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TOURISM DESTINATION IMAGE OF POST-REVOLUTION EGYPT AS PERCEIVED BY UK-BASED TRAVEL INTERMEDIARIES

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ABSTRACT: Tourism is typically a sensitive industry for social, economic and political changes. In this context, it is common among tourism researchers to presume that sociopolitical movements (e.g. demonstrations, revolutions) in any tourism destination will most probably have negative impacts on the image of that destination. Given recent political upheavals and wrenching shifts in the world, there is an escalating need for countries to understand how tourism destination image develops. Thus, this study aims to examine the image of post-revolution Egypt from the perspective of the UK travel intermediaries assuming that the Egyptian revolution may positively reform the Egyptian tourism image. Accordingly, an online survey was utilized as a method for collecting the required data. The research resulted in several findings regarding the current and future impacts of the Egyptian revolution on the image of Egypt as a tourism destination. The research findings could be significant for Egyptian tourism authorities that are handling the current situation as well as for tourism researchers interested in understanding the impacts of sociopolitical movements on tourism. **Keywords:** Tourism, Destination Image, Travel Agents, Tour Operators, UK, Egypt, Sociopolitical movements

RESUMEN: El Turismo es un sector sensible a los cambios sociales, económicos y políticos. En este contexto, es común para los investigadores de turismo presumir que los movimientos socio-políticos (por ejemplo, las manifestaciones, las revoluciones) en cualquier destino turístico muy probablemente tendrán impactos negativos en la imagen de ese destino. Teniendo en cuenta los últimos cambios políticos y los cambios dolorosos en el mundo, hay una necesidad creciente de que los países comprendan cómo la imagen de destino turístico se desarrolla. Así, este estudio tiene como objetivo examinar la imagen de la post-revolución de Egipto, desde la perspectiva de los intermediarios de viajes del Reino Unido, asumiendo que la revolución egipcia podría reformar positivamente la imagen turística de Egipto. Por lo tanto, una encuesta online fue utilizada como un método para la recogida de los datos requeridos. La investigación dio lugar a varias conclusiones sobre los impactos actuales y futuros de la revolución egipcia en la imagen del Egipto como un destino turístico. Los resultados de la investigación pueden ser importantes para las autoridades turísticas egipcias que están manejando la situación actual, así como para los investigadores del turismo interesados en la comprensión de los impactos de los movimientos socio-políticos en el turismo. **Palabras clave:** Turismo, Imagen del destino, Agentes de Viajes, Operadores turísticos, Reino Unido, Egipto, Movimientos socio-políticos

RESUMO: O turismo é uma indústria sensível a mudanças sociais, económicas e políticas. Neste contexto, é comum entre os investigadores desta área presumir que os movimentos sociopolíticos (e.g. manifestações, revoluções) que ocorrem num determinado destino turís-

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tico terão, provavelmente, impactos negativos na imagem desse destino. Tendo em conta as recentes desordens políticas e violentas mudanças no mundo, há uma necessidade crescente de os países perceberem como se desenvolve a imagem de um destino turístico. Assim, este estudo pretende examinar a imagem do Egito após a revolução na perspetiva de que segundo os intermediários turísticos a revolução egípcia pode modificar positivamente a imagem do turismo no Egito. Por conseguinte, foi utilizado um inquérito *online* como método de recolha de informação. A pesquisa gerou vários resultados acerca dos atuais e futuros impactos da revolução egípcia na imagem do Egito como destino turístico. As conclusões do estudo podem ser significativas para as autoridades de turismo egípcias que estão a lidar com a presente situação, assim como para os investigadores interessados em compreender os impactos dos movimentos sociopolíticos no turismo. **Palavras chave:** Turismo, Imagem de destinos, Agentes de viagens, Operadores turísticos, Reino Unido, Egito, Movimentos sociopolíticos.

