around-the-globe visitors.

Based on the insights and aspirations of the participants, the vision for Rosetta as a tourist destination is "a welcoming, sustainable, well-organised, and globally recognised multifaceted tourism destination that appeals to history enthusiasts, adventure seekers, and culture admirers, where locals are empowered, economic growth is fostered, poverty is alleviated, and cultural exchange is promoted".

6.3 Design phase

This phase is where participants start to translate their dreams into action plans (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2010). The design phase has been completed over three sessions of focus group discussion. Each session lasted approximately 2 h.

The discovery and dream phases were bridged during this stage, bearing in mind the aim of this study, which is to develop strategies that can boost overall economic gains while emphasising poverty alleviation in Rosetta. Participants in this phase showed a strong sense of cooperation, productivity and commitment. Although there were some differences of opinion, the participants were mature enough to handle them. In some instances, the author solved the conflict by allowing participants to express their opinions, seeking clarification and summarising arguments to make sure that differences were understood.

Based on the findings and the aspirations of participants, a lot needs to be done and planned, especially regarding local empowerment and involvement in decision-making and implementation. However, given the nature of the destination as a part of a developing country with relatively limited resources and the truth that big dreams need time, the proposed actions have been filtered to start with the most urgent ones. To design and jointly construct a plan for the ideal future, participants agreed on five prioritised objectives as follows, with the strategies and tactics needed to achieve each. To view the complete plan, refer to Appendix 3:

- Apply sustainable approaches to effectively manage land, the environment, communities, cultural heritage and urban development.
- Foster local economic growth through capacity building, investment and empowerment.
- Enhance tourism marketing strategies to boost visibility and attract visitors in preparation for placing Rosetta on the global tourism map.
- Enhance infrastructure and tourist facilities.
- Diversify tourism offerings and enhance visitor experiences to increase satisfaction and expenditure.

6.4 Destiny phase

The objectives and strategies developed during the design phase are supposed to be put into action during this phase (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2010). The findings revealed the most enabling factors for success in this phase, in addition to some anticipated crucial challenges that could potentially impact the desired achievement of the plan (see Figure 7).
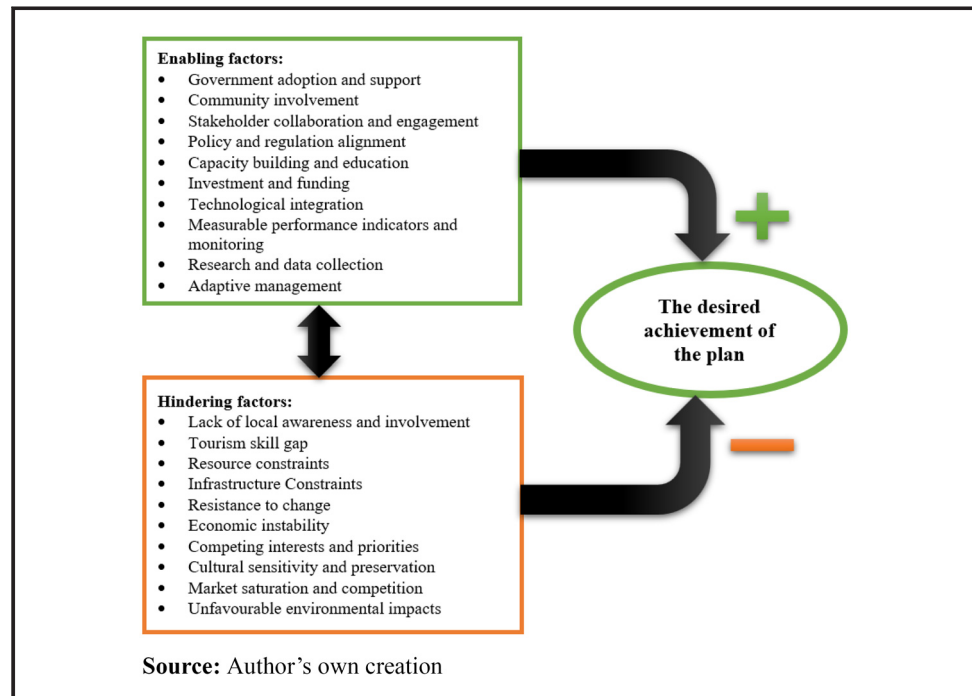
The participants agreed that the most influential factor for success in this phase is the government as a decision maker and its proclivity to adopt or reject local perspectives (design) while engaging them in the implementation of the plan (destiny). Collaboration with diverse stakeholders, including local communities, environmental groups, government bodies and businesses, is another pivotal factor for success, among others, which involves the government as a facilitator and supporter and a major contributor and coordinator to all efforts and parties.

Moreover, the findings revealed that a lack of awareness and involvement in preserving historical and cultural heritage, a tourism skill gap in the local workforce, resource constraints (financial, human and technological), infrastructure limitations, resistance to change and others could potentially negatively impact the desired achievement of the plan.

7. Discussion and implications

Research purposes and questions were developed to fill a crucial gap in the PPT literature. Extensive research has argued for tourism's impact on poverty alleviation (e.g. Scheyvens, 2011; Cole, 2008; Attaalla, 2016), but a gap persists in practical methodologies and

Figure 7 Data structure showcases enabling and hindering factors for the plan's success, derived inductively from the results

Enabling factors:
- Government adoption and support
- Community involvement
- Stakeholder collaboration and engagement
- Policy and regulation alignment
- Capacity building and education
- Investment and funding
- Technological integration
- Measurable performance indicators and monitoring
- Research and data collection
- Adaptive management

The desired achievement of the plan

Hindering factors:
- Lack of local awareness and involvement
- Tourism skill gap
- Resource constraints
- Infrastructure Constraints
- Resistance to change
- Economic instability
- Competing interests and priorities
- Cultural sensitivity and preservation
- Market saturation and competition
- Unfavourable environmental impacts

Source: Author's own creation

strategies (Zhang et al., 2023), particularly in developing nations (Cobbinah, 2014; Lama, 2012). Considering the above, this study utilised the growing AI approach in community development (Demeshane & Nel, 2018) to develop practical strategies for enhancing the well-being of the impoverished community of Rosetta. The findings are structured around the four-D phases of the AI approach, namely discover, dream, design and destiny, integrating insights from thematic analysis, stakeholder engagement and a review of related literature. Limited empirical studies have applied AI principles to PPT development (e.g. Lama, 2012), and none have been conducted in developing or Arab countries, all indicating the current study's novelty and originality.

