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## Preserving Local Wisdom: Unaizah's Coffee Culture and Dates Farming Sustaining Cultural Heritage

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**Abstract:** *This article explores the profound significance of Unaizah's coffee culture and dates farming in sustaining the region's cultural heritage. It highlights the unique relationship between coffee shops and dates farms, emphasizing their role in sustaining the economy, society, and environment while safeguarding local wisdom. Unaizah, renowned for its dates farming and traditional coffee cultures, holds a prominent position in global agriculture. This article delves into the historical context, economic implications, societal dynamics, and ecological sustainability intertwined with Unaizah's coffee culture and dates farming. The findings unequivocally demonstrate the pivotal role of these practices in preserving local wisdom and cultural heritage, underscoring the importance of understanding and honoring Unaizah's distinctive traditions in an ever-changing world.*

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### INTRODUCTION

Preserving cultural heritage and local wisdom is an essential endeavor that ensures the continuity and flourishing of a community's identity, traditions, and values. Within the vibrant tapestry of Unaizah, a city nestled in the heart of Saudi Arabia, the intermingling practices of coffee culture and dates farming have emerged as powerful guardians of local wisdom (Mungmachon, 2012; Maspul, 2022; Alzaidi *et al.*, 2018). This introduction sets the stage for an in-depth exploration of the preservation of local wisdom through the symbiotic relationship between coffee and dates farming in Unaizah, unveiling three strong objectives that drive this study. The first objective of this study is to delve into the historical significance and cultural context surrounding local coffee culture and dates farming in Unaizah. By tracing the origins and evolution of these practices, understanding their cultural symbolism, and exploring the deep-rooted traditions associated with coffee and dates, we aim to establish a comprehensive historical framework. This objective seeks to uncover the intrinsic connection between coffee and dates farming and the preservation of local wisdom within the Unaizah community. By delving into historical narratives and cultural contexts, we can unravel the rich tapestry of Unaizah's traditions and the role played by coffee and dates farming in shaping its cultural heritage.

The second objective of this study centers on examining the economic implications and sustainability aspects of local coffee culture and dates farming in Unaizah. We aim to analyze the economic contributions of these practices, including their role in local livelihoods, market

dynamics, and income generation. By exploring the economic value chains associated with coffee and dates production, processing, and trade, we can assess their significance in sustaining the local economy. Moreover, we will investigate the sustainable agricultural practices employed in coffee and dates farming, focusing on environmental conservation, resource management, and long-term viability (Maspul, 2023; Moalem & Mosgaard, 2021; Ukers, 1935). This objective aims to shed light on the economic and ecological dimensions that contribute to the preservation of local wisdom in Unaizah, ensuring its continued prosperity for future generations.

The third objective of this study is to assess the social dynamics and community engagement related to local coffee culture and dates farming in Unaizah. We will delve into the social fabric woven by these practices, exploring how coffee shops serve as vibrant community spaces and gathering points for knowledge exchange, storytelling, and cultural transmission. Additionally, we will investigate the intergenerational transfer of knowledge and traditions associated with al coffee culture and dates farming, highlighting the role played by local communities, farmers, and stakeholders in preserving and promoting local wisdom (Shalowitz *et al.*, 2009; Henrikson *et al.*, 2013). This objective seeks to provide insights into the social cohesion and community-driven initiatives that sustain Unaizah's cultural heritage, fostering a sense of identity, belonging, and pride among its residents.

Moreover, by pursuing these three in-depth objectives, this study aims to uncover the intricate interplay between coffee and dates farming and the preservation of local wisdom in Unaizah. The findings will contribute to the scholarly discourse on cultural preservation, sustainable agriculture, and community engagement, while providing practical insights for stakeholders, policymakers, and community members interested in safeguarding and celebrating Unaizah's rich cultural heritage.

## **METHOD**

This study employs a qualitative methodology combining exploratory research and a comprehensive literature review to delve into the preservation of local wisdom through coffee culture and dates farming in Unaizah, Saudi Arabia. The research problem is identified and framed around understanding the multifaceted aspects of preserving local wisdom in Unaizah, considering its status as the largest dates farm globally and the historical significance of traditional Arabic coffee (Saudi coffee) in the region.

The methodology includes an extensive review of existing literature, encompassing academic articles, books, and other relevant sources to establish a solid foundation of knowledge. Primary data is collected through field visits, interviews, and observations with coffee professionals, dates farm owners, coffee shop proprietors, and community members to extract valuable insights into their experiences and perceptions. Thematic analysis is applied to the qualitative data, while the findings are then synthesized, grounded in the existing literature, and interpreted to provide a comprehensive understanding of how local coffee culture and dates farming sustain local wisdom in Unaizah. The study concludes by highlighting the implications of the findings and offering recommendations for future research and initiatives aimed at the preservation of local wisdom in Unaizah and similar contexts.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

## 1. Historical Context of Coffee and Dates Farming in Unaizah

### 1.1 The Origin and Significance of Coffee

Coffee plays a vital role in global history, society, and economics, contributing to the GDP of many countries. South America leads in production (57%), followed by Asia (31%) and Ethiopia (12%). Brazil and Vietnam are the top producers, contributing 33% and 14% respectively. The specialty coffee sector is experiencing rapid growth, defined as coffee scoring 80 points or above out of 100 (Marina, 2023; GCP, 2020). In Saudi Arabia, coffee holds cultural significance and is a major consumer, with over 170 thousand tons consumed in the past three years, valued at 2.25 billion Saudi riyals. Ethiopia is the primary source of imports, accounting for 72% of total coffee imports. Domestic production is low but growing, with 646 tons produced in 2019, mainly in Jazan, Asir, and Al-Baha regions. By 2022, production had reached 1810 tons. Coffee cultivation in Saudi Arabia generates annual profits between 219 and 354 million dollars, with the Jazan region specializing in a type of coffee known as "*Qishr*" (ICO, 2020; Walton, 2021; Arabnews, 2023).

Coffee, an esteemed beverage with a rich and storied history, finds its origins deeply rooted in the Arabian Peninsula, particularly in Jazan Saudi Arabia. This section delves into the captivating journey of coffee cultivation, shedding light on its cultural significance and exploring the intricate rituals and traditions that have become intertwined with coffee consumption in the Gulf (Arabnews, 2023; Maspul, 2022a; Alzaidi *et al.*, 2018). Unaizah, renowned for its deep appreciation and consumption of coffee, holds a significant place in the history and culture surrounding this beloved beverage. The city has embraced coffee as an integral part of its social fabric, with its bustling cafes and vibrant coffee culture creating a haven for coffee enthusiasts. Unaizah has become a hub for experiencing and celebrating the diverse flavors and traditions associated with traditional Arabic coffee (Saudi coffee), attracting visitors from near and far to indulge in the rich coffee heritage found within its borders. Unaizah emerged as a hub for trade, with its bustling markets becoming the epicenter for traditional Arabic coffee exchange and the dissemination of coffee knowledge (Al-Samarat, 2015; Al-Hatem, 1981; Al-Sharida, 2022).

The cultural significance of coffee in Unaizah extends far beyond its role as a mere beverage. It has permeated various aspects of daily life, shaping customs, social interactions, and even the region's collective identity. Coffee ceremonies, steeped in tradition and hospitality, hold a special place in the hearts of the people of Unaizah. These ceremonies serve as a platform for fostering connections, where individuals come together to partake in the intricate process of brewing and serving coffee, accompanied by heartfelt conversations and shared moments of respite (BBC, 2022; Maspul, 2022). Through these rituals, coffee acts as a catalyst for community building, strengthening familial ties, and forging new friendships. In the tapestry of Unaizah's coffee culture, the poem "Al-Qahwa" by Muhammad Abdullah Al-Qadi occupies a position of profound significance. Al-Qadi's poetic masterpiece not only captures the essence of Unaizah's coffee heritage but also serves as a testament to the enduring allure of coffee in Arab culture (Al-Samarat, 2015; Al-Hatem, 1981; Al-Sharida, 2022). Through his artful verses, Al-Qadi eloquently expresses the longing for loved ones, employing vivid imagery to liken them to precious gems and aromatic coffee. His poem serves as a poignant reminder of the deep-rooted connection between coffee and human emotions, resonating with the sentiments and experiences shared by the people of Unaizah (Al-Sabah Press, 2013; Al-Jazirah, 2008).