INTRODUCTION

Few hours after the end of the Egyptian revolution on February 11, an Egyptian tourist guide yelled, *"How long should I wait before seeing my next customer?"* Official sources estimated that during the revolution's 18 days, Egyptian tourism lost about one billion dollars and that tourism would not fully recover before a year at best, which means losing up to 12 billion dollars. Tourism expectations were generally gloomy and pessimistic. Three days later, Eboo Patel (2011) wrote in the *Washington Post*:

> *"The images that come up in too many people's heads when they hear the terms "Muslim"…is of suicide bombers...Eighteen days in Egypt changed all that. The movement…gave the world a whole new psychological movie of the contributions of Muslim citizens to their nation. When they hear "Muslim" they think "Osama bin Laden." Well, no more. 9/11 is no longer the date that defines Islam for the world. January 25 gets that honor now."*

Addressing the same issue, USA Secretary of State Hilary Clinton, among others, declared that, *"The Egyptian revolution is going to reform the image of Arabs and Muslims."* In this context, it is undeniable that the image of several Islamic countries including Egypt has been corrupted after 9/11, which resulted in hindering tourism demand toward these countries especially from Europe and USA. Sorrowfully, this was not the only incident. During the 1990s, Egypt in particular was a stage for a series of terrorist attacks, which massively distorted the image of Egypt as a tourist destination. To top it all, during the last two decades several countries advised their citizens, on different occasions, to suspend their travel plans to Egypt due to unsettled security situations or threat of terrorist attacks in Egypt specifically or the Middle East generally.

Therefore, those encouraging statements from international entities and leading individuals concerning the potential positive influence of the revolution on the image of Egypt alert that despite all the traditional thoughts about the conflicting relationship between tourism and sociopolitical upheavals (e.g. demonstrations), which usually have negative consequences on tourism, there might be positive impacts as well. During the 18 days of revolution, Egypt was the centre of the world's attention (Euronews, 2011), where it received intensive media coverage from major international TV channels, radio stations, websites and newspapers. Most of the reports were supporting the Egyptian protests believing that the revolution will benefit the political and social future of Egypt. The question here is "can the revolution benefit the Egyptian tourism sector as well?" In plainer words, years ago, a series of sociopolitical worrisome situations (i.e. international and domestic terrorism) spoiled the image of Egypt as a tourist destination; can a new sociopolitical worrisome situation (i.e. revolution) help refurbish that image or will it add more vagueness to it? Accordingly, this research aims to explore the image of post-revolution Egypt as perceived by UK-based travel intermediaries to reveal the impact of this sociopolitical movement on that tourism image. Thus, results of this research could be significant for different stakeholders. First, for Egyptian tourism authorities that need to understand the viewpoint of UK travel intermediaries during such critical period, which may help these authorities set appropriate plans for dealing with this situation. Second, for sociological and political researchers who want to comprehend one of the impacts of sociopolitical movements.

TOURISM DESTINATION IMAGE

Given the importance of "tourism destination" as *"the away-from--home locale wherein attractions and activities are located"* (Ryan & Cave, 2005, p. 143), it is not surprising that a significant effort of tourism research has been devoted to studying this issue. In this context, "destination image" has been one of the aspects which has particularly drawn extensive attention since Hunt firstly introduced the concept to the tourism literature in 1971 as the perception held by potential tourists about an area (Li, Pan, Zhang & Smith, 2009). Since then, the body of literature on destination image has grown to a respectable size (Govers, Go & Kumar, 2007), with thorough overviews by researchers such as Gallarza, Saura & Garcia (2002) and Pike (2002). In this respect, two topics have always been receiving noteworthy consideration: the linkage between destination image, and tourists' profile and behavior as well as the effect of promotion, especially advertising on perceived image (see Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Govers *at el* 2007; MacKay & Fesenmaier, 1997; Tasci, 2009). Less commonly, related studies have also investigated the relationship between destination image and a plethora of variables such as destination personality (Ekinic & Hosany, 2006), visitors' photography (Mackay & Couldwell, 2004), cultural proximity (Kastenholz, 2010), movies and motion pictures (Kim & Richardson, 2003; Tasci, 2009), online information searching (Li *et al.* 2009), and word of mouth (Simpson & Siguaw, 2008).