7.1 Discover (uncovering Rosetta's potential)

In this phase, the study reveals Rosetta's tourism potential, stressing its historical, cultural and geographic advantages. Participants pride themselves on Rosetta's cultural importance and its potential appeal to both national and international tourists. This aligns with literature emphasising cultural and heritage assets as a prime reason for attracting visitors (e.g. Ismagilova, Safiullin, & Gafurov, 2015; Kwiatek-Sołtys & Bajgier-Kowalska, 2019; McGrath, Primm, & Lafe, 2017). According to Ismagilova et al. (2015), cultural and historical assets have the upper hand in contributing to the competitiveness of the tourism product in any destination.

Participants noted the underutilization of these advantages in Rosetta and proposed developing seven tourism types with substantial potential to benefit the impoverished, especially heritage tourism. Hassan et al. (2008) support this, noting that the growth of cultural activities and industry in Egypt can reduce poverty and promote fair wealth distribution. Additionally, according to Santoro et al. (2018), safeguarding and promoting culture and heritage can be a catalyst for eliminating poverty and driving development initiatives.

Moreover, despite some economic benefits from tourism, the study revealed that the overall impact on improving the economic conditions of Rosetta's inhabitants has been limited. However, participants identified various opportunities for impoverished individuals to become involved in and benefit from the tourism sector when it is developed properly. These opportunities ranged from direct to indirect involvement (e.g. accommodation, cultural activities and supplementary services).

7.2 Dream (aspirations for Rosetta's tourism)

The in-depth exploration of the Dream phase uncovers a rich tapestry of participants' visions, revealing key elements that constitute their dream for Rosetta's tourism and the underlying motivations that drive these aspirations. This includes envisioning a sustainable, globally recognised tourism destination that appeals to history enthusiasts, adventure seekers and culture admirers, where locals are empowered and poverty is alleviated.

The components of the developed vision align with various previous studies, emphasising their significance and efficacy in realising the envisioned status of Rosetta as a distinguished destination.

The vision aligns with several studies emphasising the importance of cultural and historical assets in attracting diverse visitors. Ismagilova et al. (2015) and McGrath et al. (2017) underscore this significance. Additionally, the identification of unique selling propositions, as emphasised by Hassan et al. (2008), plays a crucial role in reducing poverty through cultural activities, a point supported by Santoro et al. (2018). Devereux (2001) argues that a focus on niche products and diversified tourism offerings, which the vision promotes, can lead to longer stays and higher expenditures.

Furthermore, the vision's emphasis on community empowerment and poverty alleviation is supported by Hassan et al. (2008), asserting that the growth of cultural activities in Egypt can reduce poverty and ensure fair wealth distribution. This perspective is reinforced by the participants' vision for global recognition that will lead to more economic benefits, aligning with Terzić, Jovičić and Simeunović-Bajić's (2014) insights. They emphasise that when residents perceive personal gains from tourism, they are more likely to support its growth.

7.3 Design (strategies and actionable objectives)

The design phase outlines objectives and strategies derived from earlier phases, including sustainable environmental management, local economic growth, enhanced marketing, improved infrastructure and diversified tourism offerings. Each objective is underpinned by insights from literature (e.g. UNWTO & SNV, 2010; Hassan et al., 2008), emphasising the role of government, cultural preservation, local empowerment, support of small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs) and infrastructure investment. According to UNWTO and SNV (2010), SMMEs are vital for PPT, offering services like dining, crafts, transportation and local tours. However, developing SMMEs in Rosetta will require access to capital, business management training and marketing support.

Furthermore, multiple studies (e.g. Lama, 2012; Sheate & Partidário, 2010; UNWTO & SNV, 2010) highlight the crucial role of multi-stakeholder involvement in PPT success, particularly the inclusion of local insights. In line with this, the current study actively engaged the local community, recognising their deep understanding of community needs and potential. This is also crucial to ensuring benefits reach those in need. And when residents see personal gains from tourism, they are more likely to support its growth (Terzić, Jovičić, & Simeunović-Bajić, 2014).

According to Wen et al. (2021), the involvement of community residents in the context of PPT can be categorised from less to ideal into six types: passive, consultative, purchase, functional, interactive and spontaneous involvement. In the specific case of Rosetta, the

findings revealed that most community residents engaged at a passive level, resulting in restricted income from tourism. The tourism strategy in Egypt, as per ENCC (2013) and Ibrahim and Wall (2016), uses a top-down approach, lacking input from the private sector or local communities in decision-making. Musavengane et al. (2019) found PPT in sub-Saharan African cities does not sufficiently benefit vulnerable groups due to urban governance issues aligning with national practices.

7.4 Destiny (enabling factors and challenges)

Winters et al. (2013) argued that the crucial inquiry is not if there is a link between tourism and poverty reduction but when this link is most potent. Drawing on this, the destiny phase explores enabling factors for success and potential challenges. Government support and stakeholder collaboration emerge as crucial success factors. Additionally, awareness, skills gap, resource constraints and resistance to change are identified as potential challenges. This aligns with insights from the literature, highlighting the importance of government roles, investment challenges and community involvement (e.g. UNWTO & SNV, 2010; Wen et al., 2021). Aligning with Truong (2013), the study acknowledges the multifaceted roles the government plays in PPT development. These roles encompass planning, regulation, promotion and education, emphasising the government's significant influence in shaping the sector. However, the study also recognises the investment gap hindering PPT implementation, consistent with the barriers outlined by Marquardt (2018) and Sharpley and Ussi (2014). Moreover, Matei and Caraba (2010) and Fonseca and Ramos (2012) both highlight the challenges small towns face in developing tourism due to insufficient infrastructure and resources. These barriers, including skills, knowledge, ownership and capital limitations, necessitate policy attention (Mao, 2015; Scheyvens, 2011). To ensure Rosetta's success and address challenges, government backing and strategic collaboration are crucial. This includes providing resources and regulatory support for PPT development. Moreover, involving communities through collaborative participation, as highlighted by Mekawy (2012), is essential (e.g. collecting minor investments from numerous residents). Engaging communities in small projects allows for increased local satisfaction and ensures tourism revenue remains in local hands.

