



Organic harvesting-volunteer tourism in Egypt: An exploratory study

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Abstract

An increasing number of people are choosing to travel abroad for volunteer tourism trips to blend tourism with philanthropic endeavours and personal growth. Volunteer tourists who take part in farm-to-farm experiences actively participate in volunteer work on various farms during their journeys. This type of volunteer tourism typically involves residing and working on different farms located in rural or agricultural areas. The volunteer tourism industry has now reached a value of \$3 billion annually, with participants covering the costs of their travel, including flights, transportation, meals, accommodation, and fees for the organizations and programs they support. However, there is a dearth of research that specifically examines the benefits of volunteer tourism for organic farming communities. Therefore, this study aims to evaluate social, economic, and environmental impacts of voluntourism, explore the challenges and opportunities associated with integrating voluntourism into organic farming practices, identify the role of voluntourists in supporting the host community of organic farms, and investigate the impact of voluntourism on host community of harvesting farms.

Introduction

Volunteer tourism is known as social work during leisure travel and involves combining tourism with voluntary work. In other words, it is a type of tourism where travelers not only enjoy their trip, but also dedicate their time to volunteering. The main motivations for voluntourists, as mentioned by Salvador (2020), revolve around breaking away from their usual routines as volunteers. These motivations drive volunteer travelers to actively seek opportunities to help others and remain engaged in volunteer activities (Han et al., 2020). Additionally, volunteer tourism is seen as a more comfortable and affordable way to travel, as well as an opportunity for organized group trips (Olsen, Vogt & Andereck, 2017; Sin, 2009).

According to Raymond & Hall (2008), voluntourism aims to create a mutually beneficial form of travel, benefiting both the volunteer and host communities.

Volunteer tourism sets itself apart from other types of tourism. Volunteers are driven not only by the desire to explore or fulfill personal interests; but also by a genuine desire to assist local individuals in host communities and enhance their overall well-being (Lyons et al., 2012; McGehee, 2014). These volunteers choose to reside in locally operated, small-scale guesthouses and actively support the local economy by frequenting community shops and purchasing locally made products. Rather than opting for luxurious international hotels that offer greater comfort, volunteers willingly immerse themselves in the local way of life, thereby making a positive contribution to the development and economy of the community (Lee et al., 2020).

Visitors, both tourists and locals, visit farms that engage in organic farming. Here, they uncover the time-honored farming practices of rural families and explore the eco-friendly techniques employed by these farmers to cultivate organic produce. Many participating farmers take advantage of the opportunity to sell their homegrown food in farm stores on site and nearby markets. This event serves as a platform for farmers to showcase their businesses to tourists and to increase their income. The financial gain enables these farmers to maintain their livelihoods in the countryside, eliminating the need to relocate to urban areas to search for employment opportunities. (Rickerby et al, 2021; Lee et al., 2020).

Egypt has great potential as a tourist destination for voluntourism experiences in harvest farms. The country has numerous farms that can be utilized for this purpose. Egypt's cultivated land is mainly found in the Nile Valley and Delta, covering approximately 9.5 million feddans (Hamed and El-mawardy, 2023). Various crops such as tangerines, mandarins, satsumas, olives, green chilies, peppers, apples, sorghum, strawberries, sunflowers, roses, jasmine, mangoes, and dates are grown in different regions of Egypt (Statista, 2022). These crops can be regularly used by travel agencies to promote harvesting tours for local and foreign tourists interested in voluntourism (Statista, 2022). Despite the increasing popularity of voluntourism in harvest areas, there is still limited academic research in this field.

The research objectives:

1. Exploring the overall voluntourists' experience in harvest tourism.
2. Investigating the extent to which harvest tourism empowers local communities.
3. Identifying the factors that drive voluntourists to participate in harvest tours.
4. Assessing the economic, social, and environmental implications of harvest tourism in local communities.

Literature review:

Organic Harvest tours by voluntourists:

Harvest tourism refers to a travel experience focused on visiting and participating in agricultural activities during harvest seasons. This concept is closely related to agritourism, which promotes interactions between travelers and local farmers (Johnson, 2023). It often involves activities such as visiting farms, participating in organic harvests, and enjoying locally produced goods. Volunteers are permitted to freely engage in activities on the farms such as barbecues, making tea, or taking walks (Lak and Khairabadi, 2022). Additionally, they can pay for and take home a basket of fruit from the orchard as well as some of what they harvest, in addition to purchasing other local products from farmers. This could serve to economically benefit the host community. Therefore, the core idea of harvest tourism is for volunteers to utilize their vacations to positively impact host communities (Keese, 2011).

Agritourism has rapidly expanded globally over recent decades due to growing tourist interest in rural life experiences and farmers seeking additional income sources (Lak and Khairabadi, 2022). As Uriely et al. (2003) acknowledge, volunteers with sufficiently lengthy stays could form friendships with locals, understand farm operations, independently explore the environment, or properly learn assigned tasks. Zavitz and Butz (2011) highlight that working alongside locals may increase their willingness to integrate visitors into their culture and community, as such participation demonstrates a sincere interest in understanding their way of life rather than passive observation as mere tourists.

According to Miller and Mair (2014), organic volunteering has the potential to transform tourism from being an experiential commodity to a decommodified experience. Its potential as a form of decommodified tourism that positively impacts harvest tourism offers numerous benefits for travelers, farmers, and rural communities. For example, it can help farmers diversify their income by generating additional revenue streams through offerings such as farm stays, tours, workshops, and events. Additionally, Johnson (2023) suggests that agritourism activities often require additional staff to cater to visitors' needs, such as tour guides, hospitality personnel, and workshop instructors, thereby creating job opportunities. Furthermore, increased tourism traffic can benefit local businesses such as restaurants, handicraft stores, accommodation providers, and transportation services, thus supporting the local economy. Pozzan (2021) assert that harvest tourism provides travelers with the opportunity to participate in unique experiences such as farm-to-table dining. These experiences are often set in idyllic locations away from cities and crowds. Additionally, Infante-Casella (2021) assured that being on a working farm can foster a connection with nature and result in wonderful experiences and lasting memories. Farmers strive to provide a safe and enjoyable environment for visitors, but it is important for visitors to also take responsibility for ensuring a safe farm visit. Furthermore, harvest tourism experiences offer opportunities for groups of friends, couples, and solo travelers to meet new people and engage in meaningful conversations (Kelly-Shankar, 2022).