At this stage, it should be noted that the concept of destination image was originally brought to marketers' attention as a tool for product positioning and promotion (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991), as marketers believed that a positive destination image could serve as a differentiating factor among competing destinations (Li & Vogelsong, 2006). Later on, marketers realized that understanding destination image could also assist forming proper tourist products (Tasci, Gartner & Cavusgil, 2007), as *"knowing what visitors and potential visitors think about the destination is essential when developing tourism products"* (Trojan, 2005, p. 54). In the same context, Sonmez & Sirakaya (2002) presume that the success or failure of tourism in many destinations depends largely on the images held by potential travelers and the effective management of those images by destination marketers.

Focusing on understanding the factors composing the destination image, Crompton (1979) presents an old but still widely-accepted notion that destination image comprises *"the sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that a person has of a destination"*. As well, numerous researchers such as Dichter (1985), Baloglu & Mangaloglu (2001), Ekinic & Hosany (2006), Martin & Bosque (2008), and Kastenholz (2010) recognize image as a concept formed by both cognitive and affective components. The former refers to the individual's knowledge and beliefs about the destination, whereas the later relates to the individual's subjective feelings towards the destination. Consistent with this classification, studies on affective qualities have chiefly focused on testing the emotional responses to places, while research on cognitive traits has mostly focused on addressing the destinations' physical attributes (Kim & Richardson, 2003). This combination of both cognitive (i.e. knowledge, beliefs, rations) and affective interpretations (i.e. feelings, emotions) is entitled "tourism destination image".

On the other hand, a remarkable part of destination image research has tried to assess the weight of each component. Scholars such as Russell (1980), Russell & Snodgrass (1987) and Tasci (2009) did not deny the effect of the two components although believing that cognition is more fundamental assuming that shortage in rational knowledge will cause a situation of destination lack of familiarity, which will directly lead to a state of emotional refusal of the destination. This could be due to the belief approved by several researchers including Baloglu (2001, p. 128) who records that *"Higher degrees of familiarity are associated with more positive images"*. As well as, Prentice (2004) who states that in case of lack of familiarity, people may have less favorable images of the place and less desire to visit it; and if they visit it, they will feel less comfortable and secured (Olsen, McAlexander & Roberts, 1986). While this perspective is consistent with most of the available destination image studies, Ryan & Cave (2005, p. 144) claim that "*The affective* *is situationally as powerful as the cognitive".* Alternatively, few scholars (e.g. Hayllar & Griffin, 2005; Trauer & Ryan, 2005) focus on examining affective issues only such as coziness, romance, and the role of intimacy in selecting tourism destinations.

Researchers have also been keen to understand the factors contributing to the formation of destination image (Castro, Armario, & Ruiz, 2007). Gunn (1972), one of the first researchers to conceptualize the image formation process, classifies these factors into two types: organic and induced. *"The former is formed from sources not directly associated with tourism interests, such as newspaper reports and movies. Induced images derive from the conscious effort of marketers to develop, promote and advertise their destinations"* (Kim & Richardson, 2003, p. 217). Later on, Gunn's approach was improved by several researchers, most notably Gartner (1993) who recategorizes Gunn's factors into overt, covert, autonomous and organic. In Gartner's classification, the overt factor includes information received from commercial tourism sources like travel intermediaries and promotional activities. The key feature of this factor is the high level of control that destination marketers have over it (Gunn, 1997), which may lessen its credibility. On the other hand, the covert factor contains endorsements by famous personalities and travel writers who have higher credibility as destination marketers can hardly control their opinions (Tasci, 2009). The autonomous factor relies on information derived from neutral and more public sources such as newspapers, radio and TV news, documentaries, periodicals, dramas, novels, non--fictional books and classes on geography and history (Gunn, 1997), over which the destination has little, if no control. Finally, the organic factor depends on the tourist's actual visitation and word of mouth from other visitors. Of course, this factor enjoys the highest credibility as it stems from the tourist's own experience or from family members and individuals with whom s/he shares common social life (Andersen, Prentice & Guerin, 1997).