Furthermore, assessing the plan's impact requires careful consideration of various factors, as highlighted by UNWTO and SNV (2010). These factors include reach to impoverished individuals, potential income increase, non-monetary benefits, targeting effectiveness, measurability of impact, speed and visibility of the impact, sustainability and replicability potential. Such a comprehensive and continuing assessment, before, during and after the plan's execution, ensures the plan's effectiveness in alleviating poverty and fostering sustainable growth.

7.5 Contributions and implications

This study offers a comprehensive strategy for tourism development in Rosetta. The iterative process involving the local community ensures a bottom-up, inclusive approach to planning, which is not only innovative in the context of tourism planning but also aligns with the socio-cultural environment of Rosetta. Additionally, the study offers actionable strategies for poverty alleviation by identifying opportunities for impoverished individuals to participate in the tourism sector. By highlighting the untapped potential of various tourism types and the role of SMMEs, the study provides a roadmap for economic upliftment and income generation. Indeed, this plan, while tailored based on a thorough analysis of Rosetta's case and the perspectives of its residents, can serve as a significant reference and blueprint for numerous cities akin to Rosetta – of which there are many around the globe.

The findings of this study have direct implications for policymakers and decision makers involved in tourism development. It emphasises the importance of incorporating a

community-centric approach and leveraging cultural assets for sustainable and inclusive growth. This inclusivity is essential for sustainable tourism development and poverty alleviation. Although each region enjoys a unique nature and features, most of them (especially those in developing countries) are similar in many other circumstances and characteristics that limit the exploitation of tourism in reducing poverty. Therefore, the developmental and planning model developed by this research is a useful guide that decision makers can use (with modifications according to the needs of the destination) to change the rules of the game within their tourist destinations that face the same challenges.

For practitioners in the tourism industry, this study provides insights into designing and implementing tourism offerings that are not only commercially viable but also socially responsible. By promoting a diversified range of tourism types, the industry can attract a broader audience and contribute to poverty alleviation.

Academically, this study enriches the discourse on PPT development and poverty reduction in developing regions, emphasising a holistic approach by showcasing the effectiveness of the AI approach. It opens doors for further research into leveraging AI and positive psychology principles in tourism planning, potentially influencing future methodologies and strategies in tourism research and planning.

8. Conclusion

The study attempted to answer two questions through the lens of the AI approach. Across the four-D phases of AI: discover, dream, design and destiny, the study was able to conclude:

1. what forms and related activities of tourism hold promise for improving the well-being of the impoverished populace based on Rosetta's potential; and

2. how practically tourism can be used to alleviate poverty and stimulate economic progress within the marginalised community of Rosetta by developing a tailored strategy for this purpose.

The study found that while tourism brought some economic benefits to Rosetta, its impact on poverty alleviation was limited. Based on its untapped unique resources, seven potential types of tourism with pro-poor features in Rosetta were identified, emphasizing heritage tourism. These types include recreational, shopping, heritage, yacht and cruise, religious, culinary and eco-tourism. The study also highlighted various opportunities for impoverished involvement in Rosetta's tourism sector, spanning accommodation, cultural activities, transportation, traditional markets, handicrafts and locally tailored services.

To provide practical insights for leveraging tourism to drive positive socio-economic change, the study proposed a holistic tourism development strategy with actionable objectives for economic growth and poverty reduction. This strategy focuses on sustainable management, local empowerment, enhanced marketing, improved infrastructure and diversified tourism offerings.

The study's findings carry vital implications for policymakers, practitioners and academics, stressing the need for a community-centric approach and using cultural assets for sustainable and inclusive growth. Policymakers should foster a supportive regulatory environment, allocate resources and engage with local communities for PPT initiatives to be successful. Practitioners should prioritise designing socially responsible and commercially viable tourism offerings, promoting a diverse range to attract a broader audience and contributing to poverty alleviation. Additionally, this study adds to academic discussions on PPT development and poverty reduction in developing regions and prompts further research on integrating AI and positive psychology in tourism planning, potentially influencing future methodologies and strategies.

Moving forward, future research should focus on evaluating the long-term sustainability of the proposed strategies, considering potential changes in the tourism landscape, economic conditions and societal needs. Moreover, exploring the ethical dimensions of tourism development, particularly cultural preservation and local involvement, is worth deeper investigation. Additionally, comparative studies with other tourist destinations facing similar challenges could provide valuable insights into best practices for PPT development.

To the extent that the original questions guided this research, the findings have successfully answered them by presenting a holistic strategy for tourism development in Rosetta, Egypt, aiming to alleviate poverty and foster economic growth. However, acknowledging the limitations of the study is essential. The study primarily relied on qualitative data obtained through interviews and focus group discussions. While this approach provided rich and in-depth insights, future studies could benefit from complementing it with quantitative analysis for a more comprehensive understanding. Additionally, the study focused on Rosetta, Egypt, making its findings context-specific. Future research should extend to broader destinations to validate and generalise the proposed strategies. Furthermore, the research primarily focused on local stakeholders, and the perspectives of tourists and government officials were not included. Addressing these limitations and involving diverse stakeholders will lead to a more comprehensive understanding of tourism's potential for poverty alleviation.

In summary, the detailed development plan developed in this study represents a step towards filling the gap between theoretical concepts and practical strategies for using tourism to alleviate poverty within marginalised communities and enhance their living standards. Additionally, the study findings revealed the effectiveness of using the AI method in tourism planning and how it served as a framework for guiding planning and incorporating stakeholder perspectives into decision-making processes.

References

Abd Halim, N. (2014). Tourism as a Tool for Poverty Alleviation Using Value Chain Analysis: A Case Study of Setiu Wetland, Terengganu, Malaysia (Ph.D. Thesis). University of Tasmania. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.25959/23236697.v1

Abdelalim, M. F., & Fahmy, M. (2017). On the alliance of urban economic management in heritage zones: The case study of rosetta houses. *Egypt. International Journal of Applied Engineering Research*, *12*(21), 11261–11267.

Amin, M. E. K., Nørgaard, L. S., Cavaco, A. M., Witry, M. J., Hillman, L., Cernasev, A., & Desselle, S. P. (2020). Establishing trustworthiness and authenticity in qualitative pharmacy research. *Research in Social and Administrative Pharmacy*, *16*(10), 1472–1482. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sapharm.2020.02.005.

