



Reviving the Trail of the Holy Family to Egypt: Applied for the Tourism and Hospitality Sector

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ABSTRACT

More than 2,000 years ago, Mary and Najjar fled with Jesus to Egypt in order to escape the wrath of King Herod. This was a defining moment in the history of the Coptic Christians, for Egypt became a second Holy Land when their own land was blessed by the presence of the Holy Family. At present, many Egyptian historians and archeologists are calling for a project to track each town or city visited by the holy family. In anticipation of pilgrims, Egypt is working to restore several holy sites. Vatican Pope visited Egypt in April 2017. The designation of Egypt as a pilgrimage site was endorsed by Vatican Pope in October during his general audience, where he recognizes Egypt as an Official Pilgrim site. This program is forecasted to attract a large number of tourists from all around the world. This study aims at reviving the historical places of the journey of the holy family in Egypt by determining the main barriers that may face travellers during their visit and the possibility of developing the services offered and increase the number of hospitality properties.

Design/methodology/approach—the data were collected via a semi structured questionnaire addressed to experts in tourism and hospitality fields and a questionnaire addressed to a sample of visitors of these holly sites.

Research limitations/implications—The research focused on tourism and hospitality services available around the five sites that have been recognized and approved by UNESCO.

Introduction

Egypt is the land of blessings as God reward upon Egypt special blessings such as the wonderful nature full of serenity and purity, the blessings and bounties of River Nile and the sanctuary of the Holy family to Egypt escaping from persecution at the beginning of the first century (Abdel Fattah, 2017).

Egypt is blessed and honored by hosting the Holy Family after being persecuted from the Romans and this Holy touch was symbolized by many traces such as old churches and monasteries all over Egypt (Elzek and Alf, 2017; Abdel Fattah, 2017).

The arrival of Jesus Christ and the journey of the Holy Family in Egypt represent a clear and influential value for the Egyptian Coptic Church. Specialized travel agencies in the religious field took the advantage to arrange tours to follow the exist of the Holly Family and their exact path in Egypt for almost three and half years especially during Christmas time (Gabra, et al., 2012; Pope of the peace, 2017).

The Holy Family trip is distinguished by its religious, cultural and heritage aspect and special character. According to the recommendation of the Vatican Pope to do this journey, many tourists consider following the trail of the holly family as a pilgrimage (Egyptian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, 2020).

Religious tourism is considered one of the main tourism types that could be used in time of crisis. Considering the Corona Virus crisis; experts in the field of international tourism stated that the pandemic of COVID-19 has heavily affected the economy of the international tourism with a 60-80% decline in the international tourism economy in 2020. This enforce countries and governments to shift to develop recovery measures to support tourism sector. Therefore, the question to ask is, can Egypt do more to boost tourism and gain both an increase in tourist numbers and in terms of spending from each tourist? Additionally, what kind of services those Pilgrims will need, meanwhile, what are the actual services offered for them. (El Batouty, 2020).

Main Sites of the Trail of the Holy Family to Egypt:

Egypt's geography had been differed a lot since the exist of the Holy Family in Egypt as an example; branches of the Nile has decreased to only two branches Dumiat and Rashid, so the time of the Holy Family geography was different (Agban, 2018).

The story of Holy Family in Egypt starts in Jerusalem after the family was persecuted and the king Herod decided to kill the Jesus Christ after the declaration by a group of wise men that Jesus will be the expected king of the Jews (Egyptian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, 2020).

Scientists had divided the period that the Holy Family spent in Egypt to five major phases begins from Rafah in Sinai and ending by Qusiah in Assiut with a total distance 3,500 KM for four years with 25 special Holy places (Saleh et al, 2019).

The Holy Family left from Bethlehem to Egypt after an angel warned Joseph to leave with Jesus and Virgin Mary. They started their journey through northern Sinai until reaching Farama. The places they stayed in what have now been transformed to churches and monasteries (Soliman, 2017).

The next destination from their journey was Tel Basta where Jesus performed a miracle and blessed the place by causing a water spring to well up from the ground (Elzek and Alfy, 2017; Egyptian Global Gate, 2020).

Mostorod was the next stage for the Holy Family and it is also known as el Mahamaah. The name was given by the Virgin Mary to the town where she bathed her child Jesus and washed his clothes (Pope of the peace, 2017).

