

## **Visual Identity as a system to enhance the City Image** **“an analytical study of mega events”**

**Atiyat Bayoumi AlGabri**

**Professor of Design - Faculty of Applied Arts - Helwan Uni.**

[gabryet1@gmail.com](mailto:gabryet1@gmail.com)

**Assoc. Prof. Dr. Rania Farouk Abdel Azim**

**Associate Professor - Faculty of Applied Arts - Helwan Uni.**

[rania\\_nakhil@a-arts.helwan.edu.eg](mailto:rania_nakhil@a-arts.helwan.edu.eg)

**Assist. Lect. Ahmed Ahmed Helmy**

**PhD. Researcher - Faculty of Applied Arts - Helwan Uni.**

[a.helmyahmed@gmail.com](mailto:a.helmyahmed@gmail.com)

### **Visual Identity as a system to enhance the City Image:**

an analytical study of mega events

#### **Research Summary**

Recently we live in a world full of brands and logos in all fields, even cities and countries became to have a distinctive visual identity and brand. As a result of globalization, as well as the breaking of geographical, social and cultural boundaries and the impact on countries, cities, and communities, which posed challenges to enhance their ability to remain competitive and attract the target audience. So, each city has sought to prove itself and its presence to attract more tourists, visitors, and investors.

Organize the international mega-events has become one of the attractions towards the cities and countries, which helps to develop and improve the economic, social and cultural aspects. On the other hand, this is affecting the competitiveness of countries and cities, which poses challenges to meet these changes and enhance their ability to remain competitive and attract the audience "target group".

According to Philip Kotler, these events transmit specific messages to the target audience to achieve marketing objectives and creating a positive city image that enhances its ability in different aspects of marketing and competition. There are many cities around the world that used the mega-events which organize it to improve their image and making it a famous city brand around the world, such as the Venice International Film Festival and the Venice International Biennale, which helped to fame these cities and its names around the world.

This paper aims to highlight the importance of the visual identity of the Egyptian cities, not only to achieve economic objectives but also to build a positive image which enhances their competitiveness. It also aims to establish a future vision for the Egyptian cities based on the international events that can achieve the marketing objectives of these cities. As an attempt to identify the impact of visual identity on the image of the Egyptian city and how to benefit from it during the international events organized in the city and the impact of it on the target audience (local community, visitors, foreign investors) and mental image they have about the city as one of their brand components.

- The problem of the research is that many Egyptian cities do not benefit from the organization of international events to highlight and clarification the city image through its distinctive visual identity. Also, most of these mega-events promotion campaigns are not linked to the city, its brand and its visual identity, which negatively affects these cities image.
- The research assumes that the use of the visual identity of the city in the design of promotional messages for the international mega-events supports the city image positively and creates links with the target audience, Also, the optimal exploitation of visual identity systems of the city brand during these events can contribute to improving the image of the city and enhance its competitiveness.
- This paper pursuing the analytical descriptive method by studying and analyzing models of international mega-events that contributed to supporting the cities image in an attempt to enhance the image of Egyptian cities. The research case study was based on the El-Gouna Film Festival as an analytical model.

Cities are a result of human existence as a result of communication among people and communities based on a range of interactions and cultural, social, economic and cultural relations within specific environmental conditions and factors. The city image of varies among individuals according to their motivations, needs, and experiences, as each city has a special and specific characteristic comparing with other cities.

The city brand and the visual identity of it weren't important as we are nowadays. Recently it uses to face intense competition around the world between countries and cities to increase their economic resources. But to have a strong brand, the city must have the capabilities and advantages that give it a competitive advantage and added value achieve pre-defined aims.

We can be said that the technological development and rapid growth of markets and brands helped to the emergence of the idea of places marketing in its contemporary form and create a brand and visual identity distinguish them from other places and achieve a competitive advantage to attract the target audience (local community, investors and visitors).

One of the most important factors of success and fame of cities is to create a positive image and reputation in the minds of people to increase their association with it. This identity and image may have a historical dimension based on the city's history or an economic dimension to the growth and prosperity of its economy. The city image is a combination of qualities and material and moral elements that define the characteristics of the city to the target audience, which represent his feelings and attitudes towards this city as a result of experiences.

