Capturing the image of Alexandria; expectations, aspirations and reality

Assoc. Prof. Rania Abdel Galil, PhD and Arch. Ayman Al Assar, MSc
Architectural Engineering and Environmental Design Dept.
Arab Academy for Science, Technology & Maritime Transport, Alexandria, Egypt
rania.agalil@gmail.com, aymanassar@yahoo.com

Abstract:

It is only recently that attempts have been made to understand the role of the 'city image' in the perception of an ideal place and consequent choices made by people to invest, visit or even relocate to a city. A city needs to have a competitive advantage and to be favourably differentiated from its competition, or positively positioned, in the minds of the public. A key component of this positioning process is the identification of the current image and the building of a distinctive and appealing perception. The framework of this study focuses on conceptualizing the city as it is experienced and perceived by various groups; residents, visitors or those who have never been to the city. Exploring the perceptions and images of these different groups sheds light on the effect of communication models of a city's image - primary (spatial and non-spatial), secondary (advertising and PR) and tertiary (word of mouth reinforced by the media). In order to measure the image of a city, functional and psychological characteristics should be considered either as attribute based that represent a specific quality of the city or holistic based that represent a general imagery of the city, notwithstanding the unique factor and identity. This research has been conducted in the city of Alexandria, Egypt, to measure the base image of the city. Residents, visitors, tourists and those whom have never visited the city were all surveyed. The study was conducted a year after the 2011 revolution, a period where Egypt was featuring heavily in the media. The results show that there are distinct differences between those who actually experienced the city and those who have never visited and rely solely on tertiary communication.

The research adopted visual and verbal qualitative techniques, where data gathering was conducted through online and distributed unstructured open ended question questionnaires as well as personal interviews. Along with the open ended questions, images and metaphors of other locations were annexed, helping respondents to describe and state the common attributes of the city that open ended questions could not capture, and also metaphorically raise other holistic characteristics of the city that do not come up in the previous questions. This visual and verbal technique was found to be well-matched for expressing the psychological attributes and holistic imagery of the city.
The paper is divided into 4 parts. First a review of city image literature is conducted to analyse the components of the city brand image arriving at the analytical framework. The second part applies the framework to capture the image of Alexandria, adopting a qualitative approach to data gathering and discusses responses of each surveyed group. The third part compares responses of the groups to deduce variation of opinions, their sources of communication and resultant overall image of Alexandria. The paper concludes by shaping a brand image of Alexandria from the point of view of its current and potential stakeholders and reflects on the role of communication types on forming the city image.

1. City image; image-identity gap

The word image can mean many things, it can be a physical resemblance, a mental representation, or even a symbolic and metaphorical picture. City image involves actors and actions concerned with interpretations of all of these kinds of meanings and is based on individual and collective values and perceptions defining the relationship with the city. A City's image can be defined as "the sum of beliefs, ideas, and impressions that people have of a place" (Kotler et al, 1993: 131), similarly described by Hunt (1971, cited by Govers & Go, 2009:18) as "the total set of impressions of a place, or an individual's overall perception". Hence, a city's image or a place image can be seen as visually-based descriptions and opinions about a place (Vale et al, 1998) either formed because of first hand interactions with the city or through impressions communicated through others in the form of visuals, narratives and events. In general people construct mental images of a place through three processes, first through planned interventions such as planning, urban design and so on; also through the way in which they or others use specific places; and finally through various forms of place representations such as films, novels, paintings, news reports and so on.

Each City has an identity which might not be aligned with the image people form of it creating a gap or imbalance, limiting its potential development. There are positive and negative associations with the image of the city, including its people, natural and built environment. These perceptions are critical and planning bodies need develop strategies to reinforce positive images, mitigate negative images or create new ones (Di Marino, 2009). In order to create a successful city brand image and attract the targeted audience, the city must be favorably differentiated from its competition, or positively positioned, in the minds of the audience. A key component of this positioning process is the identification of the current image and the building of a distinctive and appealing perception, or brand image, of this city.

One of the main difficulties in building a brand image is the large number of targeted audiences and stakeholder groups. Another is the means by which the image of a city is communicated. People could have an image of a certain city even if they have not visited it yet nor have been exposed to any promotional literature about it. It is important to know the base brand image of the city, in order to locate its strengths and weaknesses (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003). According