After that, the Holy Family made their way to Belbeis where they sat under the shades of a sycamore tree, later named the “Virgin Mary’s Tree.” (Zekry and elzak, 2017; Egyptian Tourism Authority, 2020) When they crossed the Nile to the city of Samanoud, Jesus hollowed another water well. While in Sakha, it is believed Jesus touched a stone and pure water thrust from it (Soliman, 2017).

The Holy Family headed west and settled in Wadi Natrun area. The area has become a monastic settlement with many monasteries as a spiritual celebration of the passage of the Holy Family. Many monasteries established such as The Paromeos Monastery, The Syriac Monastery of Saint Mary, The Monastery of Saint Bishoy and The Monastery of Saint Macarius the Great (Ali, 2013; Elzek and Alfy, 2017; Eg Gate,2020).

The Holy Family moved on to Old Cairo where they took refuge in a cave. At this site the Church of Abi Serja, within the walls of the Fortress of Babylon, was built years later. Matareya and Ain Shams Since, the Holy Family shaded under a tree in Matareya, known until now by the name Mariam’s Tree. The whole area has become a place of pilgrimage for Egyptians and Christians from around the globe (SIS, 2018).

They then set out to Al-Maadi, where the Virgin Mary Church was built by the Nile. From where the Family embarked a sailing boat heading southwards (Egyptian Tourism Authority, 2020). The Family then headed to Minya from which they crossed to the east bank of the Nile. There stands the Monastery of the Virgin on top of the Gabal Al-Kaf (Mountain of the Palm). It is believed that Jesus left an imprint of his palm on a stone in the mountain (Eg. Gate ,2020).

From that spot, the Family crossed the Nile back west, to Qosqam in Assiut. They stayed for more than six months, longer than any other place in Egypt. In that area, the Monastery of Al-Moharraq was built. Later, in the same spot, an angel appeared in Joseph’s dream telling him to return to Palestine as Herod was dead (Saleh et al., 2019).

The Holy Family took almost the same route on their journey back to Palestine, after spending over three years in Egypt (Gabra, et al., 2012). The journey of the Holy Family is an important source of income if it is already implemented in Egypt. The journey of the Holy Family trip mixed with several patterns of different styles such as cultural, religious, and heritage (Rodrigues and Lay, 2012).

Pilgrims and hospitality customers for religious intentions are considered potential segment for hospitality services who always searching for maximizing its market share. So, it is important to keep searching how to satisfy their needs. Many researchers stated that pilgrims are similar in their needs with business travelers as their needs may be the basics as check-in desk, wi-fi facilities, non- smoking rooms, meeting rooms. Considering food and beverage facilities, buffet services is considering the most suitable for this kind of market segment and hotels should prepare certain foods in a certain way and a certain manner (Baker et al., 2000; Williams, 2003; Weidenfeld, 2005).

Some designs and physical religious facilities as a mini church, promenade, and exterior places suitable for setting and meditation or interacting with the exterior environment should also exist and may affect customers' preferences. The spiritual feelings should be reflected on the exterior finishing, the furnishings, and the interior decoration. Also, disabled accessibility arrangements are a must (Weidenfeld, 2005).

The adoption of the Holy Family Path as a Pilgrim Program

The Egyptian President visit to the Vatican on 24 November 2014 and he invited Vatican recent Pope to attend the opening of the new Suez Canal. Several visits to the Vatican by former minister of tourism beginning in March 2016 to discuss the use of religious tourism (a tourist pilgrimage) for the holy family itinerary. The visit of the recent Imam Al Azhar (Sheikh Al Azhar) to the Vatican on 23 May 2016 was an opportunity to resume interreligious dialogue. Compilation of all documents and manuscripts indicating the location of the holy family's route and duration in Egypt by the Coptic studies institute in a book published under the name of the holy family's journey to Egypt. A media delegation from the official Vatican channel TV2000 visited Egypt from 10-15 April 2017. Vatican recent Pope held a press conference on the evening of the incident at the church in Alexandria before his visit to Egypt. He confirmed his visit to Egypt and said:” how could I fear going to a country where the holy family has gone to protect against king Herod's brutality”. The Visit of Vatican recent Pope to Egypt from 28-29 April 2017 with a huge delegation and Both the Egyptian President and Vatican recent Pope gift an icon to the holy family to each other. The whole world watched the events of this visit on all international channels. On the fourth day of October 2017, Vatican Pope included the holy family pilgrimage to Egypt. The opera Romana foundation visited Egypt from 11-15 December 2017 to inspect sites of the holy family's route in Egypt, learn about the program and later announced to the official Vatican channel that the holy family's route was included in the pilgrimage programs approved by a 2018 catalogue (Eg Gate, 2020).