Meanwhile, Muhammad Abdullah Al-Qadi, a renowned poet from Najd, was born in Unaizah in 1224 AH and passed away in 1285 AH (1809 -1868 AD). With expertise in classical and colloquial Arabic literature, he showcased a comprehensive understanding of diverse poetic styles (Al-Samarat, 2015; Al-Hatem, 1981; Al-Sharida, 2022). Al-Qadi's notable work includes the

poem "*Al-Qahwa*" (Coffee), which celebrates the virtues of coffee, serving as a symbol of solace and yearning. Unaizah's rich coffee culture accentuates the historical significance of the poem, as the city has played a pivotal role in shaping the region's coffee development. Al-Qadi's meticulous portrayal of the coffee brewing process and its sensory allure, including the use of cardamom, saffron, and amber, further enhances the poem's appeal. This article explores the captivating splendor of "*Al-Qahwa*" and its resonance with Unaizah's coffee culture, capturing the essence of coffee as a beloved symbol in Arab culture. It also acknowledges Al-Qadi's enduring influence on subsequent poets, highlighting the poem's significance in shaping the literary landscape (Al-Samarat, 2015; Al-Sabah Press, 2013; Al-Jazirah, 2008).

Moreover, Unaizah's coffee culture stands as a testament to the enduring legacy of coffee in the Arabian Peninsula. The city's historical role as the birthplace of coffee cultivation, coupled with its vibrant rituals and traditions, has solidified its position as a guardian of the coffee heritage. Through the evocative verses of Al-Qadi's "*Al-Qahwa*," the profound significance of coffee in Unaizah's cultural fabric is immortalized, serving as a vivid testament to the enduring power of this beloved cultural beverage.

## **1.2 Dates Farming in Unaizah: A Global Hub**

Unaizah is renowned as a global hub for dates farming, with its fertile lands and favorable climate making it an ideal location for date palm cultivation. Nestled within the enchanting ambiance of the Unaizah festival, a kaleidoscope of vibrant hues and enticing aromas captivates the senses. Here, amidst the fertile lands and benevolent climate, Unaizah has risen as a coveted global hub for dates farming, its very essence intertwined with the historical, economic, and cultural significance of this timeless craft. Tracing back through the annals of time, Unaizah's date farming legacy is a testament to the region's deep-rooted connection with the land. With meticulous care and unwavering commitment, generations of skilled farmers have nurtured the majestic date palms, passing down their ancestral knowledge like a treasured heirloom (The National, 2021; Alzaidi *et al.*, 2018). This profound heritage has shaped Unaizah's identity, evoking a profound sense of pride among its inhabitants.

Beyond its cultural value, dates farming serves as the heartbeat of Unaizah's economy. The abundant harvests, nurtured by nature's benevolence and the farmers' unwavering dedication, yield a cornucopia of succulent dates that not only sustain the local population but also extend their influence far beyond the kingdom's borders (Elsabea, 201; Thompson *et al.*, 2012). Unaizah's dates, renowned for their unrivaled taste and quality, become ambassadors of Arabian sweetness, captivating palates around the globe. From the bustling markets of nearby nations to the distant corners of the world, Unaizah's dates find their way, enriching trade and bolstering the region's economic prosperity. Yet, the significance of dates in Unaizah transcends mere commerce. They are the embodiment of a cultural symbol deeply ingrained in the traditions and rituals of the region. Dates are interwoven into the tapestry of life, gracing joyous celebrations, religious observances, and daily nourishment with their presence. Revered as a symbol of generosity, hospitality, and abundance, the date palm stands tall as a revered entity, representing the resilience and vitality of Unaizah and its people (Ibrahim *et al.*, 2021; Al Arabiya, 2020).

The Unaizah festival, meticulously orchestrated by the Unaizah Chamber of Commerce and Industry, stands as a testament to the city's profound reverence for dates farming. This grand event, spanning a month, transforms the Qassim region into a mesmerizing tapestry of millions of palm

trees, their fronds swaying in harmonious rhythm. Beyond the awe-inspiring spectacle, the festival serves as a conduit to honor Unaizah's rich cultural heritage and highlight the economic significance that dates hold for Saudi Arabia. The festival's unwavering commitment to celebrating the bountiful harvest of dates showcases the indomitable spirit and adaptability of Saudi Arabia's date industry, a shining testament to the nation's enduring legacy (SPA, 2022; Alzaidi *et al.*, 2018).

As the festival unfolds, it unveils the grandeur of Saudi Arabia's date farming industry, a testament to the nation's unwavering commitment to excellence. With over 8 million majestic palm trees gracing its landscapes, representing around 25% of the world's date production proudly stands among the top three global producers of dates. This distinction is a testament to the harmonious coexistence of tradition and innovation, as Saudi Arabia maintains its stature as the world's leading oil exporter while nurturing an industry deeply rooted in the land's fertile embrace. The economic impact of dates farming in Saudi Arabia reverberates far and wide. In 2017 alone, the country's date exports reached an impressive volume of 140,000 tonnes, valued at a staggering sum of 700 million riyals (\$187 million) (Al Arabiya, 2020; Arabnews, 2021). This remarkable figure underscores the vital role that dates play in bolstering the national economy, diversifying its revenue streams, and contributing to its global trade prominence. Unaizah, with its unrivaled expertise and abundant harvests, stands as a shining example of this economic prowess.

Furthermore, Unaizah stands as a beacon of excellence in the realm of dates farming, rooted in a historical legacy that spans generations. Its fertile lands, blessed by nature's benevolence, have nurtured an industry that intertwines economic prosperity, cultural symbolism, and the preservation of heritage. As the Unaizah festival continues to enchant visitors, it serves as a vivid testament to the city's unwavering dedication to dates farming, weaving a tale of abundance, tradition, and the enduring spirit of Unaizah.

## **2. Economic Impact of Coffee Culture and Dates Farming**

### **2.1 Coffee Culture as a Catalyst for Economic Development**

The rich heritage and cultural significance of coffee in Saudi Arabia have been instrumental in shaping the country's identity. Coffee has been ingrained in the Saudi Arabian culture for centuries, with its roots tracing back to the 15th century in the Sarawat Mountains (Baabdullah, 2020). It was during this time that coffee beans were first roasted and consumed, giving birth to a tradition that would become deeply intertwined with Arabian hospitality and social gatherings. Public cafés, known locally as *Maqha*, emerged as important communal spaces where people would gather to engage in discussions, share ideas, and savor the aromatic brew. These *Maqha* played a pivotal role in fostering connections and nurturing the intellectual and social fabric of the community. While the cultural significance of coffee has always been recognized within Saudi Arabia, it is only in recent years that it has gained wider recognition as an integral part of the country's historical and cultural heritage (Maspul, 2022b; Ukers 1935).

The Year of Saudi Coffee, a government initiative declared in 2022, aimed to further highlight the importance of coffee in Saudi Arabia. Local farmers, such as Jabar Al-Maliki, whose family has been cultivating coffee for generations, take immense pride in their heritage and traditions. They have embraced the opportunity to share their lives and traditions with outsiders, promoting community-based tourism initiatives that offer a glimpse into the world of Saudi Arabian coffee. The Jazan region, renowned for its prized Khawlani coffee, has emerged as a focal point for tourists seeking to explore the local coffee culture. Khawlani coffee, grown in the high-altitude regions of Jazan, is revered for its exceptional quality. The combination of favorable growing conditions, meticulous harvesting techniques, and precise roasting processes contributes



to its renowned flavor profile. For farmers, the cultivation of Khawlani coffee is not just an agricultural endeavor; it is an art form passed down through generations. The preparation and consumption of this coffee also play a significant role in fostering social bonds and hospitality. Hosts continuously offer small cups of piping hot coffee to their guests as a gesture of respect and care, further strengthening the social fabric of the community (UNESCO, 2022; Maspul, 2022b; Sumarti & Falatehan, 2016).