Rusnani et al. (2020) have highlighted the potential of harvest tourism to empower rural communities and improve their welfare by increasing their income. Similarly, Lak and Khairabadi (2022) have argued that the implementation of harvest tourism can prevent the migration of young people from villages to cities by providing them with tourism opportunities and a source of income within their communities. However, Lak and Khairabadi (2022) have also identified the challenges associated with the implementation of harvest tourism. Participants have suggested that conflicts between local culture and tourist activities may arise due to the traditional and enclosed culture of the residents. Steele et al. (2017) emphasized the importance of protecting the privacy of residents in agritourism activities. To address this issue, it is crucial to increase awareness among residents about the cultural benefits of agritourism, foster a spirit of hospitality, and improve consumption culture among both residents and tourists. Additionally, tourism packages should be developed for these organic areas, with involvement from media outlets such as TV and social media to promote these packages to domestic and international tourists (Lak and Khairabadi, 2022).

Volunteer Tourism on farms:

Volunteer tourism, also known as voluntourism, is a form of sustainable travel that combines vacationing with volunteer work. Typically occurring internationally, it allows tourists to partake in volunteer activities during their vacation (Raymond and Hall, 2008; Wearing, 2001). As a socially conscious type of travel, voluntourism involves temporarily residing outside one's permanent home participating in unpaid charitable work that benefits local communities, societies, or other groups. The goal is to participate in such volunteer or

charitable efforts while traveling, rather than receiving mandatory financial compensation (Kazandzhieva, 2014).

According to WWOOF (2013), volunteer tourism offers several benefits, including opportunities to build social connections, exchange knowledge, experience harmony with nature, and raise awareness for future activism. Additionally, volunteer tourism allows for stronger personal connections and intimacy between volunteers and locals, which can lead to future collaborations and more sustainable development in host communities (Lee & Zhang, 2020). The benefits of volunteer tourism for host communities can be broadly grouped into three categories: financial, social, and ecological (Lee, 2020). Lyons et al. (2012) also note that volunteer tourism can have a positive impact on host communities by promoting cultural exchange, supporting local businesses, and contributing to environmental conservation efforts. Lee and Zhang (2020) demonstrated that international volunteers exhibit a high degree of altruism in their efforts to assist local communities and improve their well-being. Their care, assistance, and attentiveness provided to host communities can contribute to building a resilient future for individuals and the community.

Voluntourism is intended to provide novel and varied experiences (Stainton, 2023). Voluntourists are expected to work on farms for a set number of hours per week, usually between 20 and 30 hours, in exchange for lodging and meals. Quality and accommodation standards can differ greatly between individual farms. In some cases, volunteers may receive an interior room with air conditioning. Others may sleep in tents or rustic cabins. Meal provisions also vary significantly. At some farms, volunteers can anticipate high-quality home-cooked meals with the host family and/or other volunteers. In other situations, they may receive a food stipend and/or stockpile of food along with cooking facilities to prepare their meals. Sometimes a portion of the seasonal harvest is directly gleaned from the farm itself (Pickard, 2008). Volunteer tourism has become popular due to several factors, including fewer travel restrictions and tourists' desire for unique tourism experiences (Wearing & McGehee, 2013). Ali et al. (2023) indicate that attitude, perceived behavioral control, subjective norms, escape, and personal development positively influence potential volunteer tourists' intention to participate in volunteer tourism trips.

Volunteering on Worldwide Opportunities on Organic Farms (WWOOF):

Volunteering on organic farms with organizations such as (WWOOF) remains an under-researched area of tourism (Maycock, 2008: 283). WWOOF aims to connect volunteers (WWOOFers) with organic farmers to foster cultural and educational exchange and develop a global community aware of ecological agriculture and sustainability practices. WWOOF seeks to promote these exchanges worldwide (WWOOF, 2024). In recent times, WWOOF has become a global movement that facilitates the connection between organic farmers and international travelers who are willing to exchange their labor for food and accommodation. The organization is structured on a national level, and interested parties must apply for membership to participate (Wengel, 2018). WWOOF's objective is to promote non-commercial cultural and educational exchanges, with the goal of contributing to the development of a sustainable global community (Federation of WWOOF Organizations, 2024). As clarified by McIntosh (2009), the daily operations within the WWOOF program require that volunteers contribute labor on the farm for up to six hours daily in exchange for necessities such as food and housing, as well as opportunities for social engagement and knowledge sharing about organic agriculture. The program functions on regional and national scales, with each region or nation hosting its own coordinating body through an organizational website - for example, WWOOF EGYPT coordinates activities in Egypt.

Volunteers are required to pay a nominal fee to the WWOOF organization of their preferred country. In exchange, they receive a catalogue of WWOOF farms. Thereafter, it is the responsibility of WWOOFers to directly contact hosts to make travel arrangements (Miller and Mayer, 2014). Volunteers don't need to possess any prior experience or knowledge in small-scale agriculture. Nonetheless, they can derive satisfaction from the fact that they are contributing towards a local food system that supports the health of a regional community (Elsby, 2012). Terry (2014) has described how WWOOF volunteers are invited directly by host farmers instead of being recruited through a third party, which is often the case with voluntourism. This approach enables both parties to agree mutually on expectations, thereby preventing any potential conflicts of interest. McIntosh and Campbell (2001) examined Worldwide Opportunities on Organic Farms (WWOOFing) as a form of agricultural tourism. They indicated that key differences between WWOOFing and other farm tourism models include an emphasis on environmental ethics and a willingness to share knowledge about organic agricultural practices. Wengel's (2018) findings demonstrated the benefits of WWOOF participation, such as enhanced mutual understanding of the core values and philosophies that characterize the distinctive experience provided by this international exchange program.