Adopting a chronological approach, destination image formation can also be classified into pre-visit and post-visit images, where all the previously mentioned factors – except actual visitations – work jointly on forming the potential tourist's pre-visit image. Then, actual visitations and interaction with the hosting destination occur to provide tourists with a genuine firsthand experience (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003), which should result in modifying their pre-visit image into a post-visit image. In this context, literature on destination image usually reveals that actual visitations often change the tourists' image of the destination, as they gain more in-depth, cognitive knowledge about it (Kim & Richardson, 2003).

The suggested figure 1 depicts the relationship between the components of destination image, the factors influencing that image as well as the destination pre and post-visit images.

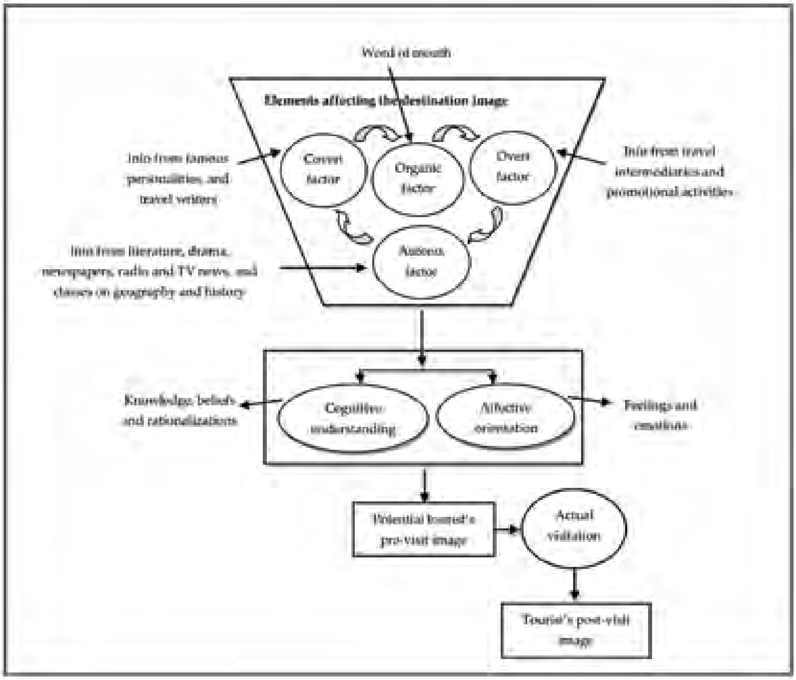


Figure 1: A framework of the elements and procedures of destination image formation.

TRAVEL INTERMEDIARIES AS CONTRIBUTORS TO DESTINATION IMAGE

Travel intermediaries (i.e. tour operators and travel agencies) exist as one of the overt sources, which contribute to tourists' pre-visit image. This should raise enquiries about the destination image perceived by travel intermediaries and the probability of this image to pop up during their interaction with customers. In this context, it is believed that travel intermediaries play a key role in forming the customers' image while informing them about the different tourism destinations, as well as when designing, promoting and selling tourism packages (McLellan & Foushee, 1983). Santos (1998, p. 282) deems that the travel intermediaries' role is critical as "*image formation...is intricately entwined with the destination selection process*". Travel intermediaries may also have an exceptional influence in case of *"destination-Naïve (first-time) travelers* [who] *mostly rely on professional sources (tour operators, travel agents, etc.) in their information search behavior*", and international tourists who *"are more inclined to use travel intermediaries in their destination selection process"* (Baloglu & Mangalouglu, 2001, p. 2). On the other hand, McLellan & Foushee (1983) believe that such influence is not flowing in just one direction (i.e. travel intermediaries toward customers) but actually, customers –

especially experienced ones – can also contribute to the travel intermediaries' images.