3. Methodology

3.1. Data and variables

Research question

According to the previous review, the study suggested to examine the specific research questions:

1. What are the main barriers travelers may face during their trip to the holly sites?
2. What are the main accommodation and foodservice facilities they need in the holly sites?

Research design

Choosing a method of collecting primary data is considered an important phase to the value of the research process as; it helps the researcher in deciding how to collect the necessary information. Questionnaire technique is common for researches in the tourism and hospitality field that facilitate the process of collecting data about humans' preferences and purchasing attitude and measure it by using statistical procedures (Veal, 2011).

Guests' questionnaire

Questionnaire was designed according to two aspects: questions' structure and the needed type of response for each question. Questions could be designed as; close-ended questions or open-ended questions. Both types were used to collect more information and get answers to research questions (Siniscalco and Auriat, 2005; Bryman and Bell, 2007).

Questionnaire was designed by using different style of questions. Part one of the questionnaire used multiple choice and it was considered with the main respondents' demographic data that may affect their preferences and evaluation to the services and facilities offered. Researchers were keen to study respondents' gender, age, and nationalities. This part was also asked if they have ever travelled as a pilgrim, how many times they visited Egypt, if they had a chance to visit churches or monastery in Egypt and how they hear about the journey of the Holy Family to Egypt.

The second part includes questions that asking participants about their purpose from travelling and whether they travelled as a pilgrim before. If they visit Egypt before and the number times of visiting Egypt and the purpose behind the visit. If they visit monastery or churches in Egypt before and if they have ever heard about reviving the Journey of the Holy Family to Egypt. Questions of this part designed by using ranking with a 5-point Likert scale style questions (1: strongly disagree to 5: strongly agree) to determine their preferences about the barriers they may faced, the food services facilities that they may need, their accommodation preferences and their behavioral intentions. At the end, the research offers recommendations based on the gathered data.

Semi structured interview

Eight separate in-depth semi structured interviews with experts in the field of religious tourism and hospitality business and specialist in the field of religious tourism were conducted. Some of them were member of a ministerial Commission specifically set up to relaunch the Path of the Holy Family.

The average time needed for completing the semi structured interview were around 25 minutes. The interviewee was concentrating on some main points as:

- 1- The exact duration of the journey of the holy family in Egypt.
- 2- What is the illustration of the holy family's path in Egypt?
- 3- The Targeted market segments, characteristics, and nationalities.
- 4- The best marketing tool of this type of tourism.
- 5- Tour companies that implement the holy family itineraries in Egypt.
- 6- What are the reasons for the neglect of the holy family's itinerary in Egypt?
- 7- The sites that was already approved in the path of the holy family in Egypt.
- 8- Actual and prospective tourism services.
- 9- Country efforts to revive the path of the holy family in Egypt.
- 10- The future and proposed marketing plans.
- 11- Quality of tourism investments to revitalize sites.

The Study Population

The study is focusing on a sample of Christian pilgrims travelers who are interested in visiting the Holy sites and churches whether for the purpose of Hajj or blessing in Christian religious places in Egypt. Also, the study was concerned to explore experts and specialists' opinion.

Collecting Data

A self-administrated questionnaire was designed and distributed to a random sample of travelers who visited Egypt recently via Internet. About 290 questionnaires of the electronic survey were sent to 290 guests discussing the main barriers travelers may face during their trip to the holy sites and the main accommodation and foodservice facilities they need, by sending them an e-mail invitation with a link to the electronic guest survey. Researcher received 260 valid responses of the guests who had been invited to participate. The results obtained from the valid forms were statistically analyzed whenever needed by using SPSS version 19. Data and information found in the study were analyzed and discussed in accordance with the stated objectives.