Hypotheses:

Based on the literature review, the research hypotheses can be formulated as follows:

- H1** There is a relationship between the opportunities associated with integrating volunteer tourism into harvesting farm practices and the social impacts of volunteer tourism on harvest trips.
- H2** There is a relationship between the opportunities associated with integrating volunteer tourism into harvesting farm practices and the economic impacts of volunteer tourism on harvest trips.
- H3** There is a relationship between the opportunities associated with integrating volunteer tourism into harvesting farm practices and the environmental impacts of volunteer tourism on harvest trips.
- H4** There is a relationship between the opportunities associated with integrating volunteer tourism into harvesting farm practices and the role of volunteer tourists in supporting the host community of farms.
- H5** There is a relationship between the opportunities associated with integrating volunteer tourism into harvesting farm practices and the interaction with the host community.

Methodology:

The purpose of the work is to examine the experience of voluntourists in harvest tourism, identify voluntourists' characteristics, assess the degree of local community empowerment through harvest tourism, determine the factors behind voluntourists' participation in harvest tours, and to evaluate the economic, social, and environmental impacts of harvest tourism on local communities. To achieve these objectives, a quantitative methodology has been implemented, which involves the distribution of a questionnaire to a selected sample of voluntourists who have participated in harvest trips.

The data were processed statistically through the "SPSS V.22" statistical program, using the following statistical tests:

- 1) Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to determine the reliability of the questionnaire.
- 2) Mean, standard deviation, and percentages of frequencies were used to describe the characteristics of the sample, and to determine the extent of the sample's response to the research constructs.
- 3) Spearman's correlation coefficient is used to illustrate the relationships between research variables and evaluate research hypotheses. It is applied to ordinal data and non-parametric testing.

180 participants in harvest trips received a distributed questionnaire using the purposive sample. The questionnaire was distributed to harvest tourists during their harvest farm trips. In addition, a Google Form was used:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/10vLheI6bekfnmwpK5Oh_6WeOp5ku3S1G_0XA12CbZJU/edit?usp=forms_home&ths=true to enable harvest tourists to fill it out on harvest travel groups and pages on social media (Instagram and Facebook). The distribution of the questionnaire was conducted from the 1st of September 2023 till the 28 of May 2024.

119 of the questionnaires that were received were deemed legitimate for statistical analysis, as indicated by Table 1.

Table (1) The response Rate

No. of distributed Surveys	No. of received Surveys	No. of excluded Surveys	No. of valid surveys	The response rate
180	129	10	119	66.11%

Designing the questionnaire:

To attain the research objective, a survey was created and distributed to voluntourists who had participated in harvest trips in Ismailia, Elqanater El Khayreya, and shubra beloulah. The survey was comprised of seven sections. The first part was about the characteristics of the sample, which was composed of five questions, including gender, age, social status, nationality, and academic qualification. The second part was concerned with the participation of voluntourism in harvest trips. The third part consisted of the social, economic, and sustainable awareness and environmental understanding impacts of volunteer tourism on harvest trips. The fourth part was about the opportunities associated with integrating volunteer tourism into harvesting farm practices. The fifth part was concerned with the challenges associated with integrating volunteer tourism into organic farming practices. The sixth part included the role of volunteer tourists in supporting the host community of farms. The last part was about the interaction with the host community.

Validity and Reliability:

As shown in Table (2), the results show that the study's constructs have a Cronbach's alpha of more than 0.7. This proves the reliability of the survey that was used for the research (Cortina, 2013). Six experts and professionals in tourist studies were given the questionnaire items to evaluate the extent of their measurement validity to ensure the validity of the instrument. On the statements measuring the variables, there was a high proportion of agreement. As a result, the completed questionnaire was given to the study's sample of tourists.

Table (2) Cronbach's alpha for the study constructs

The constructs		No. of items	Cronbach's alpha
1	The social impacts of volunteer tourism on harvest trips	6	0.986
2	The economic impacts of volunteer tourism on harvest trips	4	0.947
3	Impact on sustainable awareness and environmental understanding	7	0.959
4	The opportunities associated with integrating volunteer tourism into harvesting farm practices	5	0.971
5	The challenges associated with integrating volunteer tourism into harvesting farm practices	6	0.970
6	Role of volunteer tourists in supporting the host community of farms	5	0.956
7	Interaction with the host community	6	0.969

Results and Discussion:

Characteristics of the sample:

Table (3) indicates that 32.8% of the population was male and 67.2% was female. In terms of age, 40.3% of respondents are between the ages of 26 and 41, and 30.3% are between the ages of 10 and 25. 19.3% of respondents were between the ages of 42 and 57. 10.1 % of the respondents were between the ages of 58 and 67. In terms of education, most respondents (43.7%) have studied at universities, with postgraduates coming in second (40.3%). On the other hand, 16% of the respondents were in secondary education. Regarding marital status, the data also shows that 48.7% of respondents are single, and 32.8% of respondents are divorced. Afterward, 10.9% of those surveyed were married and 7.6% were widowed.

Table (3) Characteristics of the sample

No.	Items	Freq.	%	
1	Gender	Male	39	32.8
		Female	80	67.2
2	Age	10-25 years	36	30.3
		26-41 years	48	40.3
		42-57 years	23	19.3
		58-76 years	12	10.1
3	Education	Secondary education	19	16.0
		University qualification	52	43.7
		Postgraduate studies	48	40.3
4	Marital Status	Single	58	48.7
		Married	13	10.9
		Divorced	39	32.8
		Widowed	9	7.6

5	Nationality	Egyptian	116	97.6
		Emirati	1	0.8
		Saudi	1	0.8
		Jordanian	1	0.8

Characteristics of volunteer Tourism on harvest trips:

Table (4) shows that most of the participants in volunteer tourism on harvest trips are alone, at a rate of 60.5 %, then those who travel among their colleagues at work, at a rate of 17.6 %, followed by those who travel with friends or family (11.8 %, 10.1 %). Regarding organizing the trip, the results showed that most of the sample participates in volunteer tourism trips on harvest trips accompanied by groups via social media, at a rate of 59.6%, then those who go alone at a rate of 24.4%, who resort to travel agencies to plan their trips, at a rate of 16.6%.

As for the crops that the sample participates in harvesting, most of the sample reported that they travel on trips to participate in harvesting jasmine at a rate of 34.1%, then those who participate in harvesting mango at a rate of 21.7%, followed by harvesting oranges, strawberry, and olives at a rate of 20.9%, 17.8%, and 9.3%, respectively. The results also indicated that most of the sample learned about harvest trips through social media, at a rate of 81.5%, while the rest of the sample learned about this type of trip through their friends, at a rate of 18.5%.