Therefore, understanding the destination image as perceived by travel intermediaries may help tourism destinations make proper decisions, especially concerning their marketing strategies. However, not much effort has been conducted to address this issue. In his inclusive review of destination image research, Pike (2002) records that nevertheless researchers now have a wealth of destination image literature at their disposal, there is still a significant gap in investigating destination image as perceived by other – rather than tourists – major tourism stakeholders such as travel intermediaries. Pike (2002, p. 542) then goes on reporting that out of the 142 reviewed papers, *"a total of 59 papers targeted visitors at destinations. While 55 papers included customers at their place of residence…A number of papers sought the views of travel trade/experts (20)"*.

Exploring those papers discussing travel intermediaries' destination image reveals that few issues have been investigated. For example, in an early effort, McLellan & Foushee (1983) explored the negative images of the USA as expressed by tour operators from other countries, where they approved that destination images perceived by travel intermediaries influence their clients. In 1990, Roehl - in his study about the image of California-based travel agents toward the Peoples Republic of China (PRC) after Tiananmen Square - revealed that although the image of China was distorted, the majority of the travel agents opposed any travel restrictions against the PRC. More recently, Andreu, Bigne & Cooper (2000) compared between the perceived and projected image of Spain in the British market. Following their footsteps, Grosspietsch (2006) compared the images of Rwanda as a tourist destination as perceived by visitors and as projected by international tour operators, which resulted in identifying major differences between inadequate or even negative images held by tour operators and more positive images expressed by visitors. Finally, Moital, Peres & Costa (2005, p. 67) compare the image of Lisbon as a city break destination against Copenhagen and Amsterdam arguing that *"asking individuals how they see the destination when compared to its competitors is more appropriate than evaluating the destinations individually"*.

This demonstration shows clearly that little effort has been conducted to understand destination image as perceived by travel intermediaries especially during periods of crises, a situation which Egypt is definitely facing now.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Different methodologies have been applied in studying destination image. According to Pike (2002), the vast majority of the destination image studies (114 out of 142 papers) used structured techniques aiming to measure the image common attributes through a set of semantic differential or Likert scales (Grosspietsch, 2006). On the other hand, the rarely used alternatives are unstructured, qualitative methods, which were applied by researchers such as Dann (1996), who examined linguistic expressions of visitors to Barbados, and Kelly (1998), who used photographs of Jordan. However, such approaches are acknowledged as more conductive for measuring image richness (Baloglu & Mangalouglu, 2001), but criticized for offering limited statistical analysis (Murphy, 1999). Aiming to benefit from the combination of using both structured and unstructured approaches, in the most-cited research about destination image, Echtner & Ritchie (1991) developed a comprehensive concept merging the two approaches by using a list of attributes measured on a Likert scale in addition to open-ended questions. Afterwards, several researchers followed the path of Echtner and Ritchie, which is going to be pursued in this research as well.