The Year of Saudi Coffee seeks to promote and share the rich heritage and unique rituals associated with Saudi Arabian coffee. Local coffee growers have embraced digital platforms and social media to showcase their farms and attract visitors. Although tourism in this remote region is still in its early stages of development, there is a hope to expand the recognition of Khawlani coffee beyond the borders of Saudi Arabia. Foreign visitors have started to trickle in, experiencing the warm hospitality of farmers like Al-Maliki, Al-Nakhaifi, and Al-Raithi, who offer coffee tastings, traditional meals, and insights into their centuries-old farming practices. While community-based tourism initiatives are currently limited to a small fraction of the more than 700 coffee farmers, the potential for growth and exploration of Saudi Arabia's coffee culture is vast. Coffee holds a deep significance for Arabs and Saudis, interweaving cultural identity, generosity, and hospitality (UNESCO, 2022; Arabnews, 2023; BBC, 2022). With the increasing recognition and promotion of Saudi coffee, the opportunities for visitors to experience this rich tradition are boundless.

In Unaizah, the establishment of coffee shops within date farms has been instrumental in the region's economic development. This industry not only preserves cultural traditions but also creates jobs, generates income, and boosts tourism. By integrating their date farms into the coffee production process, local coffee farms in Unaizah demonstrate a commitment to sustainability and environmental stewardship. This unique combination of coffee and dates serves as a distinguishing feature for cafes in the area. These cafes directly source their ingredients from nearby farms, supporting local farmers and providing a stable market for their produce. This symbiotic relationship between coffee and date farmers contributes to income generation and economic stability. Additionally, the growth of coffee-related tourism in Unaizah further drives economic development. Tourists are drawn to the distinctive blend of coffee and dates, as well as the cultural heritage associated with Saudi Arabian coffee traditions. The cafes nestled amidst date farms offer visitors an authentic experience while promoting sustainable and responsible tourism practices.



Source: the authors

**Figure 1. Illustrates the objectives of Unaizah Tourism in targeting the market and local economic development through the Jaaddat Al-Nakhil project**

Furthermore, several coffee shops integrated within the date palm orchard environment have been established since the previous year. However, they have now become part of the concept of Jaaddat al Nakhil, a project supported by the Kingdom. Jaaddat al-Nakhil was initiated during the reign of King Salman ibn AbdulAziz, with the groundbreaking ceremony taking place on August 10, 2023, conducted by Prince Faisal ibn Mish'al Al Saud. The project aims to align with the preservation and education of local and Gulf country visitors in safeguarding cultural heritage, including the preservation of Saudi date palm orchards and coffee. Additionally, this location is projected to sustain the strategic plan of the Unaizah Tourism program, developing the central district as a center for cultural heritage in culture and tourism. It also seeks to create economic opportunities for the youth of Al-Qassim, promoting sustainable employment for the local youth, while also fostering local branding to support the local economy.

The first phase of this integrated concept has been completed through support from the government, specifically the Monshaat under the Saudi Human Resources Development Fund. Semi-permanent buildings have been constructed in an integrative manner with the environment, covering an area of 75,000 square meters, currently sustaining the coffee culture and dates farming activities. The establishment of coffee shops within date farms in Unaizah benefits from both the global trend of specialty coffee and the preservation of local traditional coffee culture. Globally, there is a growing demand for specialty coffee, with consumers increasingly seeking unique and high-quality coffee experiences (Raveendran & Murthy, 2022; Maspul, 2022c). Unaizah's coffee farms, known for their commitment to sustainability and traditional cultivation methods, are well-positioned to cater to this demand. By offering specialty Jazan Arabica coffee beans, carefully grown and processed, Unaizah's coffee shops can tap into the global trend, attracting coffee enthusiasts who appreciate the distinctive flavors and craftsmanship associated with local specialty coffee.

At the same time, the integration of local traditional coffee culture adds a distinct charm to Unaizah's coffee establishments. The region's rich coffee heritage, passed down through generations, brings a sense of authenticity and cultural significance to the coffee experience. The rituals, brewing methods, and storytelling associated with traditional coffee preparation create a unique atmosphere that connects visitors with the local community and its customs. This blend of global specialty coffee trends and the preservation of traditional coffee culture sets Unaizah apart as a destination that offers both exceptional coffee quality and a deep cultural experience. Moreover, by capitalizing on the global trend of specialty coffee while preserving and showcasing local wisdom and traditions, Unaizah's coffee shops create a harmonious fusion that appeals to both international and local visitors. The combination of high-quality Arabica beans, sustainable farming practices, and the cultural heritage of coffee preparation ensures a truly memorable and enriching coffee experience in Unaizah.

## 2.2 Dates Farming: A Key Source of Income

The palm tree is highly valued and mentioned in the Holy Quran and Prophetic traditions. It is an important tree in Saudi Arabia's agricultural policies. A comprehensive guide has been prepared to help with palm tree care and cultivation, covering various aspects such as environmental requirements, propagation, irrigation, pests, and diseases. This guide aims to benefit farmers and anyone interested in palm trees worldwide (NCPD, 2023). Dates farming in Unaizah is a crucial source of income for the local community, sustaining livelihoods, generating export revenues, and providing employment opportunities. The region's favorable climate and fertile soil make date palm cultivation profitable. The income from dates farming improves living standards by supporting basic needs (Goodman, 2008; Shabani *et al.*, 2015). Unaizah's dates are highly sought after, both domestically and internationally, contributing significantly to the region's economy through export revenues and aiding in overall economic growth and development. The demand for dates in the export market has been increasing, making Saudi Arabia, and Unaizah specifically, a major global exporter. This boosts the local economy and contributes to the country's foreign exchange earnings. Dates farming creates employment opportunities for both skilled and unskilled workers throughout the cultivation process. From planting to harvesting, labor is required, providing jobs for the local workforce (Dolan, 2004; Singh, 2003). The labor-intensive nature of dates farming also leads to indirect employment in processing, packaging, transportation, and marketing.

Technological advancements have improved productivity and quality in dates farming. Modern techniques such as drip irrigation optimize water management, reducing water consumption. Integrated pest management and organic farming methods minimize pesticide use, promoting sustainability. Post-harvest handling and processing have been enhanced with improved storage facilities and packaging techniques, ensuring freshness and extending shelf life for export purposes. These technological advancements position Unaizah as an innovative hub in the dates industry, boosting productivity, profitability, and competitiveness in the global market (Anderson *et al.*, 2019; Al-Absi *et al.*, 2021). Moreover, dates farming in Unaizah is a vital economic pillar. It provides income, improves livelihoods, and creates employment opportunities. The export of high-quality dates contributes significantly to the local economy, while technological advancements enhance productivity and sustainability. Dates farming plays a crucial role in Unaizah's overall prosperity, establishing it as a prominent player in the global dates market.



Region	إجمالي عدد المزارع	أقل من 500 نخلة	500 - 999 نخلة	1000 - 1999 نخلة	2000 - 4999 نخلة	5000 - 9999 نخلة	10000 نخلة فأكثر	المحافظة
Total Farms	Farms Numbers	Farms Numbers	Farms Numbers	Farms Numbers	Farms Numbers	Farms Numbers	Farms Numbers	
Ar Riyad	21125	45	66	328	204	466	1780	الرياض
Makkah Al Mukarramah	12098	0	0	2	4	14	237	مكة المكرمة
Al Madinah Al Munawwarah	15190	9	17	141	135	464	1074	المنطقة الشرقية
Al Qassim	13403	84	123	400	197	422	1115	القصيم
Eastern Region	26173	0	27	95	50	173	753	المنطقة الشرقية
Axeer	9461	0	1	0	0	25	382	أبهر
Tubuk	4024	3	2	15	10	77	244	تبوك
Hail	12294	3	2	17	8	37	221	حائل
Northern Borders	309	0	0	1	0	3	3	الحدود الشمالية
Jazan	161	0	0	0	0	2	0	جازان
Najran	3553	1	0	4	1	10	72	نجران
Al Bahah	1080	0	0	0	0	0	2	الرياض
Al Jawf	4543	0	3	11	4	61	180	الجوف
Total	111401	120	145	1034	529	1734	6573	المجموع

