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Evaluating Luxor Brand Visual Identity from Officials and Stakeholders Point of View

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Abstract

A visual identity is one of the most concrete means to communicate a brand, translating its positioning, personality, and global flux via visual element. A brand is a symbolic instrument of an identity, its relationships, conveying specific promises about products, services, or entities. This study aims to evaluates brand visual identity from tourism officials and Stakeholders Point of View. In Specifically, it tries to determine to what extend the design of Luxor brand visual identity is suitable to Luxor civilization. Additionally, the study aims to assess the marketing efforts of governmental authorities to promote the elements of Luxor's visual identity to be recognized by tourists. To achieve the aim of the study a qualitative method was used. Ten interviews were conducted with a sample of hoteliers, travel agency, restaurant manager, general manager of Karnak Antiquities in the Ministry of Tourism who responsible for implementing the visual identity project in Luxor and the general manager of Tourism Administration in Luxor Governorate. Results showed that the designing of the elements of the visual identity of Luxor represent the culture and the history of the city. Moreover, the marketing activities aren't sufficient for tourists to recognize about Luxor's visual identity.

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1. Introduction

Nowadays, images, pictures, and screens are conceptions that characterize global culture. The man of the 21st-century lives in a world where graphic messages, drawings, photos, films, and 3D animations reveal content that is meaningful to both the sender and the recipient. Traditional verbal communication has been displaced by image-dominated communication. Every person produces mental images because of a two-way process involving the social environment and the observer. Today's visual message applies to any person, organization, product, and place. Cities, regions, and countries employ a range of techniques to connect with the environment, including visuals that carry messages and information (Adamus-Matuszyńska & Dzik, 2020).

Visual identity is one of the most essential measures that countries must do to promote their cultural aspects and values. Designing a suitable logo, which is also the core of visual identity studies, is the primary means of establishing a country's identity and image. Each country has a promotional tourist logo that expresses its visual image, in addition to symbols such as a flag and a slogan (Zeybek & Ünlü, 2016).

Most of the destinations ignore the components of Visual identity and concentrate only on logo design and development. So, the problem of the current study appeared from the fact that although the project of visual identity of Luxor is created in early 2018th, it is still not sufficiently recognizable among tourists.

Therefore, this study is important as it aims to evaluate the elements of Luxor's visual identity and the different marketing efforts directed to domestic and international tourists for promoting Luxor Visual identity.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Branding

Branding has become more pervasive in our current everyday lives than it has ever been. Countries, schools, organizations, events, celebrities, and others are now employing these strategies to differentiate themselves, stand out, compete for attention, and communicate with their audiences. However, branding is more than just producing graphics to visually represent the institution. Successful brand identity encompasses the appearance, feel, and everything in between, as well as the organization's reputation, total customer experience, and personality (Smatanová, 2019).

2.2. Brand Visual Identity

Ochkovskaya and Gerasimenko (2018, p.115) illustrated that the identity of a city forms over a long time. Oxford dictionary defines identity as "the characteristics determining who or what a person or thing is. A city's identity absorbs a lot of different aspects including geographical characteristics, culture, architectural character, tradition, customs, and lifestyle".

The visual brand identity design can be explained as "the graphic components that all together provide a system for identifying and representing a brand. The basic elements of a brand's visual identity are name, logotype, slogan, color combination, and typography" as follows (Miridjanian & Ballias, 2011, p.8):

1- The Name

The name of the country is the brand name itself. Some countries are lucky and happy with their names (Papp-Váry, 2010). The name of the tourist destination is as important as the name of the company selling consumer products, the name also represents a brand of a tourist destination. The name is a verbally vocal and typographic symbol which have acoustic, visual, and associative features. The name identifies and individualizes the destination at the market and in the public. It can be a very effective communication tool - name can be seen, and its meaning can be stored and activated in a short time (Prebensen, 2007).

2- The Logo

Logo is central and most identified visual element that helps customers discover, remember the brand, and potentially share it forward. The logo can be in a form of a symbol or a logotype. In some cases, it can be a combination of the two (Nguyen, 2017).

Parfeeva (2016) explained that Logos should be more flexible and diverse, able to perform various functions. The name and the logo are the first things customers see. A logo identifies and differentiates a product or company from others. A trademark acts as a protection, a legally registered name and logo. However, "the trademark can never tell the whole story, it conveys one or two aspects of business. The identity should be supported by a visual language and a vocabulary".