Resembling the majority of destination image studies (e.g. Baloglu & Mangaloglu, 2001; Bonn, Joseph & Dai 2005; Enright & Newton, 2005; Kim & Richardson, 2003; Tasci, 2009), a self-administered survey is utilized as a research method. The survey comprises 10 questions. The first two questions were intended to identify the respondent's affiliation as well as the number of visits to Egypt, if any. The third and fourth questions were set to explore the respondent's viewpoint regarding the revolution's current and future impact on the image of Egypt as a tourism destination. The fifth question measured the affective components using the 4-item scale widely used by several researchers (e.g. Baloglu & Brinberg, 1997; Ekinic & Hosany, 2006; Russell, 1980; Walmsley & Young, 1998) including distressing/relaxing, gloomy/exciting, sleepy/arousing, and unpleasant/pleasant. The same question then measured the cognitive six elements, which were adopted from Ong & Horbunluekit (1997), Ekinic & Hosany (2006) as well as Li *et al* (2009). The cognitive bipolar adjectives include accessible/isolated, friendly/unfriendly, lively/stagnant, interesting/boring, quiet/noisy, and overcrowded/sparse. This fifth question was assessed on a 10-point Likert scale, where 1 = very negative and 10 = very positive. Respondents were then asked, in the sixth question, to rate their current overall impression of the image of Egypt by selecting a value on a Likert scale from 1 (highly unfavorable) to 10 (highly favorable). The seventh and eighth questions were designed to reveal the elements contributing to the image of Egypt. The ninth question then aimed to estimate the approximate time required for tourism to get back to normal in Egypt. Finally, the tenth question was meant to unearth the respondents' unstructured images, where respondents were asked to unreservedly write down the first three words that come to their minds when mentioning Egypt.

An initial version of the survey was sent to three reviewers for checking two issues: first, wording, sequence and other potential errors and second, the questions' suitability for achieving the research aims. Based on the responses, the survey questions were confirmed as relevant and suitable for fulfilling the potential aims. As well, few terminological and wording modifications were suggested.

UK-based travel intermediaries were targeted as a research population, where two samples were deducted from this population: "category A", which represents travel intermediaries selling Egyptian tourism packages; and "category B", which embodies travel intermediaries that are not selling Egyptian packages. For forming the samples, two lists were obtained from the Association of British Travel Agents (ABTA) www.abta.com on February 25, 2011. The first list (A) includes full details of all the travel intermediaries registered in ABTA, which are selling tourist packages for visiting Egypt (115 companies). A preliminary revision of this list revealed that three of these travel intermediaries had transferred their business to other already-included companies. Consequently, these three companies were excluded. The remaining 112 companies were considered the final population for category A. On the other hand, the second received list (B) comprises all the travel companies working in the UK. From list B, another 112 companies were randomly selected to represent the population for category B. The selection of these two independent variables aims to identify whether the image of Egypt differs between those who are functionally linked to Egypt (i.e. category A) and those who are not (i.e. category B).

On March 12, a self-administered questionnaire was e-mailed to all the 224 companies. Six e-mails from category A and four e-mails from category B were undeliverable due to e-mail address problems. By March 15, 36 completed questionnaires were received. Thus, on March 20, a reminding e-mail was sent to all the remaining companies, which resulted in receiving seven more questionnaires. In total, a sample of 43 (19.2%) out of 224 companies were successfully approached. None of the questionnaires were discarded or considered invalid. 24 of those questionnaires (55.9% of the 43 completed questionnaires) were received from participants in category A, whereas 19 (44.1%) were collected from participants in category B. SPSS 15 was utilized to analyse the data and find correlations. T-test was applied to measure results' significance and credibility; on the contrary, ANOVA test was inapplicable, as it requires comparing the data of three sample groups at least.

Table 1: Profile of responding travel intermediaries

Profile	Frequency
Type (%)	
Travel agency	58.1%
Tour Operator	39.5%
Others	2.3%
Selling Egyptian tour packages (%)	
Yes	55.9%
No	44.1%
No. of visiting Egypt (mean)	
Category (A)	4.2 visits
Category (B)	2.8 visits
Overall	3.5 visits

Analyzing the respondents' profile (table 1) reveals that the majority of the respondents (58.1%) are travel agencies. Tour operators follow by 39.5%, while 2.3% of the respondents prefer to describe themselves as "others". In average, respondents have had 3.5 visits/respondent to Egypt, with a considerable difference between the average of visits for respondents in category A (4.2 visits) and in category B (2.8 visits). At this point, it is noteworthy to mention that only four out of all the 43 participants declared that they have never been to Egypt before. Thus, it could be claimed that a significant percentage of the participants (90.7%) had had personal experience in Egypt, which should enhance their ability to provide efficient and genuine conclusions.