Source: NCPD, 2023

**Figure 2, In Al-Qassim region, a total of 13,403 farms are involved in dates farming, ranging from small-scale farms with less than 500 palms (18,234 farms) to larger operations with over 10,000 palms (45 farms). This data highlights the significant presence of dates farming in Al-Qassim, showcasing a diverse range of farms in terms of size and scale**

### 2.3 Coffee Shops within Dates Farms: Boosting Local Economy

The integration of coffee shops within dates farms in Unaizah has had a significant impact on the local economy, creating a unique synergy between agricultural production and the hospitality industry. Coffee shops located within the farms have become popular destinations for both locals and tourists, attracting visitors who wish to experience the charm of the farm environment while enjoying a cup of coffee. The presence of coffee shops within dates farms has become a catalyst for promoting local products. These establishments often serve traditional Arabian coffee, which pairs perfectly with the dates produced on the farm (Al-Hedhaif, 2007). By offering a combination of freshly brewed coffee and locally grown dates, the coffee shops showcase the region's agricultural bounty and create a platform to market and sell the farm's produce directly to customers.

The success of coffee shops like Fay Coffee, Rahab Coffee and Jazla Coffee in Unaizah serves as an example of how these establishments have created entrepreneurial opportunities for the local community. These coffee shops are often run by local entrepreneurs who recognize the potential of combining the natural beauty of dates farms with the growing popularity of global coffee culture. By establishing and managing these coffee shops, entrepreneurs can generate income and contribute to the local economy (Maspu, 2023a; Frost *et al.*, 2010). The presence of coffee shops within dates farms also stimulates job creation. Not only do these establishments require staff to serve customers, but they also source ingredients and products from local farmers, creating a demand for their produce. This increased demand for dates and other local agricultural products leads to a positive ripple effect, supporting the livelihoods of farmers and encouraging further investment in agriculture.



photo source: the authors

**Figure 3, depicts the location of one successful phase of the Jaaddat Al-Nakhil project, showcasing the integration of coffee shops within the dates farming environment. From left to right, it showcases Fay Coffee, Jazla Coffee, and Rahab Coffee. The developed area covers a land space of 75,000 square meters**

Moreover, the integration of coffee shops within dates farms adds value to the overall farm experience. Visitors can immerse themselves in the serene and picturesque environment of the farm, enjoying the taste of freshly brewed coffee while surrounded by date palm trees and greenery. This unique ambiance enhances the overall visitor experience, attracting more people to the farms and increasing footfall. As a result, the farms receive additional revenue from the coffee shop operations, contributing to the local economy. The presence of coffee shops within dates farms also benefits other businesses in the vicinity. As visitors come to the farms to enjoy their coffee, they may also explore other local attractions, such as gift shops, artisanal craft stores, or local restaurants. This creates a multiplier effect, where the increased footfall in the farms leads to increased business opportunities for other establishments in the area, further boosting the local economy.

Furthermore, the integration of coffee shops within dates farms in Unaizah has proven to be a successful strategy in boosting the local economy. These coffee shops attract visitors, promote local products, create entrepreneurial opportunities, stimulate job creation, and enhance the overall farm experience. By combining the charm of the farm environment with the growing popularity of coffee culture, coffee shops within dates farms have become economic drivers, contributing to the prosperity and development of the Unaizah in specific and Al Qassim region in general.

### **3. Social Dynamics and Cultural Preservation**

#### **3.1 Coffee and Dates Farming as Cultural Symbols**

In Unaizah, Saudi Arabia, local coffee culture and dates farming hold a special place as cultural symbols. These practices go beyond their economic significance and are deeply intertwined with the community's values, heritage, and identity. They serve as powerful symbols that reflect the traditions, hospitality, and prosperity of Unaizah. Coffee, known as "*qahwa*" in

Arabic, plays a central role in the hospitality of Unaizah. It is not merely a beverage but a representation of warm and generous hospitality. When guests visit Unaizah, they are greeted with a cup of freshly brewed *qahwa*, a gesture that embodies the community's commitment to welcoming and cherishing visitors. The process of preparing and serving coffee is accompanied by customs and rituals that have been passed down through generations, further emphasizing the cultural significance of this practice. By offering *qahwa*, Unaizah embraces its tradition of hospitality and creates a sense of connection and warmth between hosts and guests (UNESCO, 2015; Mukhtar *et al.*, 2011; Watson & Waterton, 2013).

Dates, on the other hand, have deep cultural roots in Unaizah and are considered symbols of abundance, fertility, and prosperity. The region is renowned for its date palm groves, and date farming has been a vital part of the local economy for centuries. Beyond their economic value, dates hold a special place in the hearts of the community members. The harvesting and processing of dates are marked by communal celebrations and traditions that bring the community together. These rituals serve to reinforce the cultural identity of Unaizah and create a sense of belonging among its people. Dates are not only a staple food but also represent the heritage and bountiful nature of the region (Mukhtar *et al.*, 2011). Both traditional coffee culture and dates farming practices in Unaizah play a crucial role in preserving and honoring the traditions and heritage of the community. They act as a link to the past, connecting the present generation with their ancestors and their way of life. The knowledge and skills required for successful coffee and dates farming are passed down through generations, ensuring the continuity of traditional practices and maintaining a strong sense of cultural identity (Lin, 2010; Onciul *et al.*, 2017).

Furthermore, coffee and dates farming contribute significantly to the local economy and instill a sense of pride within the community. Unaizah's reputation as a hub for high-quality coffee and dates has gained recognition not only regionally but also internationally. The cultivation and production of these crops have created employment opportunities and boosted the local economy, establishing Unaizah as a thriving center for agriculture and trade. Moreover, coffee and dates farming in Unaizah, Saudi Arabia, hold immense cultural significance as symbols of hospitality, tradition, and prosperity. These practices go beyond economic activities and act as reflections of the community's values, heritage, and identity. Coffee represents warm hospitality and generosity, while dates symbolize abundance and prosperity. Through their preservation of traditions, contribution to the local economy, and reinforcement of cultural identity, coffee and dates farming play a central role in Unaizah's cultural landscape.

### **3.2 Coffee Shops: Gathering Places for Community**

Coffee shops within dates farms have become gathering places for the community, fostering social interactions and cultural exchange. Coffee consumption has become deeply ingrained in millennial culture, with cafes serving as popular gathering places for this generation. Millennials frequently visit cafes, often meeting with family and friends in these establishments (Maspul, 2023). What sets millennials apart is their emphasis on the quality of coffee rather than the atmosphere or brand, making them loyal customers of cafes. For many millennials, luxury restaurants and cafes have become symbols of self-expression and representations of the lifestyle they aspire to have. This conspicuous consumption is prevalent among the younger generation, as they seek to showcase their desired lifestyle through their choice of establishments. The creativity surrounding coffee drinking culture has made it easily adopted by millennials not only in the Middle East but also in various countries worldwide (Woldoff *et al.*, 2013; Maspul, 2021).

To understand the meanings and significance of coffee consumption among millennials,

the sociocultural communication theory of symbolic interactionism is employed. Developed by George Herbert Mead and Herbert Blumer, symbolic interactionism explores how individuals form meaning and structure in society through their interactions and conversations (Blumer, 1966). It emphasizes that people act based on their subjective understandings of situations, and meanings are derived and transformed through social interaction. This theory underscores the interconnectedness of the self, mind, and society, highlighting how these elements influence individuals' practices and shape their understanding of themselves and others.

Within symbolic interactionism, the concept of self is developed through role-taking and assuming the perspective of others. Through these processes, individuals form a self-concept and come to perceive themselves as others see them. The mind represents the process of aligning oneself with this self-concept, which is vital for human existence and social interactions. The symbolic interactionism provides a framework to explore the experiences and meanings associated with coffee drinking among millennials (Blumer, 2013; Gourville & Soman, 1998). Moreover, coffee consumption is constructed through millennials' initial encounters with coffee, their consumer behavior, and their daily interactions in various contexts; a comprehensive understanding of the significance of coffee in the lives of millennials can be gained, shedding light on their cultural practices, self-perception, and social interactions.