to Kavaratzis (2004) the city's brand image is formed through a communication model that consists of three distinct types of communication: primary, secondary and tertiary.
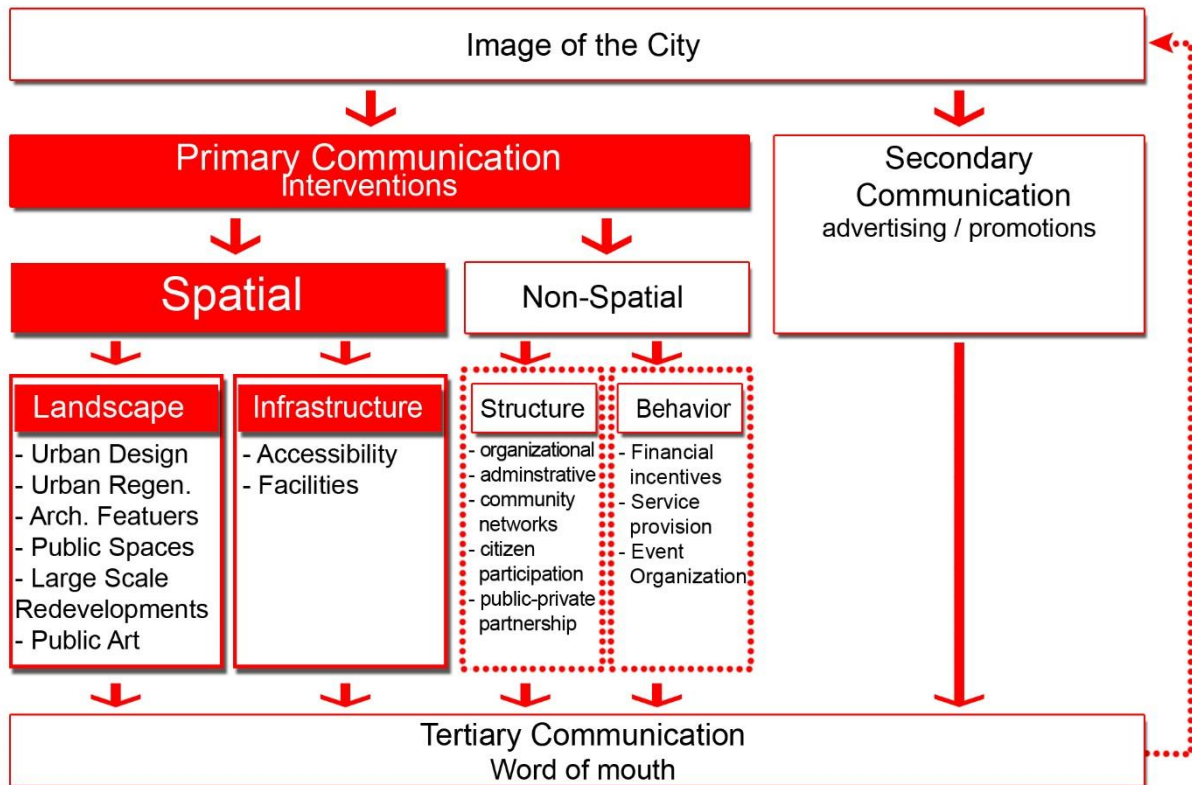

Fig 1 - City image management. Source: Kavaratzis, 2004

1- *Primary communication*: It concerns the communicative effects of actions taken by a city and in turn it is divided into spatial and non-spatial communications.

   a- Spatial communications: aiming at improving the built environment of the city, through landscape and infrastructure.

   b- Non-Spatial communications: It deals with the enhancement of the social environment, service provision and event organization through collaboration with the inhabitants.

2- *Secondary communication*: It is the promotion of the new city image in the form of advertising, PR, design, etc., the content of this communication is the most significant factor. In order to occur there must be something to communicate about; in other words promotions has to come after there is something to promote.

3- *Tertiary communication*: It is a word of mouth. The reflection of city image reinforced by the media or competitor cities, which cannot be influenced. Any image-identity gap is spread through this communication.

The increasing variety of visual possibilities as a result of new technology creates an opportunity to capture the mental imagery and experiences of a large set of audience and process their impressions in order to form a base image of the city. Similarly, they provide an opportunity to communicate the new city image.

The important role of the city brand image highlights the need to develop methodologies to comprehensively and accurately measure this concept (Baker, 2012). Therefore, the purpose of this part of the research is to review previous city brand image research with the aim of enhancing the current understanding of the concept of city brand image and of designing more appropriate techniques for its measurement.

2. City Brand Image framework

"Unless you've lived in a particular city or have a good reason to know a lot about it, the chances are that you think about it in terms of a handful of qualities or attributes, a promise, some kind of story" (Anholt 2005, cited by CEO's for Cities, 2006: 2)

When considering a city's brand image, it should be noted that there is a distinction between functional and psychological components of an image where functional characteristics are the directly observable or measurable characteristics as climate and physical characteristics whereas the psychological characteristics are more elusive as friendliness and general feeling about the city. These characteristics should be differentiated as attribute based characteristics that represents a specific quality of the city and holistic based characteristics that represents a general imagery of the city (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003). Therefore, as shown in figure (2), the measurement of the city brand image should involve methodologies to capture perceptions of four main aspects:

- Individual functional attributes such as climate, prices or roads conditions.
- Psychological attributes such as, friendliness of people and the safety of the city.
- Functional holistic imagery, such as the mental picture of the physical character of the city.

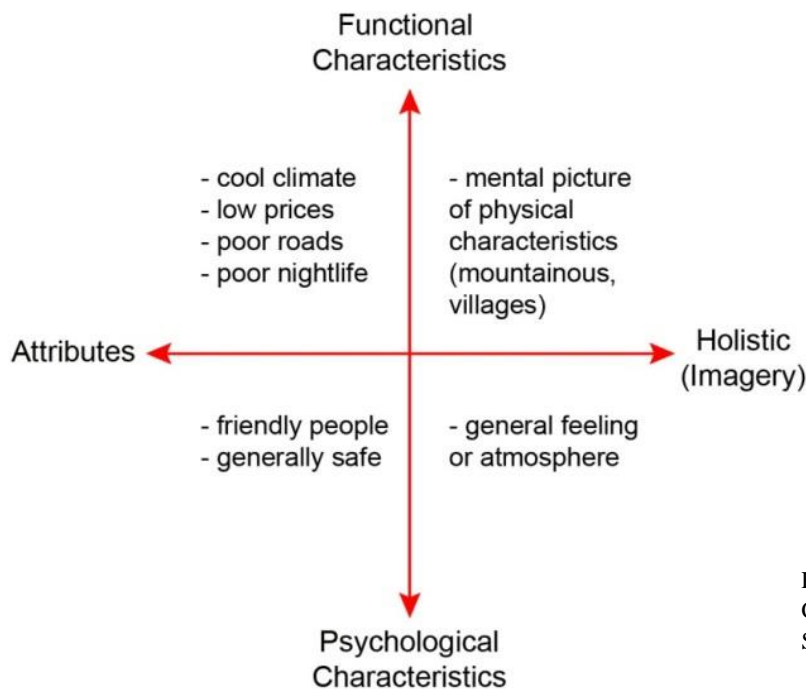- Psychological holistic imageries, such as the general atmosphere of the city.