3.2. Results and analysis or discussion

- Analysis of guests' questionnaire

Table 1

Analysis of participants' demographic data

		Freq. (N.260)	%
Gender	a) Male	150	58
	b) Female	110	42
Age	a) Less than 25 Years	6	2
	b) From 25 to less than 35 years	28	11
	c) From 36 to less than 45 years	33	13
	d) From 46 to 55 Years	85	33
	e) More than 55 Years	108	41.5
Nationality	a) Australia	41	15.8
	b) United States of America	64	25
	c) Greece	23	8.8
	d) Switzerland	16	6.15
	e) Canada	27	10.4
	f) France	32	12.3
	g) Latin American	48	18.5
	h) Others	9	3.0

From the previous table it could be noticed that most respondents were male with a percentage 58%. When reviewing respondents age analyzing data revealed that the percentage of respondents increase with the age category; 41.5% of respondents were above 55 years old, 33% were between 46 and 55 years old, 13% were above 36 and less than 45 years old, 11% were between 25 and 35 years old and the rest 2% were less than 25 years old.

Regarding the nationality of questionnaire's participants; data showed that most respondents were American with 25% followed by Latin American with 18.3%;

Australia with 15.8% followed by France with 12.3% and Canada with 10.4%; 8.8% were from Greece; 6.15% were Switzerland and 3.0% were from different nationalities that includes Arabs.

Table 2
Guests' Preferences

		Freq. (N=260)	%
1. Travelling as a pilgrim	a) Never	38	14.6
	b) Once	85	33.0
	c) Twice	63	24.0
	d) More than twice	74	28.5
2. Number of times of visiting Egypt	a) Never	9	3.5
	b) Less than 2 times	97	37.3
	c) Between 2 and 5 Times	135	52
	d) More than 5 times	19	7.3
3. The main purpose of visiting Egypt	a) Cultural tourism	68	27.0
	b) Leisure tourism	98	39.0
	c) Curative tourism	19	7.6
	d) Religious tourism	37	14.7
	e) Others	29	11.6
4. Previous visit to any of monastery/ churches in Egypt	a) Yes	112	43
	b) No	148	57
5. Hearing about reviving the Journey of the Holy Family to Egypt from	a) Family & Friends	51	19.6
	b) Personal experiences	34	13.1
	c) Internet	98	37.7
	d) Others	77	29.6

Results in the previous table showed that 33% of respondents had a chance to travel as a pilgrim for only one time in life. While 28.5% travelled for more than two times. 24% travelled for two times during their lives meanwhile, 14% of respondent never had a chance to travel as a pilgrim. The analyses of respondents' answers on this question revealed that more than 85% of respondents did travel as a pilgrim whether for one time or more than that.

Considering number of their visits to Egypt results revealed that a huge percentage did visit Egypt before for several times as 52% of respondents visited Egypt between 2 and 5 times and 37.3% of respondent visited Egypt less than 2 times. Meanwhile, 7.3% exceed 5 times in their visit to Egypt and 3.5% never visited it before.

Based on the previous question respondents were asked about the purpose of the visit, 39.0% of respondents visited Egypt for leisure tourism, followed by 27.0% for cultural tourism, followed by religious tourism with 14.7%; 11.6% visited Egypt for different purposes like education or business and finally 7.6% visited Egypt for

curative purposes. According to respondents' answers 57% of them visited monastery or churches in Egypt, while 43% didn't have a chance to visit any.

Regarding hearing about reviving the journey of the Holly Family to Egypt respondent answers demonstrated in the previous table reflect that the Internet is a powerful tool to use in spreading information about the Holly Family journey to Egypt as; 37.7% of them heard from the Internet. 29.6% used other sources to know about it such as travel agencies and tour operator. While 19.6% heard about it through family and friends and only 13.1% gained knowledge about it through their personal experience.