Anderson, W. (2014). Cultural tourism and poverty alleviation in rural Kilimanjaro, Tanzania. *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change*, *13*(3), 208–224. https://doi.org/10.1080/14766825.2014.935387.

Ashley, C., Roe, D., & Goodwin, H. (2001). *Pro-Poor Tourism Strategies: Making Tourism Work for the Poor: A Review of Experience*, London: Overseas Development Institute.

Attaalla, F. A. (2016). Pro-poor tourism as a panacea for slums in Egypt. *International Journal of Tourism & Hospitality Reviews*, *3*(1), 30–44. https://doi.org/10.18510/ijthr.2016.312.

Babbie, E. R. (2008). *The basics of social research*, Belmont, CA: Thomson, Cop.

Blake, A., Arbache, J. S., Sinclair, M. T., & Teles, V. (2008). Tourism and poverty relief. *Annals of Tourism Research*, *35*(1), 107–126. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2007.06.013.

Boyd, N. M., & Bright, D. S. (2007). Appreciative inquiry as a mode of action research for community psychology. *Journal of Community Psychology*, *35*(8), 1019–1036. https://doi.org/10.1002/jcop.20208.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *3*(2), 77–101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa.

Bricker, K. S., Black, R., & Cottrell, S. (2013). *Sustainable tourism & the millennium development goals: Effecting positive change*, Burlington, Mass: Jones & Bartlett Learning.

CAPMAS (2017). Central agency for public mobilization and statistics. Retrieved June 9, 2023, from Capmas.gov.eg website Retrieved from www.capmas.gov.eg/Pages/Publications.aspx?page_id=7195&Year=23354

Chaichi, A. (2016). *The Importance of Pro-Poor Tourism in Developing Countries* (Master Thesis). California State Polytechnic University, Pomona.

Chok, S., Macbeth, J., & Warren, C. (2007). Tourism as a tool for poverty alleviation: A critical analysis of "Pro-Poor tourism" and implications for sustainability. *Current Issues in Tourism*, *10*(2/3), 144–165. https://doi.org/10.2167/cit303.

Cobbinah, P. (2014). *Towards Poverty Reduction in Developing Countries: An Analysis of Ecotourism Implementation in the Kakum Conservation Area, Ghana* (PhD Thesis). Charles Sturt University. Retrieved from https://researchoutput.csu.edu.au/ws/portalfiles/portal/9312795/63799

Cole, S. (2008). Living in hope: Tourism and poverty alleviation in Flores. In Burns, P. and Novelli, M. (Eds.) (2008). *Tourism Development: Growth, Myths and Inequalities*. Oxford: CABI.

Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches*, Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc.

Croes, R. (2014). The role of tourism in poverty reduction: An empirical assessment. *Tourism Economics*, *20*(2), 207–226. https://doi.org/10.5367/te.2013.0275.

Demeshane, J., & Nel, H. (2018). Applying the process of appreciative inquiry in community development. *Southern African Journal of Social Work and Social Development*, *30*(3). https://doi.org/10.25159/2415-5829/3599.

Demeshane, J. (2015). *Application of the Process of Appreciative Inquiry as an Asset-Based Community Development Model in Community Development* (Master Thesis). University of Johannesburg. Retrieved from https://hdl.handle.net/10210/123796

Devereux, S. (2001). Livelihood insecurity and social protection: A re-emerging issue in rural development. *Development Policy Review*, *19*(4), 507–519. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-7679.00148.

Dimitrov, P. M., Kraseta, R., Dimitrov, B., & Parvanov, P. (2018). Bulgarian tourism and the problem of poverty in Bulgaria. *Tourism & Management Studies*, *14*(2), 45–52. Retrieved from www.tmstudies.net/index.php/ectms/article/view/982

Elsorady, D. A. (2012). Heritage conservation in Rosetta (Rashid): A tool for community improvement and development. *Cities*, *29*(6), 379–388. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2011.11.013.

ENCC (2013). *Refreshed tourism strategy 2013-2020: The way forward and new horizons*, Egypt: Egyptian National Competitiveness Council (ENCC).

Eraqi, M. I. (2007). Local communities' attitudes towards impacts of tourism development in Egypt. *Tourism Analysis*, *12*(3), 191–200. https://doi.org/10.3727/108354207781626848.

Fonseca, F. P., & Ramos, R. A. R. (2012). Heritage tourism in peripheral areas: Development strategies and constraints. *Tourism Geographies*, *14*(3), 467–493. https://doi.org/10.1080/14616688.2011.610147.

Frenzel, F. (2013). Slum tourism in the context of the tourism and poverty (relief) debate. *Die Erde; Zeitschrift der Gesellschaft für Erdkunde zu Berlin*, *144*(2) https://doi.org/10.12854/erde1449.

Garza-Rodriguez, J. (2019). Tourism and poverty reduction in Mexico: an ARDL cointegration approach. *Sustainability*, *11*(3), 845. https://doi.org/10.3390/su11030845.

Ghodya, M. K. M., Azzam, Y. A.-E., & Maarouf, I. E. (2021). Strategy of integrating Egyptian sites into world heritage property: Rashid city as a case study. *Ain Shams Engineering Journal*, *12*(3), 3381–3387. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.asej.2020.11.021.

Gill, P., & Baillie, J. (2018). Interviews and focus groups in qualitative research: An update for the digital age. *British Dental Journal*, *225*(7), 668–672. https://doi.org/10.1038/sj.bdj.2018.815.

Google (2022). Rosetta Map. Retrieved from https://maps.app.goo.gl/5UsLa3KZ2rJ9Aae56

Guest, G., Namey, E. E., & Mitchell, M. L. (2013). *Collecting qualitative data: A field manual for applied research*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Hassan, F., de Trafford, A., & Youssef, M. (2008). *Cultural heritage and development in the Arab world*, Alexandria, Egypt: Dar El-Kuttub.

Holden, A. (2013). *Tourism, poverty and development*, New York, NY: Routledge.