The city marketing is a planned process aimed at improving the city position and classification in the competitive market through many procedures and processes to improve its economic resources and attract more investments and improve services and the standard of living of the community. So, it is a way in which can enhance the city image and gain a competitive advantage in light of the fierce competition in the competitive market.

The privilege is the key to the city marketing process, each city seeks to distinguish itself using all means and marketing strategies and design effective, to achieve specific goals, and therefore visual identity attracts attention to this city. Therefore, cities should exploit the characteristics that make them different from other cities, this helps to enhance their competitiveness in the international market.

The city image reflected through the city brand and its visual identity, this is the primary objective of city marketing campaigns. The city brand works to highlight the city characteristics and to create perceptions of it among the target audience. so that will strengthen its capacity to maintain the current audiences and attract new target groups. The city brand should help the city authorities to solve the existing problems in the city and improve the level of services and the living of the local community in an attempt to change and improve the city image, but the city should have the factors and aspects that will help to express its character in a positive way. These aspects are summarized in weather and nature, Infrastructure and services, social factors of employment and standard of living, economic factors of investment opportunities and economic resources, entertainment and cultural factors. The city brand image can be considered one of the components of the city because it has a strong influence on the motives and desires of the target audience and their behavior towards the city, all this contributes can help to attract them towards the city, This image focuses on the way the audience perceives the components and characteristics of this city and Its brand and its visual identity. In order for the successful city brand and visual identity, The city authorities must be aware of the city's needs and objectives to have a brand and a long-term marketing strategy. So the brand and visual identity design must reflect the city's characteristics and values.

During the past few years, the mega-events sector has been growing rapidly and increase in many countries and cities around the world, as they have an active role in developing their economic and social aspects. City authority around the world is aware of the economic and social importance of organizing mega-events, creating a kind of competition among them. Each city seeks to attract the largest number of visitors and investors "audience".

Organizing international mega-events can be considered one of the ways to promote the cities brand and their visual identity. Which it will improve the city image, It is one of the marketing strategies that can be used in the promotion of cities. Mega-events play an important role in explaining the city development plans and improving its future vision. These events and activities require facilities and plans which improve the infrastructure and the level of services. It also promotes the sense of the city's identity at the local community and visitors. International mega-events can be considered as one of the tourist attractions.

Hosting mega-events may give the city an opportunity to solve the problem of negative image, through which the audience can be attracted to the city, improve the standard of living and the level of services, and create the environment for investment, innovation and development. It is one of the most effective ways of cities marketing because it has a positive effect in highlighting the personality, culture, and identity of the city and thus enhancing its competitiveness and improving its image by linking these events promotion campaigns with the brand and the visual identity of the city.

The Egyptian cities have the factors and the diversity of environmental and cultural that can highlight it to make them a tourist attraction in a way that improves their image and enhances their competitiveness. Despite the great history of Egypt and its cultural mix, but many

Egyptian cities are still unable to compete sufficiently with other cities around the world, due to their negative image or lack of a distinctive identity. The Egyptian cities were affected by the political and economic conditions experienced by the region during the previous years and lack of interest in developing and improving the image of the city locally and internationally. The Egyptian cities don't have a unique visual identity that expresses their values, history, goals, and culture which will be reflected at the audience "local community, visitors, investors".

Tourism is one of the most developed sectors in the world and it is one of the most important sources of the Egyptian GDP. For example, El Gouna city has become one of the most important cities and tourist destinations in Egypt according to its location and the beauty of its beaches and warm weather throughout the year.

In recent years, some Egyptian cities have adopted a new type of tourism activities, namely tourism for conferences, festivals or mega-events, which have played a major role in increasing the number of tourists and visitors, which made these cities tourist attractions during these periods, that recorded a rise in tourist and commercial activity rates in that cities.

Through tourism is one of the most developed sectors in the world and it is one of the most important sources of the Egyptian GDP. For example, El Gouna city has become one of the most important cities and tourist destinations in Egypt according to its location and the beauty of its beaches and warm weather throughout the year.

In recent years, some Egyptian cities have adopted a new type of tourism activities, namely tourism for conferences, festivals or mega-events, which have played a major role in increasing the number of tourists and visitors, which made these cities tourist attractions during these periods, that recorded a rise in tourist and commercial activity rates in that cities.