Functional Characteristics

- cool climate
- low prices
- poor roads
- poor nightlife

- mental picture of physical characteristics (mountainous, villages)

Attributes ← → Holistic (Imagery)

- friendly people
- generally safe

- general feeling or atmosphere

Psychological Characteristics

Figure (2) City Brand Image Components.
Source: Echtner & Ritchie, 2003.

Echtner & Ritchie (2003) point to additional dimensions of city image measurement, namely common attributes and unique features as an axis that runs diagonally across. Hence, city images can be arranged on a scale ranging from traits which can be commonly used to compare all cities to those which are unique to very few destinations.

A measurement of the city image involves both 'attributes' and 'holistic impressions' (Chan & Marafa, 2013; Anholt, 2005; Echtner & Ritchie, 2003). However, there is no agreement on the best way to collect information about the city image (Laaksonen et al., 2006). Traditionally images have been examined through a quantitative structured methodology using standardized scales building on semantic differential or Likert-scale-type question structures, where each attribute is rated then a combined rating is derived allowing the ease of analysis and comparison of cities (such as the brand personality scale developed by Aaker, 1997). Despite its pros, it forces respondents to think about the city only in terms of the specified attributes and scales failing to capture holistic impressions and unique characteristics.

There are also interpretative approaches available using unstructured methodologies (Laaksonen et al., 2006; Echtner & Ritchie, 2003). These can be the answer in situations where traditional surveys are not considered to be revealing and discriminating enough (Romaniuk, 2005). Free form descriptions by respondents are used to measure the image where data is gathered from a sample of responses and various sorting techniques are then used to determine the image dimensions.

Most central to the discussion on measuring the city image is whether to use verbal or visual forms of inquiry. As stated by Eisner (2008: 5) knowledge or understanding is not always reducible to language, rather knowledge comes in different forms and the forms of its creation differ. Moreover, Zaltman (1996: 13) maintains that thoughts occur as images, and social meanings are mostly exchanged in non-verbal ways. Hence, visual inquiry can counter the hegemonic and linear thinking often associated with traditional research (Butler-Kisber, 2008), stimulate thinking, formulate ideas, articulate relationships and help represent them to others (Butler-Kisber & Poldma, 2010; Laaksonen et al., 2006). Metaphors can be useful in easing the approach to the study object, allowing the expression of thoughts and enabling respondents to represent one thing in terms of another (Davies and Chun, 2003; Goatly, 1997; Zaltman, 1996). In this research, visual and metaphorical research methods have been employed in order to capture the different sub-images formed by various respondents aiming to gather these sub-images together to form the umbrella image of the city of Alexandria maintaining respondent's associated meanings and impressions of the city.

City image measurement planning-led researches are limited in the literature. Tourism-led researches followed a structured methodology, focusing on the common attributes and neglecting the holistic impressions and social thoughts and meanings. Chan and Marafa's review of 111 papers in three leading periodicals of place branding have found that although qualitative methods dominate 70% of all studies investigated, when it came to 'brand image', due to its complexity, 75% used quantitative methods. As a result, psychological and functional holistic imagery was not captured in these researches, and implied that future studies should bring more attention to defining these areas of brand image research.

In researching the image of Montana (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003) the researchers used open-ended questions to allow respondents to describe, in their own words, the mental images of the state. By combining the most common descriptions, a mental picture, or stereotypical

holistic impression was deduced. As for the French Riviera (Di Marino, 2009) 150 tourists were surveyed using open-ended (for holistic components) and closed-ended questions (for common attributes). Concerning the latter, a standardized scale was used to measure the common attributes which were selected via a literature review and data collected from several travel agencies. As a result a list of 18 attributes were selected then graded from 1 to 5 by respondents. In piloting the image of Lagos in Portugal (Agapito et al., 2010) 50 tourists and 50 residents were surveyed using open ended questionnaires. In order to construct the functional-psychological axis, the answers were selected considering the agreement of at least 25% of respondents from either group which was then measured on a scale giving each attribute a percentage. As for Vasaa, Finland (Laaksonen et al, 2006) an unstructured methodology employing visual and metaphorical methods was used on 20 focus discussion groups (4-7 people), of which 15 were local and 5 were from outside the city.100 pictures were given to each respondent to create a meaningful collage encouraged by some adjectives to choose from. There was not much variation among groups in the choices of the chosen pictures, but the difference was in the associated meanings and perceptions clarified in the written words pinned or the discussion made about them.

The four examples show that all image components mentioned in figure (2) are difficult to be captured using any structured method as the semantic differential scale or Likert-scale which can be misleading because it does not always tell whether an evaluation is positive or negative, or even relevant to the respondent. Therefore, it can be said that the unstructured methodology is a better approach to capture all components of the brand image even the common attributes. Another method that proved its success is applying a structured methodology for the attribute based components only but after piloting an unstructured methodology to list these attributes.

In other words, the qualitative methodology in city image research provides much richer information and a more holistic perception of the brand. As Ivanov et al (2010: 343) state, "An image is about respondents' perception. Self-elicitation of destination attributes (asking respondents about their opinion of a destination without providing them a list of attributes in advance) seems to be the most appropriate procedure for determining a more accurate image of a destination."