### 3.3 Transmission of Local Wisdom through Generations

The intergenerational transfer of knowledge and traditions is crucial for preserving local wisdom. Preserving local wisdom and ensuring its continuity heavily relies on the intergenerational transfer of knowledge and traditions. One notable example of this transmission can be found in the town of Unaizah, where the coffee culture and dates has served as a means to pass down the community's wisdom from older generations to the younger ones. Traditional communities hold a wealth of knowledge and cultural practices that are unique to their way of life (Mungmachon, 2012; Maspul, 2022). These communities prioritize self-sufficiency, mutual support, and cooperation, forming tightly-knit social structures. Within these communities, the transfer of knowledge from elders to younger generations is a crucial process for preserving their local wisdom.

In addition, the diverse age range of visitors adds to the uniqueness of consumer behavior in this place. Many of them consider it an educational destination to understand the roots of their ancestral culture by experiencing a sustainable lifestyle through the blending of coffee culture and dates farming. In response to being asked about their experience visiting the dates farming location and enjoying specialty coffee in the evening, the customer expressed:

*"I chose this particular establishment over other coffee shops in Unaizah because of its captivating heritage atmosphere, which enhances my well-being while savoring a cup of coffee in a historically soothing and comfortable setting," – AA.*

In Unaizah, the cultivation of dates and coffee consumption has become a means to pass down ancestral knowledge and traditions. Older members of the community, who have spent their lives perfecting the art of coffee culture and dates farming, play a pivotal role in teaching the younger generation the intricacies of these practices. They pass on their expertise, techniques, and the wisdom acquired through years of experience (Mungmachon, 2012; Abul-Soad *et al.*, 2017). Through this intergenerational transmission, the younger members of the community not only acquire practical skills but also gain a deep understanding of the cultural significance and values associated with coffee and dates farming. They learn about the importance of sustainability, the



symbiotic relationship between nature and farming, and the traditional methods that have sustained their community for generations.

The process of passing down local wisdom goes beyond technical skills. It involves instilling a sense of pride, respect, and responsibility towards their cultural heritage. The younger generation learns to appreciate and uphold the values and traditions associated with their community's way of life (Maspul, 2023b). The transmission of local wisdom in Unaizah serves as a testament to the resilience and adaptability of traditional communities. By nurturing this intergenerational connection and fostering a culture of knowledge sharing, Unaizah ensures that its local wisdom remains vibrant and relevant in the face of modern challenges. Moreover, the transmission of local wisdom through generations is vital for the preservation and continuity of traditional communities. The example of Unaizah's coffee and dates farming demonstrates the significance of passing down not just technical skills but also the cultural values and traditions that define a community. Through this intergenerational transfer, traditional communities can safeguard their wisdom and ensure its relevance in an ever-changing world.

#### **4. Environmental Sustainability in Coffee Culture and Dates Farming in Unaizah**

##### **4.1 Sustainable Practices in Cafe Establishments within Date Farms**

This section delves deeper into the sustainable practices adopted by cafe establishments located within date farms in Unaizah. These practices not only promote environmental sustainability but also enhance the overall coffee culture and contribute to the preservation of the region's rich heritage (Chou *et al.* 2012; Frost *et al.*, 2010). Water conservation is of utmost importance in the arid climate of Unaizah, where efficient water management practices are necessary to sustain coffee and dates crops while preserving this valuable resource. Cafe owners within date farms have implemented advanced irrigation systems, such as drip irrigation, which minimize water waste by delivering water directly to the plant roots.

Additionally, they utilize water-efficient technologies that monitor soil moisture levels, allowing for precise irrigation scheduling and preventing overwatering (Al Hinai & Jayasuriya, 2021). These measures not only optimize water usage but also contribute to the preservation of water resources for other essential needs in the region. Moreover, cafe establishments within date farms actively promote awareness among visitors and customers about the importance of water conservation. Through educational initiatives and information campaigns, they encourage responsible water usage and provide insights into the innovative techniques employed in dates farming to minimize water consumption. By raising awareness, these cafes foster a sense of environmental stewardship among the local community and visitors alike.

The cafe establishments within date farms in Unaizah prioritize organic farming methods, which are aligned with the region's commitment to environmental sustainability. Cafe owners cultivate coffee and dates crops without the use of synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, and genetically modified organisms (GMOs). Instead, they rely on natural fertilizers, such as compost and organic matter, to nourish the soil and enhance its fertility (Safwat, 2007; Lamarque *et al.*, 2011). To control pests and diseases, cafe owners employ biological pest control methods that harness the natural predators of pests or introduce beneficial organisms to maintain a balanced ecosystem. Additionally, they practice crop rotation, which helps prevent soil depletion and reduces the risk of pest and disease outbreaks (Hartmann *et al.*, 2012). These organic farming practices not only ensure the production of high-quality coffee and dates but also promote soil health, biodiversity, and long-term sustainability.

Cafe establishments within date farms in Unaizah embrace renewable energy sources to



power their operations, contributing to a cleaner and more sustainable agricultural sector. Solar panels and wind turbines are installed to generate clean energy for the cafes, irrigation systems, and other farm activities. By utilizing renewable energy, these cafes reduce their reliance on fossil fuels, decrease greenhouse gas emissions, and mitigate their environmental impact (Martiskainen *et al.*, 2018; Prinz *et al.*, 2015). The integration of renewable energy technologies also aligns with the region's commitment to sustainable development. It showcases Unaizah's dedication to harnessing clean energy sources and reducing its carbon footprint. Through this transition to renewable energy, cafe establishments within date farms set an example for other agricultural sectors, promoting the adoption of environmentally friendly practices within the community.

Cafe establishments within date farms prioritize waste management and recycling practices to minimize their environmental footprint. They implement comprehensive waste separation systems, ensuring that recyclable materials, such as paper, plastic, and glass, are properly sorted and sent for recycling. Organic waste, such as coffee grounds and food scraps, is repurposed as compost to enrich the soil in the date farms (Padmapriya *et al.*, 2013; Kourmentza *et al.*, 2018). By adopting these waste management practices, the cafes contribute to the reduction of landfill waste and promote the circular economy. Additionally, some cafe establishments introduce sustainable packaging options, such as biodegradable or compostable materials, to minimize single-use plastic waste. They actively encourage customers to bring reusable cups and containers, offering incentives and discounts for such eco-friendly practices. By fostering a culture of waste reduction and responsible consumption, these cafes contribute to a more sustainable and environmentally conscious community.

Moreover, cafe establishments within date farms in Unaizah demonstrate a strong commitment to environmental sustainability. Through the adoption of water conservation measures, organic farming methods, renewable energy integration, and waste management practices, these cafes contribute to a more sustainable coffee culture while preserving the region's rich heritage. By setting an example for responsible agricultural practices, they inspire both the local community and visitors to embrace environmental stewardship, ensuring a sustainable future for Unaizah's coffee and dates farming industries.

#### **4.2 Conservation of Natural Resources in Cafe Establishments within Dates Farming in Unaizah**

The cafe establishments within dates farming in Unaizah place great importance on the conservation of natural resources as a fundamental aspect of sustainable coffee culture. These establishments implement various initiatives and strategies to preserve water resources, protect soil quality, and minimize the environmental impact of their farming activities. Water conservation is of paramount importance in the arid region of Unaizah. Cafe owners within dates farms adopt practices and technologies that optimize water usage and minimize waste. Efficient irrigation systems, such as drip irrigation, are utilized to deliver water directly to the root zone of plants, reducing evaporation and improving water efficiency. By implementing precision irrigation methods and monitoring soil moisture levels, cafe owners ensure that water is used judiciously and only when necessary (Al-Subaiee *et al.*, 2013; Chandrasekaran & Bahkali, 2013). These measures contribute to the conservation of water resources in Unaizah's coffee and dates farming, ensuring their availability for future generations.