The Egyptian cities have the factors and the diversity of environmental and cultural that can highlight it to make them a tourist attraction in a way that improves their image and enhances their competitiveness. Despite the great history of Egypt and its cultural mix, but many Egyptian cities are still unable to compete sufficiently with other cities around the world, due to their negative image or lack of a distinctive identity. The Egyptian cities were affected by the political and economic conditions experienced by the region during the previous years and lack of interest in developing and improving the image of the city locally and internationally. The Egyptian cities don't have a unique visual identity that expresses their values, history, goals, and culture which will be reflected at the audience "local community, visitors, investors".

Although many Egyptian cities have some unique and distinctive characteristics which can be exploited in the development of their tourism, economic and social resources, But, because it doesn't have a distinctive brand and visual identity which expresses its personality and identity of it which can give it the opportunity to show their image positively and compete with their counterparts.

Last few years, Some Egyptian cities have joined in organizing some international events or be in competition for hosting them, but many Egyptian cities are still not qualified to organize such events due to several factors "economic, environmental, social" and inter-related problems, bad infrastructure and lack of The future plans of the development of these cities in

a sustainable manner, commensurate with the requirements of the contemporary world and the expectations of the target audience. It is, therefore, necessary to support these cities through a future vision commensurate with what is needed by the target audience, to build a distinctive visual identity achieve communication and marketing aims.

In the year 2017, El Gouna entered of organizing international mega-events represented in the El Gouna International Film Festival, that increased the city vitality and activity in several levels in a way that enhances the city image through many activities during the duration of that event. From the beginning, the organizers' goal was to put El Gouna in the world cinema map beside an attractive touristic spot so that it could one day be like the French city of Cannes, which was a tourist destination and is now one of the best places in the international film scene through Cannes International Film Festival. As the establishment of such international festivals is working to shed light on Egypt as a result of the accompanying media repercussions, which works to promote Egypt through a variety of ways, which has a positive impact on tourism, investment, culture, economy and thus the convergence of cultures and peoples.

The international mega-events has an important role in highlighting the identity of the city and the success of its brand by showing its personality and characteristics in advertising campaigns related to these events in a way that positively affects its image. These events are a good way of communication with the audience. But, In order for Egyptian cities to succeed in marketing themselves as a distinctive destination during the mega-events, should be highlighted the city brand and its visual identity through brand promotion besides event promotion campaigns, so that the brand and visual identity will be an essential part of that campaigns.

The mega-events are one of the ways in which the Egyptian cities can highlight their identity and distinctive characteristics through the brand and the distinctive visual identity. Through the development of economic resources and increase the rates of tourism and investment and development plans and the organization of many cultural and sporting events, which acts as one of the attractions towards this city. Also, it is working to attract the potential audience that the city aims to attract it by building awareness of the city image and its visual identity by linking advertising campaigns to them and enhancing the city image. The events organized by the city directly affect its image. Also, the visual identity and the cities brand enhance this image in the competitive market. Therefore, it can be considered as one of the means to improve the image of the city and thus achieve developmental and societal goals.

It can be said that the technological development and rapid growth of markets and brands helped to the emergence of the idea of place marketing in it contemporary form and the creation of a brand and visual identity distinguish them from other places and achieve a competitive advantage to attract the target audience of local community and investors and visitors.

As a globalization result, there are many cities around the world that they need excellence and have characteristics that distinguish them from others and help in the marketing process. So, Each city strives to achieve several economic, social, political and cultural objectives through

the presence of a brand and a visual identity that emphasizes its values and the distinctive character that draws the attention of the target audience and influences it. Therefore, it can be considered as one of the city's marketing tools, while others go to the fact that the city brand is the marketing strategy of the city.

So if we need to build a strong positive image for the Egyptian cities, we must:

- Attention should be paid to building a brand and a visual identity for Egyptian cities as a part of marketing strategy that helps distinguished and competitive in such a way as to attract the attention of the target audience.
- Promotion campaigns for major international mega-events should be supported by the brand identity of the city brand, linking and supporting the marketing efforts of the brand.
- The administrative and governmental authorities should take advantage of the organization of events and international events to improve the image of Egyptian cities positively.