As visual symbols, logos are supposed to be recognized more quickly than words. Designing easily recognizable logos is critical because they should survive fast-exposure environments; people are generally exposed to logos only for brief periods of time. Accordingly, that logo recognition happens in two levels: first, audiences should recognize the logo correctly, then they should be able to recall and associate the logo with its referent (Rodriguez et al., 2013).

3- The Slogan

A slogan is an integral part of destination advertising, and its function is to communicate the destination brand identity to the reader. creating a holistic destination brand can prove to be difficult. This is also apparent in the creation of destination slogans, as capsulizing the entire brand identity into a single phrase to represent the area can be a challenging task. However, an excellent, well thought-out slogan is a good representation of the desired destination brand and image as a whole (Häkkinen, 2016).

However, it is not easy to define what makes a good slogan (Papp-Vary, 2017). summarized its aspects as follows:

- It 'grabs' positioning
- It has a clear message and communicates the 'story' of the product
- It is attractive and includes 'consumer and customer' advantage
- It carries a positive connotation (or at least it is not negative)
- It is inspiring: it urges us to buy the product, or get more information about it
- It is relatively short (not longer than 5 words)
- It differentiates: it is unique, original, and different from competitors
- It can be used and sustained on a long term, you do not have to replace it
- It is easy to memorize and repeat
- It harmonizes with the logo
- It is catchy and witty
- Clients and colleagues like it.

4- The Colors

Color is a coded system. As a medium of communication and an integral element of brand and marketing communications that induces emotions and moods and affects consumers' perceptions and behavior, color helps brands position or differentiate themselves from competitors (Jin et al., 2019).

Colors help to create associations towards brand, they reflect mood and feelings and affect overall perception of a brand. they influence our emotions and help us distinguish between competing brands. For example, there is no doubt that red color associates with Coca-Cola brand or blue color reminds us about NIVEA (Filkovskaia, 2017).

According to Dang (2018), in a study named "Impact of color on marketing" researchers found that approximately 62 to 90 percent of snap judgements made about products are based on colors alone. Therefore, cautious use of colors can not only differentiate brands from competitors, but also influence moods, feelings, and attitudes of customers, whether positively or negatively. In design, choosing a color scheme for a brand identity requires a deep understanding of color theory, the meaning of color, and an ability to implement it effectively and consistently over a broad range of media.

5- The Typography

Typography is the process of arranging letters, words, and text for almost any context you can imagine it is everywhere". If the typography matches with the target market and is fully part of the brand visual identity, it represents a "valuable visual equity" (Miridjanian & Ballias, 2011).

According to Sarmento and Quelhas-Brito (2021), Typography is the means by which a written idea is given a visual form. Typography is one of the elements that has the

most influence on the character and emotional quality of a design. Typography is an art and therefore requires sensitivity on the part of the creator. It is also physical in the sense that it requires manual composition. Typography stems from handwriting and integrates attributes such as structure, aesthetic-formal qualities as well as proportions, contrast, and rhythm.

2.3. Luxor's Visual Identity

Luxor is the city of culture heritage and scientifically. It is well known around the world because of its several unique monuments (Pharaonic) which attract millions of visitors. Several years ago Egypt intended to create brand visual identity for Luxor, in 2018 a group of German university in Cairo started designing this identity to make strong statement message of Luxor, welcoming all age groups and empowering the warm impression as well as the culture of Luxor (Wahbey et al., 2018).

The basic elements of Luxor brand visual identity will be explained in the following:

1- <u>Luxor Logo Signature</u>

The logo signature is designed representing key aspects from the govern ate of Luxor, inspired from the ancient Egyptian beliefs and iconic symbols. They were chosen as a mean of global understanding of the history but most importantly showing pride in what Luxor beholds as a city of Arts and Culture (Wahbey et al., 2018). As shown in figure 1



Figure 1: The logo of Luxor

2- The Process of Creating the Logo of Luxor

The letter 'L' is a 90-degree right angle, forming most of Luxor's architecture. The 'U' is inspired from the temple's pass way, also a metaphorical representation of the Pharaonic beliefs of the afterlife and the beyond, that all doors lead to greatness. Moving to the third letter which is the 'X', it represents the city's location of the east and west banks meeting at the Nile front. The letter 'o' is a mix of two important factors in Luxor, which are the sun and Nile: the source of life. The sun representing the universe as Luxor was the center of all beginnings, and the Nile incorporated to create a feel 0of dynamism and movement. Last but not lease, the letter 'R' which is a representation of the Eye of Horus, reflecting the ancient Egyptian natural instinct and vision (Wahbey et al., 2018).