As for the reasons for the sample's participation in harvesting trips, these reasons were in order, as follows:

- Enjoying the beauty of nature and fresh air, breaking the daily work routine (30.2%).
- Participation with the local community, integration with farmers, and assistance (23.5%).
- Enjoying local food (16 %).
- Going with friends to a new place (15.1 %).
- Proximity to Cairo (14.3 %).
- Low cost (13.4 %).

Table (4) The Participation of volunteer tourism in harvest trips

No.	Items	Freq.	%	
1	Trip structure	Alone	72	60.5
		Family	12	10.1
		Work colleagues	21	17.6
		A group of friends	14	11.8
2	How did you participate in the harvest trips?	Solo	29	24.4
		I went with a travel agency	19	16.0
		I went with social media groups	71	59.7
3	What harvest trips did you participate in?	Strawberry harvesting trips	23	17.8
		Jasmine harvesting trips	44	34.1
		Olive harvest trips	12	9.3
		Orange harvesting trips	27	20.9
		Mango harvesting trips	28	21.7

4	How did you learn about harvest trips?	Social media	97	81.5
		Through friends	22	18.5
5	What are the reasons for your participation in harvest trips?	Low cost	16	13.4
		Enjoying the beauty of nature and fresh air	36	30.2
		Participation in harvesting crops	35	29.4
		Going with friends to a new place	18	15.1
		Enjoying local food	19	16
		Breaking the daily work routine	36	30.2
		Proximity to Cairo	17	14.3
		Participation with the local community, integration with farmers, and assistance	28	23.5

Descriptive statistics of the study variables:

A. The social impacts of organic harvesting-volunteer tourism:

Table (5) The social impacts of organic harvesting-volunteer tourism

Items		Frequencies percentage ¹					Mean	SD ²	Rank	
		Degree levels	1	2	3	4				5
1	Engaging in voluntourism activities allows tourists to form meaningful connections with local communities.	%	1.7	2.5	15.1	37	43.7	4.18	0.90	1
2	Voluntourism tourism fosters cultural exchange and understanding between tourists and the host community.	%	6.7	5	16	48.7	23.5	3.77	1.07	3
3	Voluntourism enhances community relations and goodwill among locals and tourists.	%	5.9	7.6	30.3	37.8	18.5	3.55	1.06	6
4	The presence of tourists engaging in voluntourism positively impacts the overall well-being and morale of the host community.	%	6.7	5.9	16.8	40.3	30.3	3.82	1.13	2
5	Engaging in voluntourism activities positively contributes to a more	%	7.6	5.9	23.5	38.7	24.4	3.66	1.13	5

	authentic cultural experience for tourists.									
6	Interacting with local farmers and engaging in their daily activities significantly enriches the volunteer tourists' experience.	%	6.7	6.7	21.8	35.3	29.4	3.74	1.15	4
1 (1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly Agree). 2 SD = Standard deviation.								3.78	1.04	

The research sample agreed on the social impacts of volunteer tourism on harvest trips, as the general mean for the social impacts of volunteer tourism on harvest trips was 3.78 at the agreement level, with a standard deviation of 1.04. Therefore, the social impacts of harvest tourism from the sample's point of view include, respectively, the following:

1. Engaging in voluntourism activities allows tourists to form meaningful connections with local communities (Mean= 4.18; SD= 0.90).
2. The presence of tourists engaging in voluntourism positively impacts the overall well-being and morale of the host community (Mean= 3.82; SD= 1.13).
3. Voluntourism tourism fosters cultural exchange and understanding between tourists and the host community (Mean= 3.77; SD= 1.07).
4. Interacting with local farmers and engaging in their daily activities significantly enriches the volunteer tourists' experience (Mean= 3.74; SD= 1.15).
5. Engaging in voluntourism activities positively contributes to a more authentic cultural experience for tourists (Mean= 3.66; SD= 1.13).
6. Voluntourism enhance community relations and goodwill among locals and tourists (Mean= 3.66; SD= 1.05).

These social benefits of voluntourism match with findings from (Hernandez-Maskivker, Lapointe & Aquino, 2018; Frilund, 2015; Bargeman, et al.,2018; Burrai, 2015; Park, 2017; Raymond & Hall, 2008) these studies show the role of voluntourism in strengthening the community and improving its knowledge, creating a caring atmosphere that makes volunteers feel at home, fostering local development in host communities due to increased sociocultural understanding from implemented volunteer projects, and the creation of friendships with volunteers.

B. The economic impacts of organic harvesting-volunteer tourism:

Table (6) The economic impacts of organic harvesting-volunteer tourism

Items	Frequencies percentage ¹						Mean	SD ²	Rank	
	Degree levels	1	2	3	4	5				
1	Voluntourism positively contributes to the economic well-being of rural communities.	%	7.6	1.7	21.8	57.1	11.8	3.64	0.98	3
2	The voluntourism aid in job creation and income	%	7.6	5	11.8	13.4	62.2	4.18	1.26	1

	generation for locals in the host community.									
3	Voluntourism could provide a stable income for the farmers	%	12.6	7.6	6.7	56.3	16.8	3.57	1.22	4
4	Voluntourism could increase local business such as local food and handicrafts.	%	12.6	7.6	0.8	13.4	65.5	4.12	1.45	2
1 (1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly Agree). 2 SD = Standard deviation.								3.87	1.15	

The research sample generally agreed on the economic impacts of volunteer tourism on harvest trips, as the general mean for the economic impacts of volunteer tourism on harvest trips was 3.87 at the agreement level, with a standard deviation of 1.15. Hence, the economic impacts volunteer tourism on harvest trips from the sample's point of view include the following respectively:

1. Voluntourism aids in job creation and income generation for locals in the host community (Mean= 4.18; SD= 1.66).
2. Voluntourism could increase local business such as local food and handicrafts (Mean= 4.12; SD= 1.45).
3. Voluntourism positively contributes to the economic well-being of rural communities (Mean= 3.64; SD= 0.98).
4. Voluntourism could provide a stable income for the farmers (Mean= 3.57; SD= 1.22).