Holland, J., Burian, M., & Dixey, L. (2003). Tourism in poor rural areas: Diversifying the product and expanding the benefits in rural Uganda and the Czech Republic. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/238088185_Tourism_in_Poor_Rural_Areas_Diversifying_the_product_and_expanding_the_benefits_in_rural_Uganda_and_the_Czech_Republic

Horák, M., Antwi Darkwah, S., & Verter, N. (2015). Tourism as a poverty reduction tool: The case of Mukuni village in the Southern Province of Zambia. *Acta Universitatis Agriculturae et Silviculturae Mendelianae Brunensis*, *62*(6), 1287–1292. https://doi.org/10.11118/actaun201462061287.

Ibrahim, Z. (2009). *Tourism Development and the Environment on the Egyptian Red Sea Coast* (Master Thesis). The University of Waterloo. Retrieved from https://uwspace.uwaterloo.ca/bitstream/handle/10012/4268/Ibrahim_Zainub.pdf

Ibrahim, Z., & Wall, G. (2016). Assessing tourism planning: Goals and objectives for Egyptian tourism, *Travel and Tourism Research Association*, *Advancing Tourism Research Globally*, Retrieved from https://scholarworks.umass.edu/ttra/2011/Oral/44

Ismagilova, G., Safiullin, L., & Gafurov, I. (2015). Using historical heritage as a factor in tourism development. *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *188*, 157–162. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.03.355.

Johnson, B., & Christensen, L. B. (2020). *Educational research: Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed approaches*, Los Angeles: Sage Publications, Inc.

Keovilay, T. (2012). Tourism and Development in Rural Communities: A Case Study of Luang Namtha Province, Lao PDR (Master Thesis). Lincoln University. Retrieved from https://researcharchive.lincoln.ac.nz/handle/10182/5248

Klytchnikova, I., & Dorosh, P. (2013). Tourism sector in Panama: Regional economic impacts and the potential to benefit the poor. *Natural Resources Forum*, *37*(2), 70–79. https://doi.org/10.1111/1477-8947.12019.

Knight, D. W. (2015). Tourism, poverty, and development: Local perceptions, empowerment, and Strategies for Change in Peru's Sacred Valley (PhD Thesis). Colorado State University. Retrieved from http://hdl.handle.net/10217/167015

Koens, K., & Thomas, R. (2016). "You know that's a rip-off": Policies and practices surrounding micro-enterprises and poverty alleviation in South African township tourism. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, *24*(12), 1641–1654. https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2016.1145230.

Krueger, R. A., & Casey, M. A. (2014). *Focus groups: a practical guide for applied research.* (5th ed.) Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Kwiatek-Sołtys, A., & Bajgier-Kowalska, M. (2019). The role of cultural heritage sites in the creation of tourism potential of small towns in Poland. *European Spatial Research and Policy*, *26*(2), 237–255. https://doi.org/10.18778/1231-1952.26.2.11.

Lama, L. (2012). The appreciative inquiry process in pro-poor tourism planning and development: Experiences from Nepal: a thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of master of tourism management at Lincoln University (Master Thesis). Lincoln University. Retrieved from https://researcharchive.lincoln.ac.nz/handle/10182/4925

Leal Londoño, M. P. (2015). Promoting gastronomic tourism to foster local development: The stakeholders' perspective. *Almatourism – Journal of Tourism, Culture and Territorial Development*, *6*(11), 54–74. https://doi.org/10.6092/issn.2036-5195/5292.

Lor, J. J., Kwa, S., & Donaldson, J. A. (2019). Making ethnic tourism good for the poor. *Annals of Tourism Research*, *76*, 140-152. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2019.03.008.

Luo, X., & Bao, J. (2019). Exploring the impacts of tourism on the livelihoods of local poor: the role of local government and major investors. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, *27*(3), 344–359. https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2019.1578362.

Luvanga, N., & Shitundu, J. (2003). *The Role of Tourism in Poverty Alleviation in Tanzania*, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania: Mkuki Na Nyota Publishers.

McGrath, J. M., Primm, D., & Lafe, W. (2017). Tourist motivations for visiting heritage attractions: New insights from a large US study. *International Journal of Leisure and Tourism Marketing*, *5*(4), 298. https://doi.org/10.1504/ijltm.2017.087497.

Manwa, H., & Manwa, F. (2014). Poverty alleviation through Pro-Poor tourism: the role of Botswana Forest reserves. *Sustainability*, *6*(9), 5697–5713. https://doi.org/10.3390/su6095697.

Mao, N. (2015). *The Role of Tourism in Poverty Reduction: A Case Study of SIEM Reap-Angkor Region, Cambodia* (PhD Thesis). Victoria University. Retrieved from https://vuir.vu.edu.au/31020/3/MAO%20Nara-thesis_nosignature.pdf

Marquardt, D. (2018). Tourism development cooperation in a changing economic environment–impacts and challenges in Lao P.D.R. In Müller, D., Więckowski, M. (Eds.), *Tourism in transitions*, pp. 117–136. Springer.

Matei, E., & Caraba, C. (2010). Tourism a panacea for the Romanian small towns development? *GeoJournal of Tourism and Geosites*, *5*(1). Retrieved from http://gtg.webhost.uoradea.ro/PDF/GTG-1-2010/9-GTG-Matei.pdf

Mekawy, M. A. (2012). Responsible slum tourism: Egyptian experience. *Annals of Tourism Research*, *39*(4), 2092–2113. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2012.07.006.

Mostafa,, W. (2017). A collection of images highlights Rosetta's diverse heritage and cultural assets. In *Wikimedia Commons, the Free Media Repository*. Retrieved from https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?search=Wael+Mostafa+%2B+rashid&title=Special:Search&profile=advanced&fulltext=1&ns0=1&ns6=1&ns12=1&ns14=1&ns100=1&ns106=1

Musavengane, R., Siakwah, P., & Leonard, L. (2019). "Does the poor matter" in pro-poor driven Sub-Saharan African cities? Towards progressive and inclusive pro-poor tourism. *International Journal of Tourism Cities*, *5*(3), 392–411. https://doi.org/10.1108/ijtc-05-2019-0057.

Nel, H. (2018). A comparison between the asset-oriented and needs-based community development approaches in terms of systems changes. *Practice*, *30*(1), 33–52. https://doi.org/10.1080/09503153.2017.1360474.

Nyumba, T., Wilson, K., Derrick, C. J., & Mukherjee, N. (2018). The use of focus group discussion methodology: Insights from two decades of application in conservation. *Methods in Ecology and Evolution*, *9*(1), 20–32.