Table 3
Guests' point of view regarding barriers and the needed facilities

Questions	Attributes	1	2	3	4	5	Mean V.	S.D.	Rank
Barriers faced visitors	a)Lack of restoration	0.2	33.4	30.2	12.7	23.4	3.26	1.166	7
	b)Unaccomplished infrastructure	-	22.0	12.7	44.1	21.2	3.65	1.046	6
	c)Lack of hospitality services offered	-	-	23.4	34.9	41.7	4.18	0.787	5
	d)Shortage of food and beverage facilities	-	-	33.2	45.4	21.5	3.88	0.731	4
	e)Weak marketing efforts & advertising tools	0.2	0.2	-	67.8	31.7	4.30	0.506	3
	f) Non existing of bazaars and souvenir shops	25.6	-	42.4	31.7	0.2	2.81	1.148	8
	g)Poor surrounding areas and passages	-	-	20.5	21.2	58.3	4.38	0.804	2
	h)Absences of special needs requirements	-	-	-	23.4	76.6	4.77	0.424	1
1. Food service facilities	a)Fast food restaurants	45.9	45.4	8.3	0.2	0.2	1.64	0.665	4
	b)Economic restaurants with counter services	-	-	0.2	20.5	79.3	4.79	0.414	1
	c)Open buffet restaurants	12.7	12.7	23.4	30.5	20.7	3.34	1.287	3
	d)Spiritual style food	-	-	8.5	69.3	22.2	4.14	0.538	2
2. Hospitality services needed	a) Motel	-	-	20.5	22	57.6	4.37	0.803	3
	b) Economic hotels	0.2	-	-	33.7	66.1	4.66	0.491	2
	c) Old Style lodging properties	-	-	0.2	28.8	71.0	4.71	0.461	1
3. Evaluating services offered	a) Booking experience and price suitability	0.2	-	0.2	91.2	8.3	4.07	0.320	3
	b) Warmly welcome from local travel agencies	34.9	-	52.2	0.2	12.7	2.91	0.923	5
	c) Accommodation experience	0.2	20.2	-	12.9	66.6	4.25	1.199	2
	d) Proper handling of service failure	55.4	12.7	23.7	8.3	-	1.85	1.050	6
	e) Marketing and advertising campaigns	0.2	8.5	-	71.0	20.2	4.02	0.753	4
	f) Satisfaction level about the whole experience	0.2	-	12.7	28.8	58.3	4.45	0.729	1

Continued

4. Behavioral Intentions	a) preferring to visit more sites of the Journey of the Holy Family in Egypt on the long run	-	-	0.2	-	99.8	5	0.099	1
	b) Willing to generate and promote positive feedback about my experience on social media	22.2	36.3	12.7	0.2	28.5	2.77	1.532	5
	c) Willing to recommend visiting Egypt to others	-	-	0.2	32.9	66.8	4.67	0.477	2
	d) Willing to come back again regardless the price	12.7	-	0.2	20.5	66.6	4.41	1.005	4
	e) Appreciating the applying of suitable arrangements for senior travelers and people with special needs	22.2	23.4	41.5	12.7	0.2	2.45	0.981	3

From the previous table the following results could be summarized in the following:

Concerning respondents' point of view about the barriers that they may face during their visit mean analyses revealed that; (Absences of special needs requirements) came in the first position with mean score (4.77). In the second position came (Poor surrounding areas and passages) that achieved an average of (4.38); followed by (Weak marketing efforts and advertising tools) in the third position with mean score (4.30). The fourth position occupied by (Lack of hospitality services offered) that achieved an average (4.18). While, in the fifth position (Shortage of food and beverage facilities) with mean score (3.88). Meanwhile, (Unaccomplished infrastructure) came in the sixth position with mean average (3.65). (Lack of restoration) (3.26) came in the seventh position. And finally, the least barrier was (None existing of bazaars and souvenir shops) with average mean (2.81).

About food service facilities that respondents may looking for in Holly Sites; results revealed that; the majority of respondents are looking for (Economic restaurants with counter services) with an average mean (4.79), which means that there is a positive strong direction toward it. Spiritual style food occupies the second position with an average mean (4.14). Third position occupied by (Open buffet restaurants) with mean score (3.34). In the last position, came Fast food restaurants with an average mean (1.64).

Analyzing respondents' preferences about the kind/type of hospitality services and accommodation they require showed that the majority appreciated old style lodging properties and considered it most suitable for their needs. Mean analysis scored (4.71) which revealed the positive direction. Respondents second choice go to economic hotels as mean scored (4.66). Mean while motel is the last choice as it is scored (4.37).

Regarding attributes that respondents used to evaluate the services offered, it could be noticed that; satisfaction level about the whole experience is considered the primary

attributes according to their evaluation as mean analysis (4.45) strong positive direction. The second attribute is the accommodation experiences which showed strong positive result (4.25). Booking experience and price suitability is the third attribute with mean result (4.07); followed by marketing and advertising campaigns in the fourth position with mean score (4.02). Warmly welcome from local travel agencies scored the fifth position with mean analysis (1.85).