These statistics commensurate with (Bargeman, et al., 2018) study that voluntourism can achieve **an economic growth** due to the increase of resources in the destination.

C. The environmental impact of organic harvesting-volunteer tourism:

Table (7) The sustainable awareness and environmental impact of organic harvesting-volunteer tourism

Items	Frequencies percentage ¹					Mean	SD ²	Rank		
	Degree levels	1	2	3	4				5	
1	Voluntourism experiences foster a greater understanding of environmental sustainability among volunteer tourists.	%	6.7	15.1	16.8	37	24.4	3.57	1.20	7
2	Participation in voluntourism activities encourages tourists to adopt more eco-friendly	%	5.9	11.8	17.6	37.8	26.9	3.68	1.16	5

Items	Frequencies percentage ¹					Mean	SD ²	Rank	
	Degree levels	1	2	3	4				5
behaviors and choices.									
3 Voluntourism support local environmental conservation efforts in the host community.	%	5	3.4	10.1	59.7	21.8	3.90	0.95	3
4 Will you prioritize eating at local restaurants	%	2.5	2.5	9.2	63.9	21.8	4.00	0.80	2
5 Will you prioritize shopping for locally produced goods during your trip	%	6.7	5	12.6	13.4	62.2	4.19	1.23	1
6 Will you take the time to ask shop owners about the significance of their products and their craft	%	5.9	6.7	19.3	51.3	16.8	3.66	1.02	6
7 You can clean up after yourself and leave natural sites as you found them	%	14.3	9.2	7.6	21.8	47.1	3.78	1.47	4
1 (1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly Agree). 2 SD = Standard deviation.							3.82	1.02	

Table (7) shows that the study sample agreed on impact of volunteer tourism on sustainable awareness and environmental understanding mentioned above, where the general mean was 3.82 at the agreement level, with a standard deviation of 1.02. Consequently, impact of volunteer tourism on sustainable awareness and environmental understanding from the sample's point of view includes, respectively, the following:

1. Will you prioritize shopping for locally produced goods during your trip (Mean= 4.19; SD= 1.23).
2. Will you prioritize eating at local restaurants (Mean= 4.00; SD= 0.80).
3. Voluntourism supports local environmental conservation efforts in the host community (Mean= 3.90; SD= 0.95).
4. You can clean up after yourself and leave natural sites as you found them (Mean= 3.78; SD= 1.47).
5. Participation in voluntourism activities encourages tourists to adopt more eco-friendly behaviors and choices (Mean= 3.68; SD= 1.16).

6. Will you take the time to ask shop owners about the significance of their products and their craft (Mean= 3.66; SD= 1.02).
7. Voluntourism experiences foster a greater understanding of environmental sustainability among volunteer tourists (Mean= 3.57; SD= 1.20).

The findings of this study are consistent with the research conducted by Rattan et al. (2011), which demonstrated that volunteer tourism can be an effective strategy for raising awareness about environmental conservation issues. Through direct observation and involvement in the activities undertaken by volunteers at the farm, participants developed a deeper understanding and more favorable perceptions of volunteer tourism and the work of volunteers.

D. The opportunities for tourists participating in organic harvesting-volunteer tourism:

Table (8) The opportunities associated with integrating volunteer tourism into harvesting farm practices

Items	Frequencies percentage ¹					Mean	SD ²	Rank		
	Degree levels	1	2	3	4				5	
1	Voluntourism experiences enhance the overall educational value of the volunteer tourists' experience.	%	4.2	9.2	16	51.3	19.3	3.72	1.01	3
2	Engaging in voluntourism activities positively contributes to a more authentic cultural experience for tourists.	%	6.7	12.6	9.2	48.7	22.7	3.68	1.15	4
3	Tourists' participation in voluntourism activities increases their appreciation for agricultural practices and rural lifestyles.	%	12.6	2.5	15.1	53.8	16	3.58	1.17	5
4	Participation in farm activities adds to the enjoyment and novelty of your experience.	%	12.6	11.8	12.6	10.9	52.1	3.78	1.49	2
5	Voluntourism experiences provided you with a unique and memorable vacation experience.	%	6.7	11.8	13.4	16.8	51.3	3.94	1.31	1
1 (1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly Agree). 2 SD = Standard deviation.								3.74	1.17	

As shown in table (8), the study sample agreed on the opportunities for tourists associated with integrating volunteer tourism into harvesting farm practices mentioned above, where the general mean was 3.47 at the agreement level, with a standard deviation of 1.17. So, the opportunities associated with integrating volunteer tourism into harvesting farm practices includes, respectively, the following:

1. Voluntourism experiences provided you with a unique and memorable vacation experience (Mean= 3.94; SD= 1.31).
2. Participation in farm activities adds to the enjoyment and novelty of your experience (Mean= 3.78; SD= 1.49).
3. Voluntourism experiences enhance the overall educational value of the volunteer tourists' experience (Mean= 3.72; SD= 1.01).
4. Engaging in voluntourism activities positively contributes to a more authentic cultural experience for tourists (Mean= 3.68; SD= 1.15).
5. Tourists' participation in voluntourism activities increases their appreciation for agricultural practices and rural lifestyles (Mean= 3.58; SD= 1.17).

E. Challenges associated with tourists participating in organic harvesting-volunteer tourism

Table (9) The challenges associated with tourists participating in organic harvesting-volunteer tourism

Items	Frequencies percentage ¹					Mean	SD ²	Rank	
	Degree levels	1	2	3	4				5
1 Farm work can be physically demanding	%	10.1	12.6	12.6	15.1	49.6	3.82	1.42	1
2 Unpredictable weather conditions could ruin your farm-to-farm trips	%	3.4	15.1	16	45.4	20.2	3.64	1.07	2
3 Learning new farm skills can be difficult	%	11.8	12.6	34.5	21.8	19.3	3.24	1.24	5
4 Limited services on a farm can be a hindrance	%	2.5	27.7	23.5	30.3	16	3.29	1.11	3
5 reactions, feelings or attitude challenges of farmers	%	7.6	24.4	19.3	28.6	20.2	3.29	1.25	4
6 There may be a feeling of inferiority to tourists due to inequalities of power and knowledge between tourists and farmers	%	29.4	34.5	15.1	7.6	13.4	2.41	1.34	6
1 (1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly Agree). 2 SD = Standard deviation.							3.28	1.16	

The study sample doesn't agree on the majority of the challenges associated with integrating volunteer tourism into harvesting farm practices mentioned above, where the general mean was 3.28 at the neutral level, with a standard deviation of 1.16. The challenges associated with integrating volunteer tourism into harvesting farm practices include, respectively, the following:

1. Farm work can be physically demanding (Mean= 3.82; SD= 1.42).
2. Unpredictable weather conditions could ruin your farm-to-farm trips (Mean= 3.64; SD= 1.07).