OECD (2018). "Egypt", in OECD Tourism Trends and Policies 2018, OECD Publishing, Paris.

Outterson, K., Selinger, E., & Whyte, K. (2011). Poverty tourism, justice, and policy. *Public Integrity*, *14*(1), 39–50. https://doi.org/10.2753/pin1099-9922140103.

Pleumarom, A. (2012). *The politics of tourism, poverty reduction and sustainable development*, Penang, Malaysia: Third World Network.

Reason, P., & Bradbury, H. (2007). *The sage handbook of action research: Participative inquiry and practice*, London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Santoro, J., Runde, D., Frigenti, L., & Ciarlo, E. (2018). Investing in Cultural Heritage: An Asset for Economic Growth in the Developing World. A Report of the CSIS Project on Prosperity and Development. Washington, DC: The Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS).

Schenck, C. J., Nel, H., & Louw, H. (2011). *Introduction to participatory community practice*, Pretoria: University of South Africa.

Scheyvens, R. (2011). *Tourism and poverty*, New York, NY: Routledge.

Schilcher, D. (2007). Growth versus equity: The continuum of pro-poor tourism and neoliberal governance. *Current Issues in Tourism*, *10*(2/3), 166–193. https://doi.org/10.2167/cit304.0.

Shah, I. A. (2023). Exploring governance effectiveness, tourism development and poverty reduction relationship in SAARC countries using panel dynamic estimation. *Journal of Tourism Futures*, https://doi.org/10.1108/jtf-09-2022-0221.

Sharma, M., Mohapatra, G., & Giri, A. K. (2021). Is tourism pro-poor in India? An empirical investigation using ARDL approach. *Journal of Economic and Administrative Sciences*. https://doi.org/10.1108/jeas-02-2021-0031.

Sharpley, R., & Ussi, M. (2014). Tourism and governance in small island developing states (SIDS): the case of Zanzibar. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, *16*(1), 87-96. https://doi.org/10.1002/jtr.1904.

Sheate, W. R., & Partidário, M. R. (2010). Strategic approaches and assessment techniques–Potential for knowledge brokerage towards sustainability. *Environmental Impact Assessment Review*, *30*(4), 278–288. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eiar.2009.10.003.

Spenceley, A., & Meyer, D. (2012). Tourism and poverty reduction: Theory and practice in less economically developed countries. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, *20*(3), 297–317. https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2012.668909.

Srisantisuk, S. (2015). *Pro-poor Tourism Policy in Thailand* (Ph.D. Thesis). London School of Economics. Retrieved from http://etheses.lse.ac.uk/3146/1/Srisantisuk_Pro-poor_tourism_policy_in_Thailand.pdf

Steiner, C. (2006). Tourism, poverty reduction and the political economy: Egyptian perspectives on tourism's economic benefits in a Semi-Rentier state. *Tourism and Hospitality Planning & Development*, *3*(3), 161–177. https://doi.org/10.1080/14790530601132286.

Tasci, A. D. A., Semrad, K. J., & Yilmaz, S. S. (2013). Community based tourism finding, the equilibrium in the COMCEC context setting: The pathway for the future. Ankara, Turkey: COMCEC. Retrieved from COMCEC website: Retrieved from https://sbb.gov.tr/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Community_Based_Tourism_Finding_the_Equilibrium_in_the_COMCEC_Context%e2%80%8b.pdf

Terzić, A., Jovičić, A., & Simeunović-Bajić, N. (2014). Community role in heritage management and sustainable tourism development: case study of the Danube region in Serbia. *Transylvanian Review of Administrative Sciences*, 183–201.

Truong, V. D. (2013). Tourism policy development in Vietnam: A pro-poor perspective. *Journal of Policy Research in Tourism, Leisure and Events*, *5*(1), 28–45. https://doi.org/10.1080/19407963.2012.760224

Truong, V. D., Hall, C. M., & Garry, T. (2014). Tourism and poverty alleviation: perceptions and experiences of poor people in Sapa, Vietnam. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, *22*(7), 1071-1089. https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2013.871019.

Tuckett, A. G. (2005). Applying thematic analysis theory to practice: A researcher's experience. *Contemporary Nurse*, *19*(1-2), 75-87. https://doi.org/10.5172/conu.19.1-2.75.

UN (2013). *The Millennium Development Goals Report, 2013*, New York, NY: United Nations.

UNESCO. (2019). Historic quarters and monuments of Rosetta/Rachid – UNESCO World Heritage Centre. Retrieved July 3, 2023, from Unesco.org website: Retrieved from https://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/1831/

UN-HABITAT (2006). Rapid Urban Sector Profiling for Sustainability (RUSPS), *Rosetta*. Nairobi, Kenya: United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT).

UNWTO (2002). Tourism and poverty alleviation. Madrid: World Tourism Organization. Retrieved from World Tourism Organization website: Retrieved from www.e-unwto.org/doi/epdf/10.18111/9789284405497

UNWTO (2004). *Tourism and poverty alleviation recommendations for action*, Madrid, Spain: World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). https://doi.org/10.18111/9789284407019.

UNWTO and IPSOS (2019), Global survey on the perception of residents towards city tourism: Impact and measures, Madrid, World Tourism Organization. Retrieved from www.e-unwto.org/doi/pdf/10.18111/9789284421107

UNWTO and SNV (2010). Manual on tourism and poverty alleviation – practical steps for destinations. *Tourism organization and The Netherlands development organization*, Madrid, Spain: The World. https://doi.org/10.18111/9789284413430.

Wang, K., Gan, C., Chen, L., & Voda, M. (2020). Poor residents' perceptions of the impacts of tourism on poverty alleviation: From the perspective of multidimensional poverty. *Sustainability*, *12*(18), 7515. https://doi.org/10.3390/su12187515

Wen, S., Cai, X., & Li, J. (2021). Pro-Poor tourism and local practices: an empirical study of an autonomous county in China. *SAGE Open*, *11*(2), 215824402110227. https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440211022740.

Whitney, D., & Trosten-Bloom, A. (2010). *The power of appreciative inquiry a practical guide to positive change*, San Francisco, Calif: Berret-Koehler.

Winters, P., Corral, L., & Mora, A. M. (2013). Assessing the role of tourism in poverty alleviation: A research agenda. *Development Policy Review*, *31*(2), 177-202. https://doi.org/10.1111/dpr.12002.