Analyzing respondents' future intentions showed that respondents have a very positive attitude regarding their desire to visit more sites of the Journey of the Holy Family in Egypt on the long run as it came in the first position. Mean analysis showed a strong positive direction (5.00). In the second position, their willing to recommend visiting Egypt in general to others. Mean results (4.67) showed strong positive direction. Willing to come back again regardless of the price came at the third position, mean analysis reflect positive direction to it (4.41) a strong positive direction. An obvious decrease in respondents' intentions to generate and promote positive feedback about their experience on social media observed; as results showed weak direction in mean analysis (2.77). In the last position is the appreciation of applying of suitable arrangements for senior travelers and people with special needs, mean analysis referred to a moderate direction (2.45).

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

The holy family stayed in Egypt for almost four years which means 12% of Jesus's life. The trail of the holy family in Egypt starting with Rafah Sinai, finishing with Qosqam in Assiut and divided by scientists into three stages. During the four years Jesus visited many places in Egypt extend to 3000 km² with a real presence of him, the Virgin Mary and Saint Joseph Najjar. There are five sites that were approved in the trail. Three sites in the Valley of Natroun, Virgin Mary Church Maadi and Old Cairo region.

The majority of nationalities who are interested to visit the trail came from; The United States of America, Australia, Canada, France, Greece, Portugal, Switzerland, Korea, India, Eastern European countries, African Christians countries such as Ethiopia and Kenya. Senior people, sick people and disabled are the major segments who seek religious tourism.

Digital marketing is the best marketing tool for the trail especially with the increasing use of social media. Many tour companies (around 35 tour companies) organize programs to visit some places of the trail of holy family in Egypt and they are conducting the trip in an average of 10 to 16 days.

The main barriers pilgrims may face during their visit to the Holy sites in Egypt; are absences of special needs requirements, poor surrounding areas and passages, weak marketing efforts and advertising tools, lack of hospitality services offered and Shortage of food and beverage facilities.

There is a clear shortage in the existing and the quality of services offered around sites that was already approved in the path of the holy family in Egypt and unpaved roads and scarcity of accommodation and hospitality services. The only form of accommodation is residence in monasteries, which provide a limited services, and the

residence is in a dormitory consisting of number of beds sharing the same bathroom. The current travel agencies' programs offer accommodation in Cairo or Alexandria and travel to those sites for only one day.

Economic restaurants with counter services and spiritual style food occupied the majority interest of Christian Pilgrims. Old style lodging properties and economic hotels reflect pilgrims' needs to feel the spiritual atmosphere that should be considered in the designing of hotels around the holly sites. There are some factors that affect pilgrims' opinions and evaluation to the travelling experience as; satisfaction level about the whole experience, the accommodation experiences, booking experience and price suitability, marketing and advertising campaigns, and finally, warmly welcome from local travel agencies.

Discussing Country's efforts to revive the path of the holy family in Egypt, there was an increasing interest from the Egyptian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities about the trail of the holly family therefore and the file of the trail of the Holly Family was transferred to The State Council due to the importance of the trail and also due to the overlapping between a number of ministries and governorates concerned. Unfortunately, the progress in this issue is going slowly as it is concerned with;

- 1- The future and proposed marketing plans.
- 2- Quality of tourism investments to revitalize sites.

The experts suggested that The State Council of the country should follow a strategy to ensure the success of the path as a new and promising product for Egyptian tourism. This strategy should be based on five axes that must be achieved in parallel.

1. Raise the efficiency of the sites of the Holy Family Path that will be visited by tourists.
2. An intensive campaign for the targeted countries (about 18 countries).
3. Paying attention to the security axis, and this involves the availability of paved roads with an appropriate infrastructure, and the preparation of the surrounding community to ensure the safety of tourists.
4. Supporting the Egyptian Orthodox Church, which has jurisdiction over most of the sites of the Holy Family Path.
5. Raising awareness of the surrounding community and rehabilitating it with handicrafts in a way that benefits them and improves their income.

Travelers showed willingness to visit more sites of the Journey of the Holy Family in Egypt on the long run regardless of the price, especially if it is affiliated with visiting other Holly sites in The Middle East.