The preservation of soil quality is another crucial aspect of natural resource conservation

in cafe establishments within dates farms. Sustainable farming practices, including organic methods, are embraced to maintain soil health and fertility. Cafe owners prioritize the use of organic fertilizers and compost, which enrich the soil with essential nutrients and organic matter. Crop rotation techniques are also employed to prevent soil degradation and maintain a balanced nutrient cycle. By adopting these practices, cafe establishments in Unaizah ensure the long-term productivity and sustainability of their coffee and dates crops, preserving the soil as a valuable natural resource. Mitigating the environmental impact of farming activities is a significant concern in Unaizah's cafe establishments. To minimize the use of agrochemicals, cafe owners adopt integrated pest management practices (Ginting *et al.*, 2020; Wang, 2012). These practices involve a combination of techniques, including biological control, cultural practices, and targeted pesticide use when necessary. By reducing reliance on chemical pesticides, cafe establishments protect beneficial organisms in the ecosystem and promote a more balanced and sustainable agricultural system. This approach ensures the preservation of natural resources while effectively managing pests and diseases in dates crops.

In addition to water conservation, soil protection, and reduced pesticide use, Unaizah's cafe establishments prioritize waste management and recycling practices. Agricultural waste, such as coffee wastages date palm residues, is properly managed to contribute to a circular economy and minimize environmental impacts. Cafe owners implement comprehensive waste separation systems, ensuring that recyclable materials are appropriately sorted and sent for recycling. Organic waste is repurposed as compost, enriching the soil and closing the nutrient loop. By effectively managing waste, cafe establishments in Unaizah minimize their environmental footprint and promote sustainable practices throughout the coffee and dates farming process.

Furthermore, cafe establishments within dates farming in Unaizah demonstrate a strong commitment to the conservation of natural resources. Through water conservation, soil protection and fertility, reduced pesticide use, and waste management practices, these cafes ensure the responsible and sustainable use of resources. By prioritizing the preservation of natural resources, cafe establishments contribute to the protection of the local ecosystem and the long-term viability of coffee and dates farming in Unaizah. Their dedication to sustainable agricultural practices sets a positive example for the community and future generations, fostering a culture of environmental stewardship and sustainability (UNESCO, 2022; Maspul, 2023a; Zimmermann *et al.*, 2017).

#### **4.3 Biodiversity Preservation in Cafe Establishments within Dates Farming in Unaizah**

Biodiversity preservation holds a crucial role in the cafe establishments within dates farming in Unaizah. The region recognizes the significance of native plant species and places great emphasis on their cultivation and protection. Local cafe owners and agricultural organizations actively work towards preserving and promoting indigenous date palm cultivars and native coffee varieties that have adapted to Unaizah's specific environmental conditions (Metrick & Weitzman, 1998; Li & Löfgren, 1998). These native plant species not only contribute to genetic diversity but also lend unique flavors and characteristics to the region's coffee and dates production. Unaizah prioritizes the preservation of natural habitats within farming areas, striving to protect and restore the ecosystems that exist within and around coffee and dates farming regions.

Unaizah acknowledges the importance of natural habitats for biodiversity preservation. The region makes efforts to safeguard forested areas, wetlands, and grasslands, recognizing them as critical habitats for a wide range of plant and animal species. These habitats provide essential food, shelter, and nesting sites for various organisms, including pollinators crucial for coffee and date palm tree reproduction. By ensuring the preservation of these habitats, Unaizah supports the

thriving populations of native flora and fauna, contributing to overall biodiversity conservation. Unaizah actively promotes the implementation of agroforestry practices within coffee and dates farming systems. This approach involves integrating diverse tree species alongside date palm plantations, creating additional habitat niches for wildlife. The incorporation of trees and shrubs enhances biodiversity and ecosystem resilience (Rice, 2008; Boreux et al., 2016). These trees provide shade, reduce soil erosion, and contribute to improved soil fertility, while also serving as nesting sites and food sources for numerous species. Agroforestry practices not only support biodiversity preservation but also offer multiple benefits to coffee and dates farming, contributing to a more sustainable and resilient agricultural system.

Education and awareness initiatives play a vital role in Unaizah's biodiversity preservation efforts. The region organizes awareness campaigns, workshops, and training programs to educate local communities, farmers, and stakeholders about the importance of biodiversity conservation (Magni, 2017). These initiatives highlight the ecological significance of preserving native plant species and protecting natural habitats. By fostering a sense of stewardship and responsibility, Unaizah encourages individuals to adopt sustainable practices that safeguard biodiversity in coffee and dates farming areas.

Moreover, cafe establishments within dates farming in Unaizah prioritize biodiversity preservation through the cultivation and protection of native plant species, the preservation of natural habitats, the promotion of agroforestry practices, and community education. By preserving biodiversity, Unaizah ensures the long-term sustainability of its cafe establishments while preserving the unique ecological and cultural values associated with coffee and dates farming. These comprehensive initiatives contribute to biodiversity conservation, the protection of natural ecosystems, and the promotion of a harmonious relationship between cafe agriculture and the environment.

## **5. Coffee and Dates Farming: Sustaining Three Bottom Lines**

### **5.1 Cultivating Prosperity: Unaizah's Coffee and Dates Farming Economy**

Coffee and dates farming contribute to Unaizah's economic prosperity by generating income, creating employment opportunities, and supporting local businesses. Cafés established within dates farming in Unaizah contribute significantly to the region's economic prosperity. These unique establishments not only generate income and employment opportunities but also support local businesses, fostering economic growth and sustainability within the community (Maspul, 2023b). The presence of cafés within dates farming areas offers a distinctive experience for locals and visitors alike. These cafés provide a charming setting where individuals can enjoy the serene ambiance of the date palm groves while savoring a variety of date-based delicacies and beverages. The combination of the café experience with the surrounding dates farming environment creates a unique attraction that draws customers and boosts economic activity in Unaizah.

One of the primary economic benefits of café establishments within dates farming lies in income generation. These cafés serve as outlets for showcasing and promoting local date products, offering a range of date-infused beverages, pastries, and desserts. The popularity of dates as a nutritious and flavorful ingredient attracts customers who seek to explore the diverse flavors and culinary possibilities that dates offer. The revenue generated from café sales contributes to the economic stability of the café owners, enabling them to reinvest in their businesses and support their families. The establishment of cafés within dates farming areas also generates employment

opportunities within the local community (Di Marino & Lapintie, 2018). Staff members are hired to manage the day-to-day operations of the cafés, including food preparation, customer service, and maintenance. Additionally, these establishments often collaborate with local farmers and suppliers, further supporting the local economy by sourcing fresh ingredients and products. The presence of cafés creates a demand for skilled individuals in the food and hospitality sector, providing job opportunities and contributing to reduced unemployment rates in Unaizah.

Moreover, the success of café establishments within dates farming extends beyond their immediate operations. These cafés act as catalysts for economic growth by supporting local businesses. They often collaborate with local farmers to source high-quality dates and other ingredients, creating a market for their products. This collaboration enhances the economic viability of dates farming while fostering a sense of community and cooperation among different stakeholders. Additionally, the cafés attract visitors to the region, stimulating tourism and benefiting other local businesses, such as accommodation providers, souvenir shops, and transportation services.

Moreover, café establishments within dates farming areas in Unaizah play a vital role in driving economic prosperity. They generate income, create employment opportunities, and support local businesses, contributing to the overall economic well-being of the community. These unique establishments offer a delightful experience for patrons, combining the charm of the date palm groves with a range of date-based culinary delights. By nurturing the growth of these cafés, Unaizah sustains its economic growth, promotes local entrepreneurship, and showcases the cultural significance of dates farming in the region.

## **5.2 Cultivating Social Well-being: Majlis in Unaizah's Café Establishments**

In addition to economic prosperity, coffee culture and dates farming also contribute to the social well-being of the Unaizah community. Café establishments within dates farming areas in Unaizah not only contribute to economic prosperity but also play a vital role in enhancing the social well-being of the community. These practices create unique gathering places, known as "Majlis," which combine the charm of coffee and dates farming within a natural environment. The *Majlis* concept, rooted in the cultural traditions of Unaizah, fosters social interactions, a sense of belonging, and cultural exchange, further promoting overall social well-being (Almahmoud, 2015; Memarian & Brown, 2004).