3- The Slogan of Luxor

Wahbey et al. (2018) illustrated the slogan of Luxor which is "the beyond" The concept is inspired from ideology and belief of the ancient Egyptians that nothing in their world was static. Everything was in constant motion, even in death. They don't end there, there is the afterlife which they prepare for this concept was adopted and made it the focus of the brand. There is another slogan for Luxor which is "beyond architecture".

Two slogans have been used for Luxor, but it is necessary to focus on one slogan only, so that the tourists know it well and do not get distracted. Especially, the implementation of the visual identity project was recently launched and the change in the slogan must take place at long intervals.

4- Color palette in Luxor's logo

The dynamic and lively color scheme inspired by their original pigments found in some of the surviving temples, the colorful identity aims to focus on the richness of the heritage and vitality of the people of Luxor today. The colors which are used in Luxor's' logo are blue in reference to the color of the sky, yellow in reference to the color of the sun and the color of the walls of temples and museums, as for the red color, a symbol of power and anger, inspired by the colors of the inscriptions on the walls of Luxor temples, and Turquoise (German University in Cairo, 2021).

5- Typography of Luxor's' Brand Visual Identity

Wahbey et al. (2018) showed that Luxor Logo's primary typefaces are PT and Lato. The city tagline typeface is used in "Beyond History" which is accompanying the logo is "Ara Es Nawar". The main Arabic typeface used is 'Adobe Arabic'. These fonts with Multiple levels of typographic hierarchy are modern, flexible, and easy to read.

3. Methodology

This study aims to evaluate brand visual identity from tourism officials and Stakeholders Point of View. Specifically, it tries to determine to what extend the design of Luxor brand visual identity is suitable to Luxor civilization. Additionally, the study aims to assess the marketing efforts of governmental authorities to promote the elements of Luxor's visual identity to be recognized by tourists. In addition, it evaluates the efficiency of spreading it in tourist sites, hotels, restaurants, travel agencies, at main streets, and on governmental buildings. To achieve the aim of the study a qualitative method which depended on interviews was used.

3.1. Population and sampling technique

The target population of this study is the officials in the governmental authorities who responsible for implementing the visual identity project in Luxor Governorate. Moreover, interviews were conducted with the stakeholders of tourism industry in

Luxor governorate as hotels, travel agencies, etc. A judgmental/purposive sample was used to select the sample of the study.

3.2. The Research Instrument

The study used an interview as a qualitative tool. This interview targets the officials in governmental authorities and stakeholders in Luxor governorate to evaluate the overall situation of visual identity project in Luxor. The interview discussed if the design of Luxor visual identity elements is suitable to Luxor civilization. Additionally, it aims to assess the marketing efforts of governmental authorities to promote the elements of Luxor's visual identity to be recognized by tourists. In addition, it evaluates the efficiency of spreading it in tourist sites, hotels, restaurants, travel agencies, at main streets, and on governmental buildings. Finally, interviewees were asked to give any suggestions to enhance the effect of Luxor's visual identity project.

Ten interviews were conducted with two tourism officials in governmental authorities concerned with implementing the visual identity project in Luxor Governorate. Moreover, interviews were conducted with one travel agency manager in Luxor, one tour operator and two tour guides. In addition, interviews were directed to two managers of two hotels, as well as two managers of two restaurants.

Moreover, interviews were conducted with general manager of Karnak Antiquities in the Ministry of Tourism who responsible for implementing the visual identity project in Luxor and the general manager of Tourism Administration in Luxor Governorate. The interview included six open- ended inquiries which were answered by interviewees. Five interviews were conducted face- to- face and the other five interviews were conducted by telephone. The interviews were conducted from November 2021 to December 2021.

3.3. Research Questions

- 1- Is the design of the elements of visual identity suitable for Luxor civilization?
- 2- What are the marketing efforts from the governmental authorities to promoting the visual identity of Luxor?
- 3- Are the existing marketing tools for promoting visual identity sufficient for tourists to know about this project?

4. Results of the Interviews with the Officials and Stockholders

The qualitative data from interviews were analyzed. Qualitative analysis means analyzing the interviews to identify the main themes that emerge from the answers given by the respondents.

A: general manager of Karnak Antiquities and General Supervisor of Rams Road and responsible for implementing the visual identity project in Luxor.