F. The attitude of volunteer tourists toward supporting the host community of farms

Table (10) The attitude of volunteer tourists toward supporting the host community of farms

Items	Frequencies percentage ¹					Mean	SD ²	Rank		
	Degree levels	1	2	3	4				5	
1	Will you recommend these businesses to friends and fellow travelers to promote their growth and sustainability?	%	8.4	11.8	4.2	21	54.6	4.02	1.35	1
2	Will you share positive experiences with these businesses on travel review platforms or social media to help them attract more customers?	%	6.7	5.9	14.3	57.1	16	3.70	1.03	3
3	Have you set a portion of your trip budget specially for supporting local businesses?	%	6.7	52.1	18.5	15.1	7.6	2.65	1.06	5
4	Voluntourism have had a positive influence on living conditions in the host community?	%	6.7	12.6	10.1	51.3	19.3	3.64	1.13	4
5	Do you feel that your participation in voluntourism activities had a positive impact on the host community?	%	5.9	6.7	10.9	59.7	16.8	3.75	1.01	2
1 (1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly Agree). 2 SD = Standard deviation.								3.54	1.03	

From the results of table (10), the study sample agreed that volunteer tourism has a vital role in supporting the host community of farms, where the general mean was 3.54 at the agreement level, with a standard deviation of 1.03.

G. The volunteer tourist interaction with the host community

Table (11) The volunteer tourist interaction with the host community

Items	Frequencies percentage ¹					Mean	SD ²	Rank		
	Degree levels	1	2	3	4				5	
1	The host community members were welcoming and friendly.	%	5	4.2	13.4	50.4	26.9	3.90	1.01	2
2	I actively engaged in daily activities with the host community.	%	16.8	13.4	14.3	19.3	36.1	3.45	1.50	4
3	I had meaningful conversations with the host community.	%	3.4	10.9	21	39.5	25.2	3.72	1.06	3
4	I shared my skills or knowledge with the host community.	%	10.1	26.1	32.8	18.5	12.6	2.97	1.16	6
5	I participated in local cultural events/ceremonies	%	16	16.8	22.7	29.4	15.1	3.11	1.30	5
6	I felt like a part of the host community during voluntourism activities.	%	2.5	5.9	13.4	24.4	53.8	4.21	1.04	1
1 (1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly Agree). 2 SD = Standard deviation.								3.56	1.11	

From the results of the table (11), the study sample agreed that voluntourism in harvesting farms praise the interconnectivity between the host community and the volunteer tourists, where the general mean was 3.56 at the agreement level, with a standard deviation of 1.11.

The findings of this study have revealed a strong positive relationship between the opportunities associated with integrating volunteer tourism into farm harvesting practices and the interaction with the host community. These results are consistent with the activities mentioned in the study by Vaugeois et al. (2017), which highlighted several activities that volunteers can participate in, such as: 1. Recreational activities in rural areas and on farms, including farm tours, harvesting, horseback riding, hunting, fishing, bird watching, hiking, cycling, photography, videography, painting, sketching, gardening, egg hunts, boating, and flower arrangements. 2. Events or festivals celebrated by the local community within rural areas and on farms, such as harvest festivals, heritage celebrations, and seasonal events. 3. Educational services: Any educational or learning experiences on the farm, including

workshops to learn new skills, heritage tours to learn about the history and evolution of farm practices, courses on animal care, farm work experience, craft shows, and dog training.

The relationship between the study variables:

There is a relationship between the opportunities associated with integrating volunteer tourism into harvesting farm practices and the social impacts of volunteer tourism on harvest trips.

Table (12) The relationship between the opportunities associated with integrating volunteer tourism into harvesting farm practices and the social impacts of volunteer tourism on harvest trips

			The opportunities associated with integrating volunteer tourism into harvesting farm practices	The social impacts of volunteer tourism on harvest trips
Spearman's rho	The opportunities associated with integrating volunteer tourism into harvesting farm practices	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	0.971**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	0.000
		N	119	119
	The social impacts of volunteer tourism on harvest trips	Correlation Coefficient	0.971**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	.
		N	119	119
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				

The results indicated in table (12) proved that there is a strong positive relationship between the opportunities associated with integrating volunteer tourism into harvesting farm practices and the social impacts of volunteer tourism on harvest trips (Sig. = 0.000 < 0.05).

There is a relationship between the opportunities associated with integrating volunteer tourism into harvesting farm practices and the economic impacts of volunteer tourism on harvest trips.

Table (13) The relationship between the opportunities associated with integrating volunteer tourism into harvesting farm practices and the economic impacts of volunteer tourism on harvest trips

			The opportunities associated with integrating volunteer tourism into harvesting farm practices	The economic impacts of volunteer tourism on harvest trips	
Spearman's rho	The opportunities associated with integrating volunteer tourism into harvesting farm practices	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	0.833**	
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	0.000	
		N	119	119	
	The economic impacts of volunteer tourism on harvest trips	Correlation Coefficient	0.833**	1.000	
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	.	
		N	119	119	
	**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				

The results indicated in table (13) assured that there is a strong positive relationship between the opportunities associated with integrating volunteer tourism into harvesting farm practices and the economic impacts of volunteer tourism on harvest trips (Sig. = 0.000 < 0.05).

There is a relationship between the opportunities associated with integrating volunteer tourism into harvesting farm practices and the environmental impacts of volunteer tourism on harvest trips.