3. City image of Alexandria

Alexandria is considered Egypt's second largest city in terms of population, with over 4.5 million residents, on a total area of 2680 square kilometers. Its special geographic location on the Mediterranean Sea made Alexandria the second development pole in Egypt of wide economic diversity. It also attracts over 1.5 million tourists annually, most from neighboring cities, which made Alexandria known as The Pearl of the Mediterranean (http://www.alexandriaegypt.com).

Based on the previous section, the research adopts a qualitative unstructured methodology in identifying the current city brand image of Alexandria, adopting both verbal and visual methods through interviews and questionnaires to capture holistic and attribute characteristics of the city brand image. Four groups were surveyed covering current and potential stakeholders of the city, namely: residents, national visitors, foreign tourists, people who have never been. The first two groups were distributed a questionnaire while the latter two groups were identified and interviewed over social media channels using the questionnaire for structure. Open-ended questions and visual and metaphorical methods formed the base of the methodology used in this research. The questionnaire was divided to five modules; first general information of respondent; second relation of respondent to the city; third questions on the image, acquiring data on holistic and unique features; fourth the visual part where 20 pictures of other cities were used and respondents were asked to choose from these pictures whatever they found relevant to Alexandria either in a positive or a negative way, and then they were asked to write down adjectives related to each chosen picture. Prompt adjectives were provided, but respondents were allowed to use their own words. The final fifth module allowed respondents to list any other opinion or recommendation they might have of the city.

Considering this is a pilot study, Nieswiadomy (2002, cited by Hertzog, M. 2007) recommend obtaining approximately 10 participants or 10% of the final study size, the final decision for the pilot study sample size is to be guided by cost and time constraints as well as by size and variability of the population. residents were identified in stratas of age groups (100 respondents - 26% of full sample size), visitors randomly sampled based on the main criteria that they are visiting from any other city in Egypt (50 respondents – 13% of full sample size), foreign tourists and those who have never been were identified through convenience sampling (10 each).

Each group, questionnaire analysis resulted in identifying functional attributes, psychological attributes, functional holistic imagery, psychological holistic imagery, unique factor and identity

of the city. With the help of the visual section of the questionnaire, respondents pointed out the attributes that represents the city and used some adjectives to describe them. These adjectives are found to be either positive or negative, based on that, results are analyzed through frequency count of positive and negative attributes. The frequency count does not represent the number of respondents, it represents the number of times the attribute was mentioned throughout the whole questionnaires. For the sake of brevity, analysis and comparison of the results will be conducted rather than go through the response for each of the six listed components for each group. The top attributes or adjectives through all respondent groups are selected and compared with each other, in order to evaluate and analyze the different points of view of respondents and detect any gaps between expectations and experiences for tourists and visitors.

Functional Attributes:
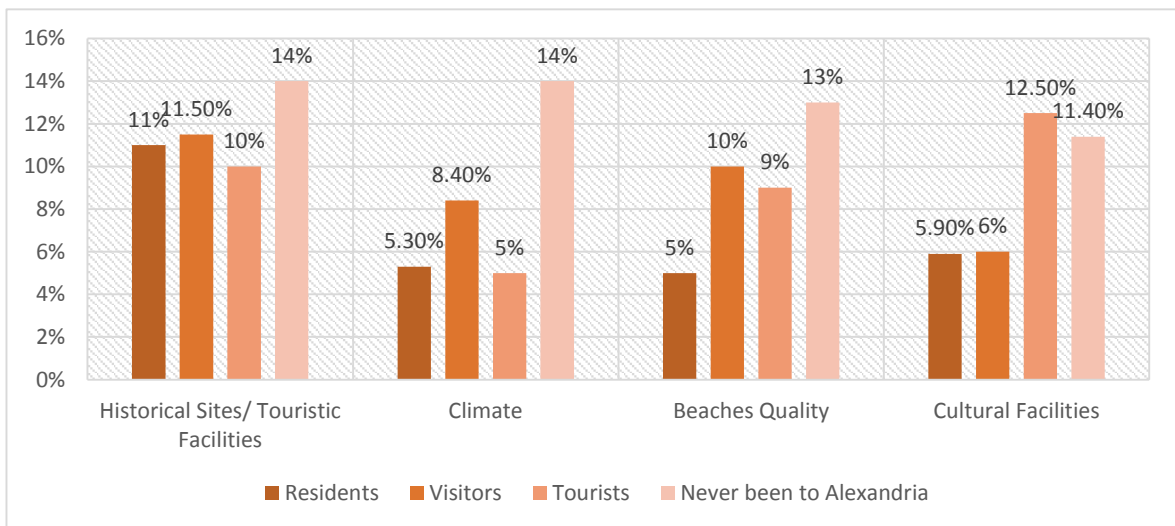
Figure (3) Top positive Functional Attributes across all respondents' groups.

Figure (3) represents the top four positive functional attributes across all four respondent groups. These attributes are: historical sites/ touristic facilities, climate, quality beaches and cultural facilities. Findings from this figure are:

- Affiliation with historical sites and touristic facilities over all groups as they almost scored the same percentage.
- A huge drop between climate expectations from potential tourists 14% to actual experience of tourists 5% this is related to the season and month of visit. Climate is expected to be warm and sunny all year long, cold and rainy winter is not expected by visitors in pre-visits.