Recommendations

Recommendations	The recommendation is directed To	Implementation Mechanism
1. More care and attention should be given to the Holly Family Trip Road, especially, around the five sites already approved.	-The Supreme Council for Tourism -The State Cabinet	- An adequate infrastructure - Raising up the awareness of the surrounding population
2. The other sites, which is not approved yet, should be developed for the maximum exploitation on the long run.	-The Supreme Council for Tourism -The State Cabinet	- The needed infrastructure - An adequate marketing campaign
3. Sites that might be difficult to exploit at the international level due to the sensitivity of their location, may be allocated to the local level	-The Supreme Council for Tourism -The State Cabinet -Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities -Travel Agencies -	- Implementing new programs that might be addressed to the Local tourism level through Churches and media channels
4. The state is requested to provide a pool of investment varieties that may cover the handcraft, souvenirs, the gifts, which will be available at the surrounded areas of the route.	-The Supreme Council for Tourism -The State Cabinet -Ministry of International Cooperation -Ministry of Investment	- Encouraging the local and international investors to cooperate with the state development plan
5. Maintain the surrounded areas as it is, to keep the spiritual atmosphere.	-The Supreme Council for Tourism -The State Cabinet, The Egyptian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, The local and social media	- Preventing any recent developments that may harm the spiritual image of the site - Spreading the required cultural awareness among the residents of the surrounding areas and linking it to the benefits of the tourism movement

Continued

<p>6. Utilizing people from the surrounded areas, to keep up those areas according to the required standards and as a competitive advantage for a better life for them</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The Supreme Council for Tourism -The State Cabinet -Egyptian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities -Political Parties -Local and social media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Urging the residents of the sites and the surrounding areas to participate and work in jobs that are based on tourism
<p>7. An awareness campaign should be addressed to the local community, in order to raise up the awareness of the Egyptians and specially those who are living at the surrounded areas.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The Supreme Council for Tourism -Egyptian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities -Egyptian Tourism Authority -Political Parties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conducting awareness sessions about the importance of Tourism
<p>8. An international marketing campaign should be addressed all over the globe, including the speech and the decision of the Vatican Pop. In order to attract Christians Pilgrims from all over the world.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The Supreme Council for Tourism -Egyptian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities -Egyptian Tourism Authority -Egyptian Coptic Church -The Vatican -Egyptian Embassies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The use of international institutions specialized in advertising and marketing in each and every concerned country
<p>9. Promoting videos where “Jesus Christ” was walking, eating taking bath along with a story about the spots where he lived for a long time.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The Supreme Council for Tourism -Egyptian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities -Egyptian Tourism Authority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The use of international institutions specialized in advertising and marketing in each and every concerned country
<p>10. To unify the efforts of the state, including Tourism Authorities, Egyptian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, Ministry of Foreign Affairs to publicize the whole journey all over the globe, specially at the top 10 producers’ countries</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The Supreme Council for Tourism -Egyptian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities -Egyptian Tourism Authority -Ministry of Foreign Affairs -Egyptian Embassies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Better and effective communication under the supervision of the Supreme Council for Tourism

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<p>11. The formation of an advisory body specialized for the path of the Holy Family, headed by the Prime Minister, to help overcoming the obstacles it may face.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Supreme Council for Tourism -The State Cabinet -Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities -Egyptian Tourism Authority -Egyptian Tourism Federation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The existence of an entrusted body for removing the obstacles that might hinder the development of the path
<p>12. Encouraging tourism investors to establish a group of hotels (different categories) and Restaurants variety, if possible, nearby the sites to meet and satisfy the requirements of pilgrims</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Supreme Council for Tourism -The State Cabinet -Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities -Egyptian Tourism Federation -Ministry of Investement -Ministry of Local Government -Tourism Development Authority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Allocating some lands areas for tourism development near and around the sites
<p>13. For the state to undertake the production of a huge cinematic film, with the help of international film makers companies, that depicts the story of the life of Jesus Christ in Egypt and, if possible, in real sites to promote the path of the Holy Family in Egypt</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Supreme Council for Tourism -The State Cabinet -Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities -Egyptian Tourism Authority -Egyptian Tourism Federation -Ministry of Investement -Ministry of Information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A competition for the best written story that depicts the life of Jesus Christ in Egypt and assign it to an international film maker company to turn it into a movie
<p>14. Issuing a cooperation protocol between the countries that Jesus passed by on his way to Egypt, through tailoring a variety of joint tourism programs, such as Jordan and Palestine</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Supreme Council for Tourism -The State Cabinet -Ministry of Foreign Affairs -Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities -Egyptian Embassies -Egyptian Tourism Authority -Egyptian Travel Agencies and International Tour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An open invitation to attract more tourists for the concerned countries.