B: refers to the general manager of Tourism Administration in Luxor Governorate and responsible for implementing the visual identity project in Luxor.

C: refers to director of a travel agency in Luxor.

D: refers to a tour operator.

E & F: refers to two Tour guide.

G & H: refers to two managers of tourist hotel.

I & J: refers to two managers of tourist restaurant.

Inquiries of the interview and interviewees responses are presented in the following:

- 1. Do you think that the design of Luxor's Visual identity is suitable and appropriate to give the intended impression of Luxor culture's historical and natural background, and why?
- A, B, C & D "Yes, because Luxor is a distinguished city with a special nature and deserves its own identity because of what is characterized by the presence of beautiful landscapes, distinctive monuments and a clear atmosphere throughout the year".
- E, F, G & I "Yes, as the designing of the elements of the visual identity of Luxor represent the culture and the history of the city".
- H & J added, "Yes, because visual identity will help to understand and remember Luxor culture's historical and natural background".
- 2. How can you evaluate the efficiency of spreading Luxor Visual identity in tourist sites, hotels, restaurants, travel agencies, and main streets, and governmental buildings?

All interviewees agreed that "There is lack of spreading it and its not exist in important tourist places, such as most entrances and exits of the city, as well as tourist hotels, as well as tourist restaurants and other sites. It is also not available on all means of transportation, whether public or private."

- 3. How can you evaluate the different marketing efforts directed to domestic and international tourist markets for spreading and promoting Luxor Visual identity?
- A & D "I think we are still in need of more efforts to promote the visual identity of Luxor. not only this, but I still can also hear from tourists that their friends back home don't know that Egypt opened and is available to be visited".
- B, J & C "For domestic tourists it's acceptable till now, but international tourists still not enough and need more promotional efforts. They need diverse marketing efforts to promote visual identity through social media, websites, and various media".
- $E,\ I\ \&\ F$ "I think it needs more effort, as well as focusing the light on Luxor by holding conferences, celebrations and the Marathon in abundance, and highlighting

the visual identity of the Governorate as well as the cultural and civilizational dimension of Luxor".

4. Are the current marketing efforts for promoting visual identity sufficient for tourists to know about this project?

- A, B, & C "The perception of visual identity is poor for foreign tourists and relatively good for Egyptian tourists to Luxor because of the insufficient dissemination of all elements of visual identity throughout the Governorate."
- G & I "Not for all tourists actually, but with more effort, it can be reached for more of them".
- E, F & J "recognition of Luxor visual identity is not enough but by paying more attention to its presentation, it will become more noticeable and observed to foreign tourists and Egyptians".

5. According to answers to previous question, why marketing efforts aren't sufficient for tourists to recognize Luxor's visual identity?

- C, H & D "Because advertising for the visual identity with its various elements is incomplete. As the different tools of propaganda did not care to deliver it to the required groups in different languages. It is necessary to diversify the sources of knowledge of the project from visual, reading, audio, written and other means".
- E, G, J & F "it does not cover most of the sites or tourist attraction. Tourists were away from Luxor for a long time, and the government always offered Luxor as a typical city. But it needs more time to give a chance for tourists to know how Luxor changed to be an open museum and it also has a unique and attractive visual identity".
- A, I & B "I think that Luxor's visual identity has become one of the distinguishing features of Luxor City today. The awareness by tourists of the visual identity of Luxor is inadequate because the beginning of the project was not long ago. Moreover, most of the visits to Luxor depend on the over day trips coming from Hurghada and Sharm El Sheikh. Therefore, the tourist does not stay in Luxor except for a short period that does not allow them to recognize and observe the visual identity elements".

6. Please give any suggestions to improve and enhance the effect of Luxor Visual identity

The respondents added suggestions to enhance the effect of Luxor visual identity as follows:

- 1- Publishing the logo and slogan in all tourist sites and on all entries of booking tickets in tourist places.
- 2- should provide short movies about Luxor visual identity in airplane and airport and in railway station and trains.

- 3- Designing gifts like bags imprinted with the slogan and logo in tourist sites so that it is easy to spread the visual identity elements of Luxor, which helps to remember them.
- 4- Designing television advertisements and publishing them on local channels as well as international channels in different languages so that the visual identity of the Governorate is well advertised.
- 6- Printing the logo and the slogan of Luxor on all the clothes of employees in temples and museums to quickly convey the idea of visual identity to tourists.
- 7- As well as printing the logo and the slogan as posters on tourist buses and other means of transportation used by tourists so that they are an obvious address for the city.
- 8 Presenting some pamphlets to tourists at the airport, hotels, and other places in Luxor to define and explain the idea of the visual identity for tourists.
- 9 Creating interactive experiences for Luxor visitors and focusing on making different products inspired by the elements of visual identity to sell, market and gift them on important occasions.