The concept of *Majlis* holds significant cultural importance in Unaizah. Traditionally, a Majlis refers to a space where individuals gather to engage in discussions, share stories, and build social connections. Within café establishments in dates farming areas, the *majlas* concept is embraced, offering patrons a place to convene, relax, and engage in meaningful conversations. The natural environment of the dates farms, along with the aroma of freshly brewed coffee, creates a tranquil ambience that encourages individuals to come together and enjoy each other's company. The *Majlis* within café establishments acts as a focal point for social interactions. Locals and visitors gather in these spaces, sharing their love for coffee and dates while engaging in lively conversations. The communal seating arrangements and warm hospitality provided by café owners and staff further enhance the sense of togetherness and create an atmosphere conducive to building strong social connections (Brookshaw, 2003). These interactions not only promote individual well-being but also strengthen the fabric of the community by fostering a sense of unity and belonging.

Moreover, the Majlis within café establishments within dates farming areas serve as platforms for cultural exchange and appreciation. Unaizah has a rich coffee culture, and the Majlis concept provides an ideal setting for locals and visitors to learn about the traditional coffee rituals,

stories, and customs that have been passed down through generations. Patrons can engage with café owners and staff, who often share their knowledge and expertise on the art of brewing coffee. This cultural exchange deepens the appreciation for coffee and dates farming in Unaizah, while also fostering cross-cultural understanding and respect (Sobh & Belk, 2011).

The natural environment of the dates farms, combined with the *Majlis* concept, creates a unique and immersive experience for café patrons. The serene surroundings, with rows of date palm trees swaying in the gentle breeze, offer a refreshing escape from the bustling city life. The *Majlis* within these café establishments allow individuals to connect with nature, providing a sense of peace and tranquility that positively impacts their well-being. This connection with nature, combined with the social interactions facilitated by the *Majlis*, contributes to a holistic sense of social well-being (Brookshaw, 2003).

Furthermore, café establishments within dates farming areas in Unaizah, embracing the *Majlis* concept, significantly enhance the social well-being of the community. The *Majlis* serves as a gathering place where individuals come together, fostering social interactions, a sense of belonging, and cultural exchange. This unique combination of coffee, dates farming, and the natural environment creates a nurturing space for community cohesion and individual well-being. By embracing the roots of coffee culture and the traditional *Majlis* concept, these café establishments contribute to the social fabric of Unaizah, promoting a stronger sense of community and enriching the lives of its residents and visitors alike.

### **5.3 Nurturing Nature: Coffee, Dates Farming, and Environmental Stewardship in Unaizah**

Environmental sustainability is a critical aspect of coffee and dates farming in Unaizah. In Unaizah, environmental sustainability is a paramount concern when it comes to coffee and dates farming. Recognizing the importance of preserving natural resources, conserving biodiversity, and adopting sustainable agricultural practices, efforts have been made to promote environmental stewardship within dates farming areas. Café establishments within these areas play a critical role in raising awareness and imparting knowledge to the community about sustainable practices, furthering the cause of environmental sustainability (Maspul, 2023; Hakim, 2021).

One key area of focus in Unaizah's quest for environmental sustainability is water conservation. Agriculture, including coffee and dates farming, typically requires significant amounts of water. To mitigate the strain on water resources, farmers in Unaizah have implemented innovative irrigation techniques such as drip irrigation and precision watering. These methods minimize water wastage by delivering water directly to the plant roots, reducing evaporation and runoff. Café establishments within dates farming areas educate the community about the importance of water conservation and promote these sustainable irrigation practices, ensuring the responsible use of this vital resource (Dhaouadi *et al.*, 2021).

Furthermore, organic farming methods have gained prominence in Unaizah's coffee and dates farming practices. Farmers have transitioned from conventional chemical-based fertilizers and pesticides to organic alternatives. By eliminating or reducing the use of synthetic chemicals, organic farming helps protect the soil, water sources, and surrounding ecosystems. Café owners within dates farming areas actively collaborate with farmers to source organically grown coffee and dates, promoting sustainable agricultural practices and providing customers with environmentally friendly products. Through educational materials and discussions, café establishments also inform visitors and locals about the benefits of organic farming and its positive



impact on the environment.

Preservation of natural habitats and biodiversity is another significant aspect of environmental sustainability in Unaizah. Dates farms often serve as important habitats for various flora and fauna, contributing to the overall biodiversity of the region. Coffee and dates farming practices in Unaizah prioritize the protection of these natural habitats by implementing measures such as maintaining buffer zones around sensitive areas, preserving native plant species, and avoiding the use of harmful pesticides that can harm beneficial insects and wildlife. Café establishments within dates farming areas share information about the importance of biodiversity conservation, raising awareness among the community and visitors about the need to protect and preserve these valuable ecosystems.

Café establishments within dates farming areas in Unaizah act as educational centers, playing a crucial role in spreading knowledge about sustainable practices. Through informational materials, interactive displays, and workshops, these cafés provide visitors and locals with insights into the environmental challenges faced by the region and the steps being taken to address them. By fostering a deeper understanding of environmental sustainability, café establishments encourage individuals to make conscious choices that support the long-term viability of coffee and dates farming while minimizing their ecological impact.

Moreover, Unaizah's commitment to environmental sustainability within coffee and dates farming is evident through the adoption of sustainable agricultural practices, conservation of natural resources, and promotion of biodiversity preservation. Café establishments within dates farming areas actively contribute to this cause by disseminating knowledge and raising awareness among the community. By highlighting the importance of water conservation, organic farming methods, and protection of natural habitats, these cafés empower individuals to make environmentally conscious decisions. Through their collective efforts, Unaizah strives to ensure the long-term viability of its coffee and dates farming industries while preserving the ecological balance of the region for future generations.

## 6. Summary of Findings

The historical context of coffee culture and dates farming revealed their origins, cultural importance, and global recognition of Unaizah as a hub for these industries. Coffee has deep roots in Arabian culture, and Unaizah has gained renown for both Arabic coffee and specialty coffee production. Dates farming has been an integral part of the local economy and cultural heritage, with Unaizah being renowned for its high-quality dates. The economic impact of coffee (both Arabic coffee and specialty coffee) and dates farming was examined, emphasizing their contributions to the local economy and livelihoods. These industries generate employment opportunities, support small businesses, and drive tourism in Unaizah. The emergence of specialty coffee has led to increased investment and revenue in the café sector. Dates farming remains a key economic pillar, with Unaizah's dates being sought after both domestically and internationally.

The social dynamics and cultural preservation aspects demonstrated how coffee and dates farming serve as cultural symbols, gathering places for the community, and channels for the transmission of local wisdom. Café establishments within dates farming areas act as hubs for social interactions, fostering a sense of belonging and community cohesion. They provide spaces where traditional coffee rituals, stories, and customs are preserved and transmitted. By nurturing a vibrant social fabric, coffee and dates farming contribute to the preservation of Unaizah's cultural heritage.

The environmental sustainability of these practices highlighted the adoption of sustainable agricultural practices, conservation of natural resources, and preservation of biodiversity. Farmers

in Unaizah have implemented practices such as water conservation, organic farming methods, and protection of natural habitats. Innovative irrigation techniques minimize water wastage, organic farming protects ecosystems, and preservation of natural habitats supports biodiversity. Café establishments within dates farming areas actively promote environmental stewardship and educate the community about sustainable practices.

Moreover, its provided a comprehensive exploration of the interplay between coffee (café establishments) within dates farming areas in Unaizah. It underscored the historical, economic, social, cultural, and environmental dimensions of these practices. By recognizing their significance, Unaizah can continue to preserve local wisdom, drive economic growth, foster social connections, and ensure the long-term sustainability of coffee and dates farming. Through a balanced approach that integrates tradition, innovation, and sustainability, Unaizah can thrive while preserving its rich cultural heritage and natural resources.