Continued

	Operators	
15. International hotel chains can advertise a package of accommodation programs in their hotels located in the countries within the route to increase the occupancy percentage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Supreme Council for Tourism -Ministry of Foreign Affairs -Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities -Egyptian Embassies -Egyptian Tourism Authority -Egyptian Travel Agencies and International Tour Operators -International Hotel Chains Head Quarters 	- Pilgrims may get benefits being accomodated in the same hotel chain in different countries with an affordable rate.
16. Hotel Properties can raise occupancy percentage and increase the revenue, Meanwhile, helping to develop the surrounding area through several spiritual ideas, including, for example, offering to their guests planting a tree or a palm tree, carrying their names, on the Holy Family Path, where each property is located.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Supreme Council for Tourism -The State Cabinet -Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities -Ministry of Investement -Ministry of Local Government -Tourism Development Authority 	- Collaboration between the concerned bodies, in order to improve the surrounding areas through Self-Charitable Spiritual Efforts under the supervision of the Supreme Council For Tourism and International Foundations

Limitations and Future research

There are some limitations that should be considered when dealing with the results of this study as it depends on tourism and hospitality services available around the five sites that have been recognized and approved by UNESCO. And to increase the credibility of the study, experts in the field of religious tourism and tourists who are interested in this type of tourism were investigated to get more information about tourists' needs and barriers that may face and the way to increase Egypt's share from the international number of tourists around the world.

A future study could examine how to develop the approved sites around the Holly trail. Also, further research should study handicraft industries that can be developed around sites of the trail and how to study the importance of developing food and beverage services beside those sites.

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إحياء مسار العائلة المقدسة إلى مصر بالتطبيق على قطاعي السياحة والضيافة

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المخلص

منذ أكثر من 2000 عام، هرب يوسف النجار والعذراء مريم مع الطفل يسوع المسيح إلى مصر من أجل الهروب من غضب الملك هيرودس. كانت هذه لحظة حاسمة في تاريخ المسيحيين الأقباط، فقد أصبحت مصر أرضًا مقدسة ثانية عندما بارك أرضهم وجود العائلة المقدسة. واليوم، توقفت الأماكن التي كان يُعلم فيها تقاليد عن العائلة المقدسة، والطريق الذي يُعتقد أنهم سلكوه، أصبح يشكل مسارًا مقدسًا. في الوقت الحاضر يطالب العديد من المؤرخين وعلماء الآثار المصريين بمشروع لتتبع كل بلدة أو مدينة زارتها العائلة المقدسة. بعد ثورة 2011، شهدت مصر انخفاضًا بنسبة 42% في إجمالي عدد السياح في عام 2016. كما انخفضت عائدات السياحة بنسبة 70% تقريبًا. تحسبًا للحجاج، تعمل مصر على ترميم العديد من الأماكن المقدسة. وقد زار البابا فرنسيس بابا الفاتيكان مصر في أبريل 2017. أيد البابا فرنسيس تسمية مصر كموقع للحج في أكتوبر خلال العظة التي يقدمها أمام جمهوره، حيث اعترف بمصر كموقع رسمي للحجاج. اليوم، تقف الكنائس أو الأديرة على هذه المواقع التي يراها المصريون مصادر مباركة ملموسة. والتوقعات هي أن 20% من 2.2 مليار مسيحي في العالم سيزورون مصر. حاليًا، يمثل الحج المسيحي 3% فقط من السياحة المصرية. يشمل طريق الحج في مصر 25 موقعًا، من سيناء في الشرق إلى أسبوط في الجنوب. من المتوقع أن يجذب هذا البرنامج عددًا كبيرًا من السياح من جميع أنحاء العالم. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى إحياء هذه الأماكن التاريخية من رحلة العائلة المقدسة في مصر لجذب الجماعات الكنسية والحجاج ووضع جميع المواقع في مواقع التراث العالمي وإمكانية تطوير الخدمات المقدمة وزيادة عدد المنشآت الفندقية.

معلومات المقالة

الكلمات المفتاحية

العائلة المقدسة؛
التسويق الإلكتروني؛
السياحة والضيافة؛
الحج المسيحي؛
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