- Beaches are found acceptable for all groups except for residents, where they find it crowded, not enough and has no privacy.
- Cultural facilities are found balanced between residents of Alexandria and visitors from Egypt, and also balanced between expectations of people who have never been to Alexandria before and tourists. This could refer to the different level of interest in cultural facilities between Egyptians and non-Egyptians, and the strong reputation of the Library of Alexandria all around the world.
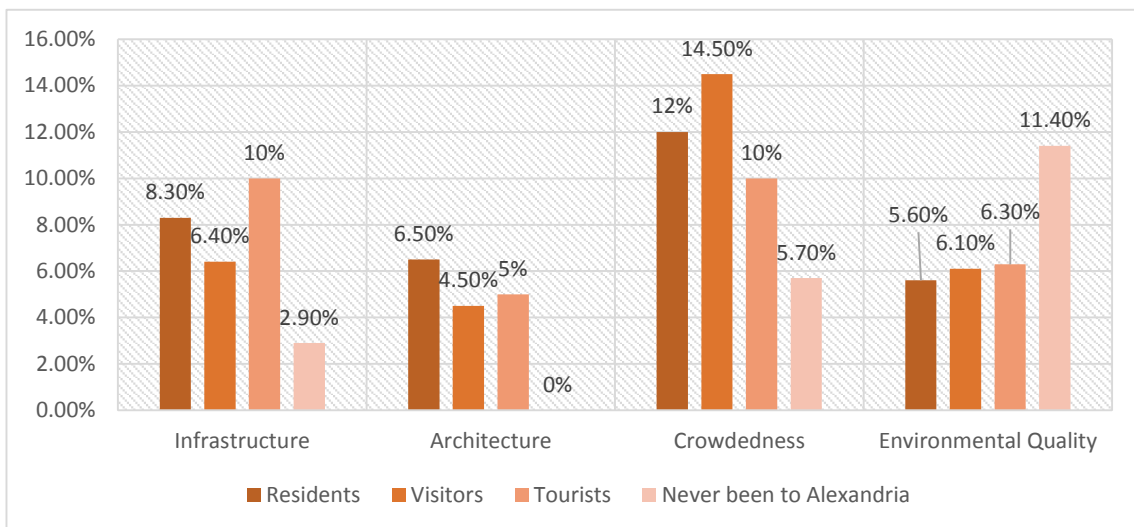
Figure (4) Top negative Functional Attributes across all respondents' groups.

The top four negative attributes across all groups (deteriorated infrastructure, poor architecture, crowdedness and degraded environmental quality) are selected and represented in figure (4), it is found that:

- All three groups that interacted with the city are displeased with the infrastructure of the city, on the other hand, people do not expect to find the infrastructure deteriorated before visiting.
- "Poor modern architecture" as described by respondents is also an opinion of experience and not expectation.
- Like architecture, the city is found over crowded by all groups involved with the city and is the highest negative attribute in all of them, but on the other hand this image of crowdedness is not expected before visiting the city.
- Environmental quality is actually the opposite of the previous attributes, the city is expected to be highly polluted scoring the highest count in the negative attributes for potential tourists, while for the other three groups it scored a much lower count.

Psychological Attributes:

The main psychological attributes found in all groups are vitality and safety, as demonstrated in figure (5), the main findings of these attributes are:

- The city is described as vital, energetic and vibrant in a similar percentage by all groups except for residents, who also think that it is vital but not in the same way. Residents need the city to be more lively and exciting.
- When it comes to safety, the gap between the national image of the city and the international one is clear. No respondents from tourists and potential tourists groups perceive Alexandria as a safe place, nevertheless, they perceive it as highly dangerous.
- On the other hand, visitors find the city more safe than dangerous. Residents opinion on the safety of the city is divided between safe 6% and dangerous 14%
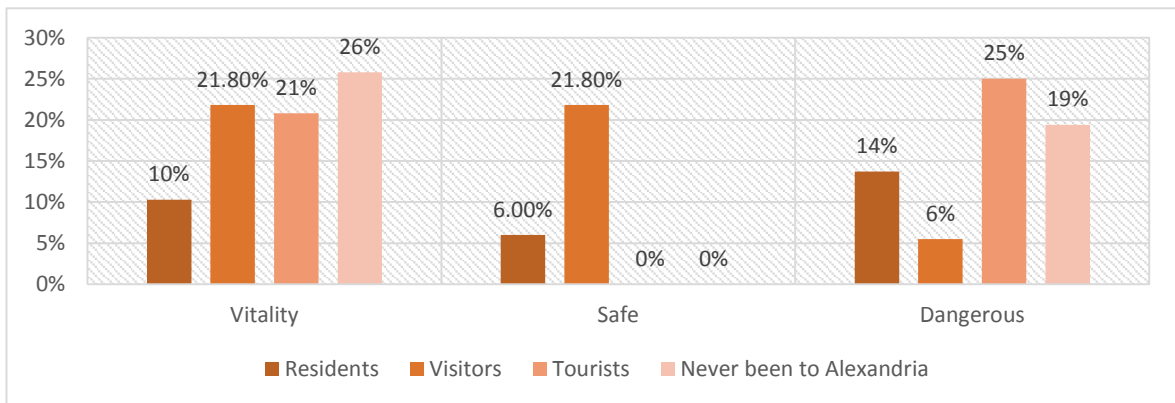
Figure (5) Top Psychological Attributes across all respondents' groups.