The results of the interviews can be summarized in the following points:

- 1- The designing of Luxor's Visual identity elements reflects culture historical and natural background of Governorate.
- 2- It is essential to spread elements of visual identity in important tourist places, such as most entrances and exits of the city, as well as tourist hotels, as well as tourist restaurants and other sites.
- 3- The current marketing efforts for promoting visual identity need more efforts to become more noticeable and observed to foreign tourists and Egyptians.
- 4- It is important presenting some pamphlets to tourists at the airport, hotels, and other places in Luxor to define and explain the idea of the visual identity for tourists.
- 5- Designing television advertisements and publishing them on local channels as well as international channels in different languages so that the visual identity of the Governorate is well advertised.
- 6- Officials and Stakeholders Summarized that the elements of visual identity needed to be promoting in various languages.

6. Conclusion

Visual identity represents a very important component in the appearance of tourist destination, and it is extremely important because of increased competition among tourist destinations. There for visual identity has predominant influence on the overall success of tourist destinations, but despite of these, the problem of designing thriving tourist destination visual identity and their components is hardly addressed.

This paper attempts to discover the extent to which the Luxor's visual identity related to historical culture and the nature of Luxor. It was found that logo, slogan, color, and typography of the brand visual identity of Luxor are developed to create a new perception about the city. Additionally, culture, heritage, and nature of Luxor are presented in its visual identity. Tourism officials and stakeholders think that visual identity of Luxor could be stronger and more recognizable.

Brand visual identity of Luxor needs to be well known by tourists specially foreigners. This identity is essentially to spread around the city and in tourists' sites, restaurants, hotels, transportation means, etc.

Brand visual identity of Luxor needs to be printed on brochures, posters, employees' uniforms, etc. As well as it must be included in all events, conferences, celebrations, and the Marathon in abundance. It is vital to highlight the visual identity of the Governorate as well as the cultural and civilizational dimensions of Luxor. The visual identity of Luxor Governorate needs to be promoted well to achieve its goal by advertising these elements in various languages.

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تقييم الهوية البصرية لمحافظه الاقصر من وجهة نظرالمسؤولين والمستفيدين

الملخص العربي

تعد الهوية البصرية واحدة من أكثر الوسائل الملموسة لإيصال العلامة التجارية وتوضيح موقعها وشخصيتها والتدفق العالمي اليها عبر العنصر المرئي. العلامة التجارية هي أداة رمزية للهوية أو علاقاتها أو تنقل وعودًا محددة حول المنتجات أو الخدمات المقدمة. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تقييم مشروع الهوية البصرية في محافظة الأقصر من وجهه نظر المسئولين في الجهات الحكومية ووجهه نظر أصحاب المصلحة من الفنادق والمطاعم وشركات السياحة. وتحاول هذه الدراسة تحديد مدى ملاءمة تصميم عناصر الهوية البصرية لحضارة الأقصر. بالإضافة إلى ذلك ، تهدف الدراسة إلى تقييم الجهود التسويقية للجهات الحكومية للترويج لعناصر الهوية البصرية للأقصر لكي يتعرف عليها السائحون. ولتحقيق هدف الدراسة تم استخدام الأسلوب النوعي من خلال المقابلات الشخصية. وتم إجراء عشرة مقابلات شخصية مع عينة من أصحاب الفنادق وشركات السياحة ومدير المطعم والمدير العام لآثار الكرنك بوزارة السياحة وهو المسؤول عن تنفيذ مشروع الهوية البصرية في الأقصر والمدير العام لإدارة السياحة بمحافظة الأقصر. أظهرت النتائج أن تصميم عناصر الهوية البصرية للأقصر يمثل ثقافة وتاريخ الاقصر. علوة على ذلك ، فإن الأنشطة التسويقية الخاصة بمشروع الهوية البصرية ليست كافية للسائحين للتعرف على عناصر الهوية البصرية للأقصر.

الكلمات المفتاحية: العلامة التجارية - الهوية البصرية – المسئولين في الجهات الحكومية السياحية - الأقصر