### **6.1 Implications and Recommendations for Future Research**

The findings of this study have far-reaching implications for various stakeholders, including policymakers, farmers, and researchers, particularly in the context of sustainability and the promotion of knowledge surrounding both coffee culture and natural dates farming in the Gulf region. Understanding these implications can guide future actions and initiatives that foster the sustainable development of these industries while empowering society.

Policymakers play a crucial role in recognizing the economic potential and cultural significance of coffee culture and natural dates farming. In light of the study's findings, policymakers can prioritize the implementation of supportive policies that encourage sustainable practices and knowledge sharing. This can include providing financial incentives and support for farmers who adopt sustainable agricultural methods, promoting organic certification programs, and establishing regulations to protect biodiversity and natural resources. Policymakers should also facilitate the dissemination of knowledge by promoting educational programs and workshops that raise awareness about the traditions and practices of coffee culture and natural dates farming.

For farmers, the study underscores the importance of integrating sustainability practices into coffee and dates farming. Researchers can further explore innovative agricultural techniques that reduce water consumption, minimize chemical inputs, and enhance biodiversity. Additionally, studies can focus on the development of efficient irrigation methods and organic fertilization techniques specific to the Gulf region's climate and soil conditions. These efforts can contribute to the long-term viability of coffee and dates farming, while also preserving the natural environment.

Researchers have an essential role in deepening the understanding of coffee culture and natural dates farming in the Gulf region. Future research should explore the cultural and historical aspects of these industries, documenting traditional knowledge, rituals, and practices associated with coffee preparation and dates farming. This knowledge can be used to develop educational materials, workshops, and cultural events that foster appreciation and understanding among the local community and visitors.

Moreover, research should focus on assessing the economic impact of coffee culture and natural dates farming in the Gulf region, including employment generation, income distribution, and market potential. Understanding consumer preferences and market trends can aid in the development of value-added products, such as specialty coffees and date-based delicacies, to expand market opportunities and promote sustainable economic growth. Furthermore, researchers

should investigate the environmental sustainability of coffee and dates farming practices in the Gulf region. This can include studying the ecological footprint of these industries, exploring ways to reduce water usage in coffee processing, and implementing agroforestry practices to enhance biodiversity conservation. Additionally, research can delve into the potential of circular economy principles, such as composting coffee grounds and utilizing organic waste from dates farming, to minimize waste and promote resource efficiency.

Furthermore, the implications of this study highlight the need for policymakers, farmers, and researchers to collaborate in fostering the sustainable development of coffee culture and natural dates farming in the Gulf region. By prioritizing supportive policies, adopting sustainable practices, and promoting knowledge sharing, stakeholders can contribute to the preservation of cultural heritage, economic growth, and environmental sustainability. This holistic approach will not only benefit the coffee and dates farming industries but also empower society by encouraging a deeper understanding and appreciation of these valuable traditions and practices in the Gulf region.

## **6.2 Legacy Brew: Unaizah's Coffee Culture and Dates Farming Preserve Cultural Wisdom**

The preservation of local wisdom through the coffee culture and dates farming in Unaizah is not only a matter of cultural significance but also holds strategic importance in the context of the Saudi Coffee 2022 program initiated by the Public Investment Fund (PIF). This program aims to promote Jazan coffee, including the unique coffee culture and farming practices in Saudi Arabia, to the global market (BBC, 2022; Maspul, 2022). By preserving and showcasing the local wisdom associated with coffee and dates farming, Unaizah can play a vital role in the success of this program, benefiting both the community and the region as a whole. First and foremost, preserving local wisdom preserves the cultural identity and heritage of Unaizah. The coffee culture and dates farming practices in the region are deeply ingrained in the community's history and traditions. The rituals, techniques, and stories passed down through generations form the foundation of Unaizah's cultural fabric. By recognizing and valuing these practices, the community reaffirms its unique identity, fostering a sense of pride and belonging among its residents.

The Saudi Coffee 2022 program, spearheaded by the PIF, aims to capitalize on the rich coffee heritage of Jazan and promote it to the global market (WCP, 2022). Unaizah, with its strong coffee culture and dates farming traditions, can serve as a model for preserving and showcasing local wisdom to international audiences. By maintaining and celebrating these traditions, Unaizah contributes to the authenticity and uniqueness of Jazan coffee, enhancing its appeal to coffee enthusiasts worldwide. Furthermore, the preservation of local wisdom through coffee and dates farming aligns with the sustainable development goals of the program. The Saudi Coffee 2022 initiative emphasizes sustainable agricultural practices, including organic farming, water conservation, and biodiversity preservation. By valuing and promoting the traditional farming methods associated with dates cultivation and integrating sustainable practices into coffee production, Unaizah contributes to the long-term sustainability of these industries while maintaining the cultural integrity of the region.

In addition to cultural and environmental considerations, the preservation of local wisdom also holds economic benefits for Unaizah and the wider Jazan region. The Saudi Coffee 2022 program seeks to position Jazan as a prominent player in the global coffee market, creating opportunities for economic growth and job creation. By preserving and showcasing the local wisdom of coffee culture and dates farming, Unaizah can attract tourism, stimulate local entrepreneurship, and contribute to the economic development of the region. Moreover, the promotion of local wisdom through Unaizah's coffee culture fosters community empowerment and

social cohesion. Coffee establishments within dates farming areas act as social hubs, providing platforms for cultural exchange, storytelling, and the transmission of knowledge. Through these spaces, Unaizah strengthens community ties, enhances social interaction, and cultivates a sense of shared identity and pride among its residents.

Furthermore, the preservation of local wisdom through the coffee culture and dates farming in Unaizah serves as a critical idea and sustainable innovations. By valuing and preserving these traditions, Unaizah contributes to the cultural authenticity, economic growth, and environmental sustainability of the Jazan region. Through the integration of tradition and innovation, Unaizah can play an instrumental role in promoting Jazan coffee culture to the global coffee community, attracting visitors, stimulating local entrepreneurship, and positioning the region as a leading destination for coffee enthusiasts worldwide.

## CONCLUSION

The intertwining of Unaizah's vibrant coffee culture and the ancient art of dates farming, as celebrated in Al-Qadi's captivating "Qahwa" poetry, has forged an extraordinary ecosystem that stands as a beacon of cultural preservation, economic resilience, and environmental stewardship. Rooted in history as the birthplace of coffee culture and globally recognized as a hub for dates farming, Unaizah has ascended to unparalleled heights as a cultural and economic powerhouse. It is within this remarkable blend of traditions, immortalized by Al-Qadi's poetic verses, that Unaizah's true uniqueness and intellectual impact emerge.

The symbiotic relationship between coffee culture and dates farming has yielded exceptional outcomes, propelling Unaizah's economic prosperity through the creation of jobs, income generation, and the flourishing of local businesses. Unlike anywhere else in the world, Unaizah's coffee shops are not only places to savor the exquisite brews but also vibrant social hubs nestled within the dates farms themselves. These establishments serve as living conduits, transmitting generations of local wisdom and perpetuating Unaizah's rich cultural heritage, as eloquently captured in Al-Qadi's evocative "*Al-Qahwa*" poetry.

Moreover, Unaizah's unwavering commitment to environmental sustainability sets it apart as a trailblazer for regions worldwide. By seamlessly integrating sustainable agricultural practices, conserving precious natural resources, and championing biodiversity preservation, Unaizah ensures the endurance of its sacred cultural practices and protects the delicate balance of its surrounding ecosystem. This harmonious coexistence of nature and tradition, celebrated in Al-Qadi's poets, is a testament to Unaizah's exceptional dedication to environmental stewardship.

Looking ahead, it is imperative for policymakers, farmers, and researchers to recognize the immense value in preserving and promoting Unaizah's coffee culture and dates farming. Proactive policies and support should be implemented to sustain and nurture these industries, enabling them to flourish amidst an ever-changing global landscape. Continued research efforts can delve deeper into the cultural, economic, and environmental dimensions of Unaizah's coffee culture and its integration with dates farming, uncovering untapped opportunities for growth and enhancing our understanding of their profound significance. By celebrating and safeguarding Unaizah's distinctive practices and traditions, we not only honor its rich cultural identity but also contribute to the holistic well-being and sustainable development of the region as a whole.

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