Functional Holistic Imagery
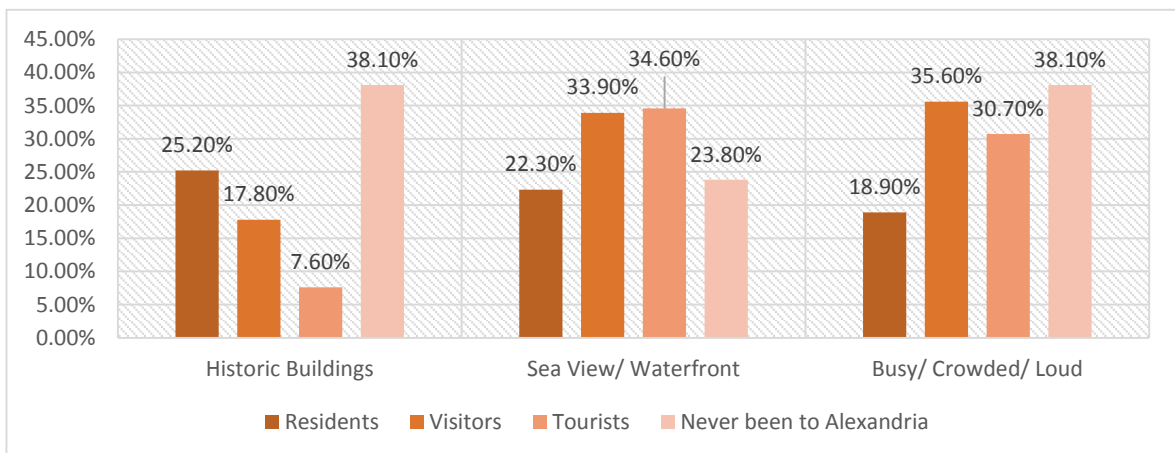
Figure (6) Top Functional Holistic Imagery across all respondents' groups.

The common functional holistic imageries found in all groups are: historical buildings, sea view/ waterfront and the image of a crowded busy city as shown in figure (6), the main findings of these imageries are:

- A huge gap between expectations before visiting the city and after, tourists commented on not finding fixed tours or at least signage for the important historical buildings in Alexandria.

- The Mediterranean Sea and the waterfront of Alexandria without a doubt shapes one of the most functional holistic images of the city in all four groups.

- Likewise, an image of crowdedness, loudness and chaos is perceived in a large percentage of respondents, only residents found other images more holistic to represent their city.

Psychological Holistic Imagery
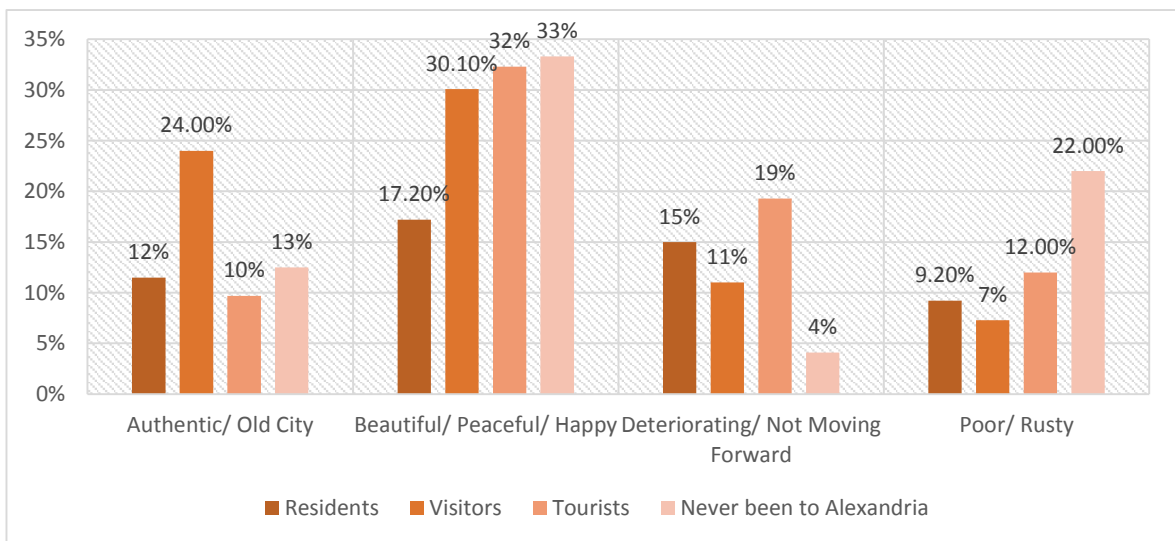
Figure (7) Top Psychological Holistic Imagery across all respondents' groups.

Top psychological holistic imageries found in the results, as shown in figure (7), includes two positive images: authentic/old city and beautiful/ peaceful/ happy city. It also includes two negative images: deteriorating and poor city. The main findings of these images are:

- Finding or expecting the city to be authentic is almost equal for all groups, only visitors from other cities in Egypt find it even more authentic than residents.

- It is very important to point out that the highest percentage of psychological holistic imageries among all groups is the image of a happy, peaceful, beautiful and cheerful city even after pointing out all the negative attributes stated in the results.
- The city is regarded as a deteriorating city by all groups involved physically with the city, respondents who have never been to Alexandria before do not expect it to be that way, which also creates a gap between expectations and actual experience.
- On the contrary, the city is expected to be poor and rusty but the experience shown through the percentage of count for other groups show the opposite.