These results fit (Johnson, 2023) study that farm practices have significant economic impacts that can support the economic development in rural communities through diversifying income and generating additional revenue streams from different performances like tours, workshops, events and farm stays; Creating jobs for additional staff such as hospitality employees, tour guides and workshop trainers to help visitors during their trip; Supporting local Businesses in the community such as transportation services, restaurants, accommodation providers, and handicraft shops.

Table (14) The relationship between the opportunities associated with integrating volunteer tourism into harvesting farm practices and the environmental impacts of volunteer tourism on harvest trips

			The opportunities associated with integrating volunteer tourism into harvesting farm practices	The environmental impacts of volunteer tourism on harvest trips
Spearman's rho	The opportunities associated with integrating volunteer tourism into harvesting farm practices	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	0.909**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	0.000
		N	119	119
	The environmental impacts of volunteer tourism on harvest trips	Correlation Coefficient	0.909**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	.
		N	119	119
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				

The results indicated in table (14) supported that there is a strong positive relationship between the opportunities associated with integrating volunteer tourism into harvesting farm practices and the environmental impacts of volunteer tourism on harvest trips (Sig. = 0.000 < 0.05).

There is a relationship between the opportunities associated with integrating volunteer tourism into harvesting farm practices and the environmental impacts of volunteer tourism on harvest trips.

Table (15) The relationship between the opportunities associated with integrating volunteer tourism into harvesting farm practices and the attitude of volunteer tourists in supporting the host community of farms

			The opportunities associated with integrating volunteer tourism into harvesting farm practices	Role of volunteer tourists in supporting the host community of farms
Spearman's rho	The opportunities associated with integrating volunteer tourism into harvesting farm practices	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	0.981**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	0.000
		N	119	119
	Role of volunteer tourists in supporting the host community of farms	Correlation Coefficient	0.981**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	.
		N	119	119
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				

The results indicated in table (15) proved that there is a strong positive relationship between the opportunities associated with integrating volunteer tourism into harvesting farm practices and the role of volunteer tourists in supporting the host community of farms (Sig. = 0.000 < 0.05).

There is a relationship between the opportunities associated with integrating volunteer tourism into harvesting farm practices and the interaction with the host community.

This result is consistent with (Vaugeois et al., 2017) study that farm tourism supports the host community through creating excess revenues for local business to the host community; supporting farming and agriculture in the countryside; Preserving rural lands and buildings; stimulating local traditions and history; participating in the rural development and promote rural tourism.

Table (16) The relationship between the opportunities associated with integrating volunteer tourism into harvesting farm practices and the interaction with the host community

			The opportunities associated with integrating volunteer tourism into harvesting farm practices	Interaction with the host community
Spearman's rho	The opportunities associated with integrating volunteer tourism into harvesting farm practices	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	0.977**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	0.000
		N	119	119
	Interaction with the host community	Correlation Coefficient	0.977**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	.
		N	119	119
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				

The results indicated in table (16) confirmed that there is a strong positive relationship between the opportunities associated with integrating volunteer tourism into harvesting farm practices and the interaction with the host community (Sig. = 0.000 < 0.05).

This means that greater voluntourism in harvesting farms leads to greater interconnectivity between the host community and the volunteer tourists. This can achieve several benefits for the host community, as noted in Vaugeois et al. (2017) study, such as generating additional revenue for the local business community, supporting farming and agriculture in the region, preserving rural lands, buildings, and heritage, revitalizing local traditions, participating in rural development, providing opportunities for cultural exchange, and creating rural tourism experiences.

Table (17) includes a brief of the hypotheses based on the preceding results as follows:

Table (17) Brief of the results of the research hypotheses

No.	Hypotheses	Results
H1	There is a relationship between the opportunities associated with integrating volunteer tourism into harvesting farm practices and the social impacts of volunteer tourism on harvest trips	Supported
H2	There is a relationship between the opportunities associated with integrating volunteer tourism into harvesting farm practices and the economic impacts of volunteer tourism on harvest trips	Supported
H3	There is a relationship between the opportunities associated with integrating volunteer tourism into harvesting farm practices and the environmental impacts of volunteer tourism on harvest trips	Supported
H4	There is a relationship between the opportunities associated with integrating volunteer tourism into harvesting farm practices and the role of volunteer tourists in supporting the host community of farms	Supported
H5	There is a relationship between the opportunities associated with integrating volunteer tourism into harvesting farm practices and the interaction with the host community	Supported

Conclusion

Harvest Tourism is a good opportunity for sharing the qualified Egyptian farms - for this tourism pattern with those volunteer visitors who are eager to connect with the local community to explore its people customs, and to share their local food production through helping farmers during different harvesting seasons to ensure a good experience that can achieve their personal fulfillment and happiness (Chenchen et al., 2019). However, there are few studies exploring volunteer tourism on organic farms during harvest tours. Therefore, this study investigates the overall voluntourists' experience in harvest tourism identify the factors that drive them to participate in harvest tours. The aim of the study was to assess social, economic and environmental impacts of voluntourism, explore the challenges and opportunities associated with integrating voluntourism into organic farming practices, recognize the role of voluntourists in supporting the host community of organic farms, and investigate the extent to which harvest tourism empowers local communities of harvesting farms.

The actual number of completed questionnaires by voluntourists in harvest trips was 119. Regarding the study findings, it's approved that there are significant social, economic, and environmental impacts for Volunteer tourism on harvest tours. Also, there are positive relationships between the opportunities associated with integrating volunteer tourism into harvesting farm practices and these different impacts of volunteer tourism on harvest trips. The results also assured that there are opportunities and some challenges associated with integrating volunteer tourism into harvesting farm practices. Furthermore, there is a positive relationship between the opportunities associated with this integration and the role of volunteer tourists in supporting the host community of farms. Finally, the research proved that voluntourism in harvesting farms praises the interconnectivity between the host community and the volunteer tourists.