Yu, L., Wang, G., & Marcouiller, D. W. (2019). A scientometric review of pro-poor tourism research: Visualization and analysis. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, *30*, 75-88. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2019.02.005.

Zhang, D., Wang, Q., & Yang, Y. (2023). Cure-all or curse? A meta-regression on the effect of tourism development on poverty alleviation. *Tourism Management*, *94*, 104650. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2022.104650.

Zhao, W., & Ritchie, J. R. B. (2007). Tourism and poverty alleviation: an integrative research framework. *Current Issues in Tourism*, *10*(2-3), 119-143. https://doi.org/10.2167/cit296.0.

Further reading

OECD. (2016). Fostering tourism competitiveness in South East Europe. In The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Retrieved from www.oecd.org/south-east-europe/programme/Fostering_Tourism_Competitiveness_South_East_Europe.pdf

Appendix 1. One-on-one interview questions

Questions developed for the "discover" phase include

- DIS1. Do you recall a time when you witnessed or were told by your ancestors that a significant portion of tourism benefits are directed to the local people?
- DIS2. If yes, what do you think were the factors that led to this favourable situation?
- DIS3. If not, what do you think were the factors back then that could have led to this favourable situation?
- DIS4. Why should people visit your area? What makes it significant?
- DIS5. What stories will help you explain the significance of your area?
- DIS6. Which current tourism products appear to be delivering the most benefit to the impoverished?
- DIS7. What kinds of new products and activities can be developed that are good at delivering benefits to the impoverished?

Questions developed for the "dream" phase include

- DRE1. What do you hope regarding locals' access to authority in decision-making and their role in the tourism industry?
- DRE2. What do you hope regarding the locals' benefits from tourism?
- DRE3. What do you hope for regarding the state of Rosetta's facilities, attractions and promotion?
- DRE4. What is the overall vision you propose for Rosetta as a tourist destination?

Source of Appendix 1: Author's own creation using insights from Cobbinah (2014), ENCC (2013), Lama (2012), Schenck et al. (2011), UNWTO & SNV (2010) and Whitney & Trosten-Bloom (2010).

Appendix 2. Focus group discussion questions

Questions developed for the "design" phase include

- DES1. Have you been involved in tourism planning and implementation in the community?
- DES2. If you were the decision maker for tourism planning and implementation in your community, what decisions or things would you take or change for a better future?
- DES3. How can you effectively share your narratives and historical significance, ensuring Rosetta gains recognition on a global scale?

Questions developed for the "destiny" phase include

- DST1. What factors do you believe will facilitate the successful implementation of this plan?
- DST2. What obstacles do you anticipate may impede the efficient execution of this plan?

Source of Appendix 2: Author's own creation using insights from Cobbinah (2014), ENCC (2013), Lama (2012), Schenck et al. (2011), UNWTO & SNV (2010) and Whitney & Trosten-Bloom (2010).

Appendix 3

Table A1 Tailored plan to develop rosetta based on study findings		
Objectives	*Strategies*	*Tactics*
1. Apply sustainable approaches to effectively manage land, the environment, communities, cultural heritage and urban development	1.1 Raise public awareness about preserving historical sites and cultural heritage	1.1.1 Workshops and seminars in schools, universities and community centres 1.1.2 Community involvement and volunteer programmes
	1.2 Restructure urban areas to protect heritage sites and landmarks from unplanned construction	1.2.1 Zoning regulations and land use planning 1.2.2 Heritage Impact Assessments (HIAs) 1.2.3 Digital documentation and archiving
	1.3 Implement proper interpretation tools and informative signage at heritage sites	1.3.1 Signs 1.3.2 Guided tours 1.3.3 Brochures and pamphlets 1.3.4 QR codes 1.3.5 Storytelling sessions
	1.4 Improve safety and security in and around heritage sites to protect both visitors and historical structures	1.4.1 Cameras, alarms and regular patrols 1.4.2 Community engagement and reporting 1.4.3 Perimeter fencing and access control
	1.5 Establish a thorough plan for preserving and restoring Rosetta's authentic historical architecture, including Ottoman-style buildings, historic houses and archaeological sites	1.5.1 Research and documentation 1.5.2 Funding and grants 1.5.3 Engage local experts and historians 1.5.4 Partnerships with conservation NGOs
	1.6 Address the issue of diminishing agricultural land due to the inorganized urban expansion	1.6.1 Land use planning and zoning regulations 1.6.2 Incentives for agricultural conservation 1.6.3 Farmland preservation programmes
	1.7 Develop and upgrade infrastructure and sites with a focus on sustainability	1.7.1 Incorporating eco-friendly practices in construction, energy use, waste management and water conservation 1.7.2 Collaborate with environmental organisations to protect nature and heritage for future generations 1.7.3 Public-private partnerships (PPPs)
2. Foster local economic growth through capacity building, investment and empowerment	2.1 Encourage local investment by leasing the promenade to local entrepreneurs and prioritising local employment	2.1.1 Tax incentives to local entrepreneurs 2.1.2 Business pitch competitions 2.1.3 Local job fairs
	2.2 Set up an industrial zone for local products and a heritage crafts centre to train in ancient crafts revival	2.2.1 Promote local artisans and craftspeople 2.2.2 Public workshops and demonstrations 2.2.3 Cultural events and exhibitions 2.2.4 Heritage conservation awards
	2.3 Bridge the tourism workforce skills gap through capacity building, especially among impoverished people, to enhance service quality and optimise benefits for the local community	2.3.1 Training and skill development programmes 2.3.2 Apprenticeships and on-the-job training 2.3.3 Certification and accreditation 2.3.4 Mentorship programmes for tourism career seekers 2.3.5 Language and communication skills enhancement
	2.4 Involve local communities in the decision-making and implementation processes of tourism-related projects and initiatives	2.4.1 Community consultations workshops and meetings 2.4.2 Collaborate with community leaders and influencers 2.4.3 Formation of local advisory committees 2.4.4 Participatory planning and design workshops
	2.5 Promote community-based tourism offerings, where visitors engage with local communities, providing them with direct economic benefits and fostering cultural exchange	2.5.1 Guided tours led by locals 2.5.2 Create engaging local cultural experiences 2.5.3 Volunteer and homestay programmes 2.5.4 Partner with travel agencies to promote community-based tourism packages