Unique Factor
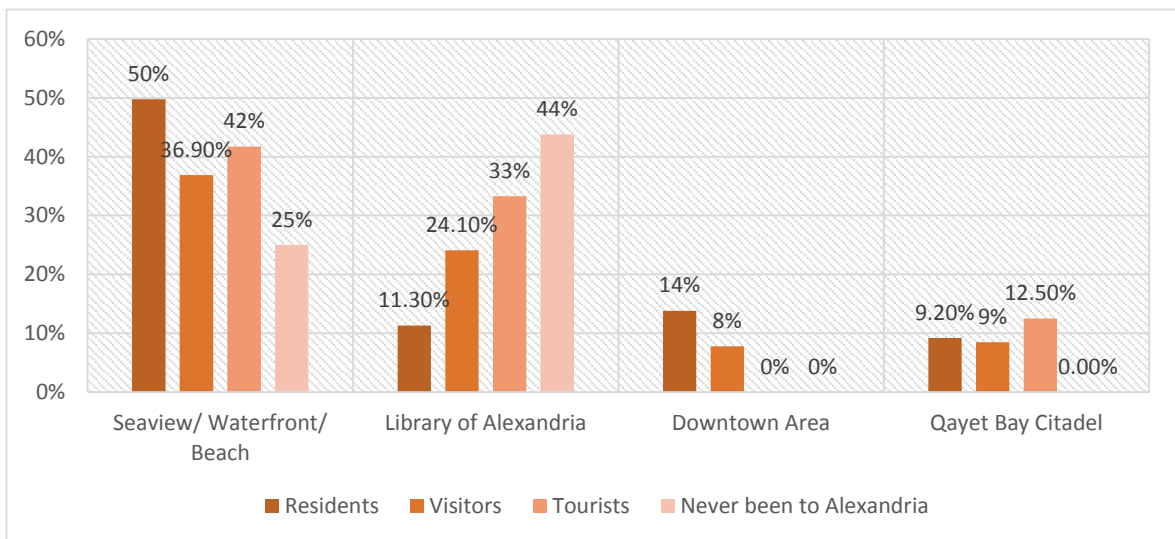
Figure (8) Top Unique Factors across all respondents' groups.

Figure (8) represents the top four unique factors by all groups, these factors are: waterfront and beaches, library of Alexandria, downtown area and Qayet Bay citadel. The main findings of these unique factors are:

- The Mediterranean Sea and the beaches of Alexandria are considered as the highest scoring unique factor through most of the respondents. Although a lot of respondents mentioned it, they also mentioned that this factor is not sufficiently made use of as they complained from the quality of the beaches before.
- The library of Alexandra has a great reputation worldwide, it is the reason why some respondents know Alexandria in the first place, but as shown in the figure, the percentage decreases with the increase of interaction with the city, making it the

highest unique factor for people who have not visited Alexandria before and one of the least for residents.

- Downtown area and Qayet Bay citadel percentages approves with what is found in the functional holistic imagery, tourists do not know a lot about our heritage and historical buildings and they cannot find any significance for it in the city's experience. The percentage increases with the visitors and residents as it depends on personal knowledge of the city.

Identity
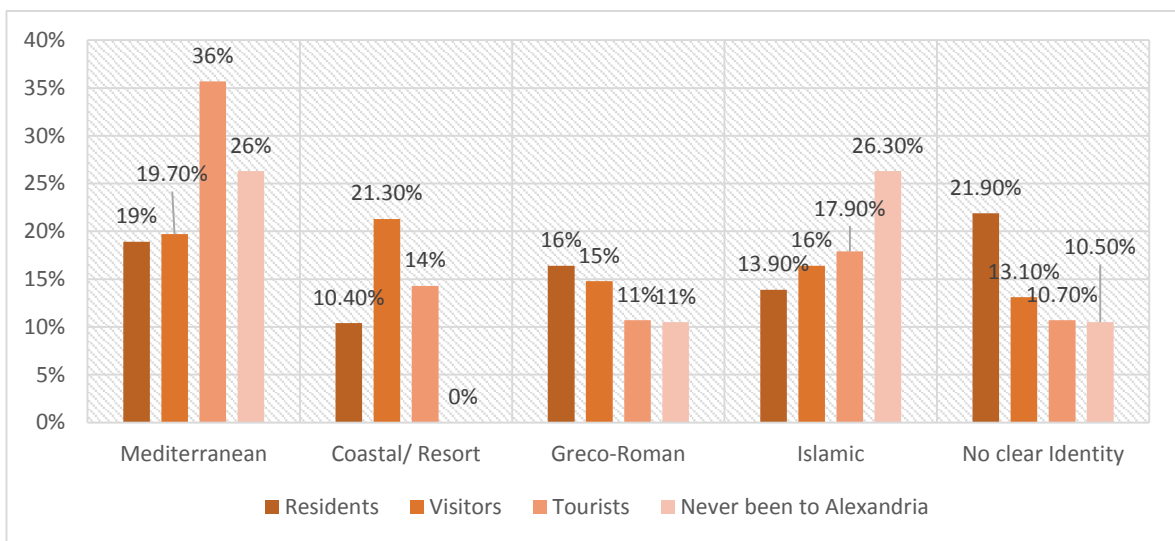
Figure (9) Top Identities across all respondents' groups.

It cannot be claimed that Alexandria has a single clear identity for any respondent group. However, from figure (9) it is found that:

- The highest count in all groups is the Mediterranean identity of Alexandria, its location shapes a lot of its identity as well as its unique factor.
- Other respondents considered the city as a coastal or resort city only without referring to it being a Mediterranean city, but that agreed also with that the sea defines the nature of the city.
- Other identities as Greco-Roman and Islamic are found in the respondents' answers with different percentages.
- A lot of respondents, especially residents stated that the city has no clear identity, the answers are either because they find it with multiple identities and could not define only one, or because they find the city lost its identity it had years ago.