Recommendations

Here are some proposed recommendations that can facilitate applying harvest tourism by voluntourists:

A. Recommendations Directed to the Egyptian Ministry of Tourism:

- Incorporating the trend of rural volunteer tourism within the Ministry's strategy as a promising approach.
- Taking action to limit the activities of tourist service offices that conduct these trips and encouraging travel agencies category A to add it into their programs.
- Cooperating with the Egyptian Ministry of Agriculture in encouraging farm owners to allocate specific days during harvest seasons to welcome volunteer visitors who want to help those farmers in harvesting and to enjoy the harvest journey experience. This can be in exchange for a certain financial reward for those farm owners.
- The Ministry of Tourism should cooperate with WWOOF to encourage a wider implementation of volunteer harvesting tourism.

B. Recommendations Directed to the Egyptian tourism Authority:

- Enhancing the Authority's marketing efforts for volunteer harvesting trips on the Authority's official website.
- Issuing tourist brochures and promotional films to support and market volunteer harvesting trips internationally.
- Conducting a comprehensive analysis of the target audience before launching a travel-related advertising campaign.
- Promoting harvesting tourism to elderly people (baby boomers) as it is very appealing and aligns with current tourism trends for this demographic.

C. Recommendations Directed to the Egyptian travel Agent Association:

- Issuing directives to regulate the placement of tourist service offices operating in organizing harvest trips.
- Encouraging tourism companies to promote volunteer harvesting trips and offering incentives to them.

D. Recommendations Directed to the Egyptian farm Owners: (FCS,2024; Asap2024)

The farm owners who are going to allocate their farms during harvest seasons to receive volunteer visitors should take into consideration the following steps:

➤ Establishing their farms by:

- Using signage: to make it simpler for visitors to find the farm, identify the directional signs at significant crossroads and turns, as well as uncertain areas.
- Parking: It is preferable to have parking spaces and places to turn around the farm easily.

- Welcome Station: It's critical to set up a welcoming area ahead of time with staff members available to assist, greet, and guide guests.
 - Restrooms and Handwashing stations: Provide the farm with amenities for both.
 - Presenting their farm: Tell the guests about your farm's history, your growing methods, and the locations of your products after the tour.
 - Product sales: Present your agricultural products in an eye-catching, appealing, and well-marked manner so that visitors may view and purchase them.
- **Staffing and Volunteers:**
- Ask for the help of staff or volunteers to manage: parking, a welcome table, product sampling, activities, sales table, music, station hosts and demonstrations, etc.
 - Make sure that everyone is well-trained for his role, and they are equipped with information, frequently asked questions and stories to share with visitors.
 - If the farm is well staffed with knowledgeable people, visitors will have a better experience and the farm sales will be improved.

E. Recommendations Directed to the Egyptian travel agencies:

The Egyptian travel agencies who are going to organize harvest tours - especially for volunteer visitors who would like to participate in these tours - should take into consideration the following items (Asap,2024):

- **Marketing your Events and Tours:**
- Advertise your activities via newsletters, on your website, or on social media. You may also add marketing materials to your farmers market, such as posters or tour guides.
 - Build relationships with the farm's clients because it is simpler to grow a business with an existing client than to attract new ones.
 - Inform your clientele about the events you have coming up. Encourage your wholesale clients to become members as well.
 - Share your story: Local media outlets are constantly searching for captivating tales.
 - Offer plenty of notice to your local news, radio, and other media by sending them images, event details, and a brief synopsis.
 - Hand out promotional materials: Make "save the date" fliers or cards to hand out to acquaintances and clients. Add a photo and/or a coupon (for a free item or % off at the farm).
 - Post promotional signage: Place guidance signs next to busy intersections and along your road. Provide the date(s) and time(s) of the event to both attract curious passersby and discourage guests from showing up while you are closed.

- Promote events using social media and the internet: Post details about the event on your website, your community event calendars, and social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter).
- Share images and brief videos of the sights and activities available on your farm.

➤ **Leading Tours:**

When organizing a tour, consider the following factors:

- Your identity and the reason behind your farming: Most guests are interested in learning about your farm's past, getting advice on how to cultivate certain plants and goods, and making connections with nearby farmers.
- Consider the size of the group. It should be possible for everyone on the tour to hear you and see the topics you are discussing. If collectives are typically.
- Arrange for interactive exercises: Visitors want to interact with your farm and tell their own stories in addition to hearing yours. Providing farm chores, hiking, art projects, cooking demonstrations, and tasting tests.

Suggestions for Future Research:

For future research, it would be valuable to investigate the following topics:

- 1) Evaluating the cooperation between local farmers, tour operators and NGOs
- 2) Exploring the regulatory framework the governing volunteering harvest tourism in Egypt
- 3) Assessing the role of social media in promoting volunteers harvest tourism and attracting domestic and international tourism for participation.
- 4) Evaluating the economic impact generated from harvest tourism in Shubra Balula trip and its impact on local communities.

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السياحة التطوعية لرحلات الحصاد العضوي في مصر: دراسة استكشافية

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يختار عدد متزايد من الأفراد السفر إلى الخارج للقيام برحلات سياحية تطوعية من أجل دمج السياحة مع المساعي الخيرية والنمو الشخصي. يشارك السياح المتطوعين الذين يشاركون في تجارب سياحة المزارع في العمل التطوعي في المزارع المتنوعة خلال رحلاتهم. عادة ما يتضمن هذا النوع من السياحة التطوعية الإقامة والعمل في مزارع مختلفة تقع في مناطق ريفية أو زراعية. وقد وصلت صناعة السياحة التطوعية الآن إلى قيمة 3 مليارات دولار سنويًا، حيث يغطي المشاركون في السياحة التطوعية تكاليف سفرهم، بما في ذلك الرحلات الجوية، والنقل، والوجبات، والإقامة، والرسوم للمنظمات والبرامج التي يدعمونها. ومع ذلك، هناك نقص في الأبحاث التي تفحص بشكل محدد فوائد السياحة التطوعية للمجتمعات الزراعية المحلية. لذلك، تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تقييم الآثار الاجتماعية والاقتصادية والبيئية للسياحة التطوعية، واستكشاف التحديات والفرص المرتبطة بدمجها في الممارسات الزراعية العضوية، وتحديد دور السياحة التطوعية في دعم المجتمعات المحلية الزراعية، والتحقق من تأثيرها على تلك المجتمعات.

الكلمات الرئيسية: السياحة التطوعية، سياحة الحصاد، المجتمع المضيف، التجربة السياحية.