### References:

1. Doğan, Evinç, *Analysing the impact of a mega-event on city image by visual methodologies: branding Istanbul during the European capital of culture 2010*, Lucca, IT, IMT Institute for Advanced Studies, 2013
2. Kavaratzis, M. & Ashworth, G.J., City branding: An effective assertion of identity or a transitory marketing trick?, *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie*, (96/5), Wiley-Blackwell, 2005, P. 510: 513
3. Bıçakçı, Ayşe, Branding the city through culture: Istanbul, European Capital of Culture 2010, *International Journal of Human Sciences*, Vol 9/1, 2012, P. 993: 1006
4. Anholt, Simon, *Places: Identity, Image and Reputation*, London, UK, Palgrave Macmillan, 2010
5. BLAIN, C., LEVY, S., & RITCHIE, J., Destination Branding: Insights and Practices from Destination Management Organizations, *Journal of Travel Research*, 2005, 328: 338
6. Kavaratzis, Mihalis, *From city marketing to city branding: An interdisciplinary analysis with reference to Amsterdam, Budapest and Athens*, Groningen, NL 2008, P. 52: 55
7. Anholt, Simon, The Anholt-GMI City Brands Index How the world sees the world's cities, *Place Branding* (2/1), 2006, P. 18: 31
8. Espelt, Núria & Benito, José, The Social Construction of the Image of Girona: A Methodological Approach, *Tourism Management journal* (26/5), 2005, P. 777: 785
9. Hall, Tim & Hubbard, Phil, *The entrepreneurial city: geographies of politics, regime, and representation*, New Jersey, USA, John Wiley & Sons, 1998
10. Carat, Mohamed, Branding of Cities: Mechanisms and Challenges, International Forum "The Role of Media and Communication in the Marketing of Cities and their Cultural Heritage", University of Constantine, Algeria 2016, p.
10. Sheikh, Ayman Zreia, the brand of Saudi cities, makkahnewspaper.com , <https://makkahnewspaper.com/article/63253/Makkah>) accessed November 10, 2018(
11. Fizariya, Kholoud, discussing the role of festivals in the culture industry and promoting tourism in the cultural club, omandaily.om (http://www.omandaily.om/561352) /accessed November 2, 2018(

12. Nasrallah, Nourhan, M 8 festivals in 40 days .. «Random timing» lead the activities of Egypt Technical .. And filmmakers: redistribution of the agenda The only solution, elwatannews.com «

(accessed November 3, 2018) <https://www.elwatannews.com/news/details/3245107> .13

14. Associated Press, A record number of visitors attend Venice Biennale art show, businessinsider.com, <https://www.businessinsider.com/ap-a-record-number-of-visitors-attend-venice-biennale-art-show-2017-11> (accessed December 2, 2018)

15. Brosto, Dalila, How City Branding Can Support Sustainable Urban Development – Research Findings, placebrandobserver.com, <https://placebrandobserver.com/how-city-branding-can-support-sustainable-urban-development/> (accessed November 5, 2018)

16. Chan, Cheryl, Expo 86: When Vancouver wooed the world - 30 photos, 30 years later, vancouver.sun.com, <https://vancouver.sun.com/news/local-news/expo-86-when-vancouver-wooed-the-world-30-photos-30-years-later> (accessed December 8, 2018)

17. Elsirgany, Soha, Gouna Film Festival to 'put itself on the international map,' says founder Naguib Sawiris, ahram.org.eg, <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/5/32/276122/Arts--Culture/Film/Gouna-Film-Festival-to-put-itself-on-the-internati.aspx> (accessed November 12, 2018)

18. Gregory, Tom, LONDON 2012- INSPIRING A GENERATION.... OF LAYA-BOUITS?, wessexscene.co.uk, <https://www.wessexscene.co.uk/lifestyle/2012/07/30/london-2012-inspiring-a-generation-of-layabouts/> (accessed November 12, 2018)

19. OPEN COPENHAGEN Logo, underconsideration.com, [https://www.underconsideration.com/brandnew/archives/something\\_is\\_button\\_in\\_the\\_sta.php](https://www.underconsideration.com/brandnew/archives/something_is_button_in_the_sta.php) (accessed December 4, 2018)