(continued)

Objectives	Strategies	Tactics
3. Enhance tourism marketing strategies to boost visibility and attract visitors in preparation for placing Rosetta on the global tourism map	3.1 Develop a comprehensive tourism marketing strategy and attractive marketing materials	3.1.1 Produce compelling, informative content on historical sites and cultural heritage through articles, videos and social media 3.1.2 High-quality brochures, pamphlets and flyers 3.1.3 Partner with influencers and bloggers 3.1.4 Targeted advertising and promotions 3.1.5 Participation in travel events and fairs
	3.2 Enhance the digital presence to provide easy access to information, bookings and interactive experiences for potential visitors	3.2.1 Develop a user-friendly, informative and visually appealing website 3.2.2 Use social media 3.2.3 Travel apps 3.2.4 Develop VR and AR experiences
	3.3 Showcase the rich heritage and traditions of Rosetta, drawing visitors from around the world	3.3.1 Cultural events 3.3.2 Food festivals 3.3.3 Art exhibitions and historical reenactments
	3.4 Connect Rosetta with Alexandria through tourism programmes and travel agency partnerships	3.4.1 Promote complementary packages (Rosetta–Alexandria tours) 3.4.2 Cross-promotion on travel platforms 3.4.3 Trails tours that connect the two cities 3.4.4 Transportation links 3.4.5 Cruise ship partnerships
	3.5 Partner with tourism entities and online platforms to globally market Rosetta, highlighting its diverse attractions and unique features	3.5.1 Partner with local and international tourism boards and intermediaries 3.5.2 Leverage online travel communities
	3.6 Promote rosetta as a culinary hub	3.6.1 Promote local dishes and showcase the town's unique gastronomic heritage 3.6.2 Establish food festivals, cooking competitions and food tours to engage visitors in the delightful Egyptian cuisine 3.6.3 Awareness of hygiene and food safety
4. Enhance infrastructure and tourist facilities	4.1 Regulate unlicensed cafes, restaurants and stalls that affect the promenade's beauty and flow	4.1.1 Educate business owners 4.1.2 Implement licensing requirements 4.1.3 Enforce design guidelines 4.1.4 Conduct regular inspections 4.1.5 Promote responsible waste management
	4.2 Enhance the city's transportation and roads	4.2.1 Create designated bike lanes, pedestrian walkways and safe crossings 4.2.2 Infrastructure upgrades 4.2.3 Public transit improvements
	4.3 Establish organised markets to improve goods' presentation and quality and protect historical sites from crowding, damage and litter	4.3.1 Establish organised markets in proximity to historical sites 4.3.2 Traffic, crowd control and waste management measures 4.3.3 Provide guidance on packaging, labelling and pricing 4.3.4 Promote hygiene and sanitation
	4.4 Enhance tourist site services and facilities for an improved visitor experience	4.4.1 Informational signage and interpretation centres 4.4.2 Accessibility improvements 4.4.3 Online booking systems and apps 4.4.4 Maintain clean and tidy restrooms, picnic spots and amenities
	4.5 Design a tourist map showcasing key attractions in Rosetta, intended as a guide for tourists, investors and officials	4.5.1 Research and identify key attractions 4.5.2 Engage professional designers 4.5.3 Incorporate descriptive text and images 4.5.4 Use interactive elements (e.g. QR, AR, etc.)

(*continued*)

Table A1

Objectives	Strategies	Tactics
	4.6 Create upscale accommodations blending modern luxury and tradition, providing stunning views, spa facilities, fine dining and personalised services	4.6.1 Design reflects the local heritage 4.6.2 Use locally sourced materials 4.6.3 Sustainable practices 4.6.4 Local traditional cuisine 4.6.4 Local employment
5. Diversify tourism offerings and enhance visitor experiences to increase satisfaction and expenditure	5.1 Reducing seasonality and increasing tourist length of stay and expenditure	5.1.1 Diversifying tourism products 5.1.2 Developing complementary products 5.1.3 Encourage tourism during off-peak
	5.2 Develop eco-friendly and adventure activities	5.2.1 Hiking, water sports and nature trails 5.2.2 Attracting adventure seekers and promoting active tourism in the region 5.2.3 Heritage camping experiences
	5.3 Developing new tourism products and types	5.3.1 Recreational tourism 5.3.2 Shopping tourism 5.3.3 Heritage tourism 5.3.4 Yacht and cruise tourism 5.3.5 Religious and ritual tourism 5.3.6 Culinary tourism 5.3.7 Eco-tourism
	5.4 Establish interactive museums and interpretive centres that showcase the town's diverse history, culture and contribution to ancient civilizations	5.4.1 Utilize modern technology to bring history to life through augmented reality and interactive exhibits 5.4.2 Integrate storytelling and multimedia 5.4.3 Offer special programmes for schools
	5.5 Offer curated experiences for tourists to immerse themselves in the local culture	5.5.1 Traditional cooking classes 5.5.2 Handicraft workshops and language lessons 5.5.3 Involve the local community to showcase their unique traditions and practices
	5.6 Introduce Nile river cruises from Rosetta, providing tourists with a scenic journey along the river	5.6.1 Combine historical narrations, entertainment and exquisite dining experiences to enhance the cruise's allure 5.6.2 Discounted rates for students and locals
	5.7. Host annual art and cultural festivals. These festivals will create a vibrant atmosphere and attract a diverse audience	5.7.1 Traditional music, dance and theatre performances 5.7.2 Children's programmes and activities 5.7.3 Create festival merchandise 5.7.4 Engage artists and creatives

Source: Author's own creation

About the author

Tamer M. Elsawy, lecturer at Pharos University's Faculty of Tourism and Hotel Management, holds a PhD in tourism planning and development. With a decade of academic experience and eight years as Assistant Manager at F.S. Hotels, he brings expertise in hospitality and intercultural skills. Currently leading committees and serving as editorial manager of the Pharos *International Journal of Tourism and Hospitality*, he's also involved in various roles, including head of academic advising, marketing committee, and international relations. As an IR coordinator, he establishes partnerships globally and secures funding for projects, collaborating with academics worldwide to drive research and enterprise activities. Tamer M. Elsawy can be contacted at: tamer.elsawy@pua.edu.eg