City Brand Image Components	Alexandria's Brand Image						Conclusion
	Positive			Negative			
Functional Attributes	Greco-Roman historical sites.	Byzantine architecture and history.	Islamic culture and architecture.	Deteriorated streets and infrastructure.	Randomness and lack of ethics in development.	Poor architecture in new buildings.	The Greek and Roman sites and buildings shape the historical image. The Byzantine, Islamic, European and Modern eras create a diverse cultural background. The good climate and beaches also produce positive functional attributes. The city is perceived in terms of negative functional attributes as a city with deteriorating infrastructure, poor and random modern architecture, crowded and has a deteriorated environment.
	European style in downtown area.	Modern culture and architecture.	Relatively good beaches and great weather.	Crowdedness not only in rush hours.	Unclean city.	Lack of attention to the environmental quality.	
Psychological Attributes	Energetic city that never sleeps.	Peaceful, relaxing and inviting.	Connected and cozy.	Unsafe at times.	With the current infrast. it becomes dangerous.	Not user-friendly as it lacks sufficient streetscape	The positive psychological attributes of vitality, coziness and relaxation are interrupted by the feeling of unsafety and finding the city not user-friendly and hard to navigate through.
Functional Holistic Imagery	The renovated historical buildings.	The waterfront skyline and activities.	The Corniche road.	The demolishing of the historical buildings	A crowded and loud city.	The illegal new buildings rising almost everywhere.	The functional holistic image is generated from historical buildings either through their re-use or through neglecting and demolishing them. Other images as the waterfront, crowdedness and illegal new structures also generates it.
Psychological Holistic Imagery	The authentic city represented in downtown	Old city streets and crafts.	Revolution plazas and freedom.	Deteriorating our heritage.	Poor and rusty city.	Chaotic attitude of residents.	On a psychological holistic level, the city is perceived as an authentic, old and beautiful city. The revolution and the demonstration plazas also affect the image positively. On the other hand it is perceived as poor, deteriorating and chaotic.
Unique Factor	The waterfront in general with its views, beaches and activities.		The library of Alexandria's cultural impact on the city.	The historical downtown area with its culture, architecture and history.		Qayet Bay Citadel.	The waterfront is considered as the main unique factor that needs to be more efficiently used. The library of Alexandria, Qayet Bay Citadel and the historical downtown area are also other unique factors that need to be developed.
Identity	The long shore of Alexandria reflects the Mediterranean identity of the city.		A summer resort for many visitors.	The ancient Greek and Roman history reflects on its identity.		Islamic identity.	The city is generally perceived as a Mediterranean or coastal city. Other identities as Greco-Roman, Islamic or a combination of all of these is also perceived for it.

In the study respondents were allowed to express their perceived image through metaphorical picture selection and free text form. From the responses, it was clear that most of the respondents and interviewees knew Alexandria and its famous history and attractions. Residents, visitors and tourists have a strong image of the city in their mind and a very obvious perception, sometimes positive and other times negative. Interviewees who have not been to Alexandria before also have expectations about the city based mainly on general knowledge about the location and history of the city. In general, the positive shared images has a greater influence over the people's perception than the negative ones.

4. Conclusion

The research set out to identify the current brand image of Alexandria as the initial step in reinventing the city. In general, Alexandria is perceived as a city of a *Mediterranean coastal identity*, it is well known in the mind of people as a touristic city with a lot of significant *historical sites and cultural facilities*. As concluded in figure (10), on a functional level, its beaches, good climate mostly all the year and being well planned create the psychological feeling of coziness, energy, relaxation and feeling invited. On the other hand, the city is perceived as deteriorating over time that created an image of rustiness, poverty and unsafety. On a functional level, the city is found crowded, has a deteriorated environment and infrastructure. The modern structures are also found poor in terms of architecture.

The Uniqueness of the city arises from the imaginative and creative ways of combining different themes uniquely together. For example, the great influence of the Library of Alexandria on the image of the city results from combining the history of the ancient Library of Alexandria, with the ancient and modern culture and architecture of Alexandria, with the location that reflects the Mediterranean theme of the city. More creative interventions combining the three main themes concluded should be developed, as a single architectural icon on its own cannot represent a reinvention of a city, but only a catalyst for it.

In terms of communication, it was clear from the gap in responses that secondary and tertiary methods of communication can portray a different picture to reality. Reliance on primary spatial and non-spatial communication is insufficient, secondary communication through mainstream media and social media can be very influential and can create a gap between reality and

perception. In terms of methods of inquiry, the visual and verbal qualitative techniques used in the research are found to be well-matched for expressing specially the psychological attributes and imagery of the city. Pictures bring expressions closer to the respondent's mind, they also intrigue the perception of functional attributes of the city. The qualitative analysis of the study is challenging but proved to be extremely informative. The visual material in the research could not have been analyzed without the verbal explanation from the respondents. Some results are found confusing, as the same attribute is described using contradictory adjectives as cheerful and depressing or safe and dangerous, but through using a frequency count technique both adjectives are observed and analyzed. The results of the study shows that the components of the city's image could not be separated and they affect the evaluation of each other, hence evaluating a single component only, could create bias in the collected data.

Apparently, the current image of Alexandria may be sufficient for current users, but it is not sufficient to attract new users, investors or visitors. Natural and man-made resources available in Alexandria, such as the three themes stated before, can provide the city with a comparative benefit with other cities that possess the same resources, while the ability of the city to utilize, intervene and mobilize these resources over the long term defines the competitive advantage. Real changes need to be made in the built environment, accessibility, facilities and cultural activities. In other words, good beaches and a warm climate are no longer good enough on their own to give a city a competitive advantage over another, the city's image should have an added value and to overcome any negative perceptions both of residents and visitors. Residents and visitors often ended their responses by stating that the city is a good place to live in and referred to it as 'home' or 'second home', despite its negative attributes. Therefore, it is suggested that 'better quality of life' can be the combining and leading vision for Alexandria. A City image should be derived from reality, building on attributes and holistic imagery as well as unique factors and perceived identity. The focus on any of these components at the exclusion of any other component, results in an incomplete brand image for the city.

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