BRITISH TOURIST DEMAND TOWARD EGYPT

Egypt has always been a worldwide popular tourism destination. It is not only the incomparable, numerous archeological sites that make Egypt a major tourism destination, but also the Red Sea resorts, deserts, and the Nile; that is besides acceptable quality of tourism services and facilities. During the last four decades, tourism has become an indispensable source for the development of the Egyptian economy especially in terms of employment and securing foreign currency. For instance, in 2009 Egypt received about 12.5 million tourists, who expended approximately 10.7 billion dollars, representing about 11.3% of the Egyptian GDP, 39% of the Egyptian non-commodity exports and 19.5% of Egypt's foreign currency revenues (Ministry of Tourism, 2010).

International demand from certain markets - mainly Germany, the UK, Italy, France and more recently Russia - has always been crucial for the progress of Egyptian tourism. In the modern era, the flow of British tourists toward Egypt started with the early tours of Thomas Cook, who organized his first tour to Egypt in 1869 (Thomas Cook, 2011). Cook's promotion presented Egypt as an attractive warm destination with plenty of unmatched heritage sites. Since that date, the British market has always been of special importance for the Egyptian tourism industry. Table 2 shows that during the last decade (2000--2009) UK was one of few markets which achieved continuous growth in the number of tourists visiting Egypt. The British market came at best first in 2006 and at worst fifth in 2000 and 2001 among the markets sending tourists to Egypt. UK was the first market to exceed the barrier of one million tourists visiting Egypt in 2006. Today, British tourists represent above 10.8% (i.e. 1.35 million tourists) of the international tourist arrivals to Egypt, contributing 1.1 billion US dollars to the Egyptian economy (Ministry of Tourism, 2010). On the contrary, Egypt does not emerge as a significant tourism destination from the British perspective as it at most gets a share of 2.46% (2009) of the British outgoing tourism market, although statistics show an incremental expansion in that share.

Table 2: Trends of British tourism toward Egypt

Year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
No. of British tourists (in millions)	0.33	0.35	0.36	0.36	0.55	0.84	1.03	1.06	1.20	1.35
Ranking of the British tourism market in Egypt	5	5	4	4	4	2	1	3	3	2
Share of the British tourism market in Egypt	5.8%	6.0%	6.9%	6.0%	6.8%	9.8%	11.3%	9.6%	9.4%	10.8%
British tourists visiting Egypt to international British tourists	0.58%	0.60%	0.61%	0.59%	0.87%	1.27%	1.48%	1.52%	1.74%	2.46%

Source: Ministry of Tourism, 2010

Chronological analysis of table 2 shows that, from an Egyptian point of view, the British market has thrived over the last ten years. Such conclusion does not rely only on the incremental number of British tourists who have been visiting Egypt, but also on their share in the Egyptian tourism market, which has almost been doubled from 5.8% in 2000 to 10.8% in 2009. Most importantly, Egypt has also been able to enlarge its share of the British outgoing market from less than 0.6% to almost 2.5% during the same period. In other words, one of each ten tourists visiting Egypt is British, whereas almost 25 of each one thousand British tourists are heading to Egypt. Finally, the British market has ensured its position as a major market for Egyptian tourism by always being among the top five markets sending tourists to Egypt.

RESULTS

Respondents' viewpoint regarding present and future impacts of the recent events in Egypt (i.e. the revolution and its consequences) as well as the period required for getting tourism back to normal are provided in table 3.

Although the majority of the respondents in the two categories (66.7% and 52.6% respectively) believe that, compared to the pre--revolution image, the recent events are currently affecting negatively the image of Egypt as a tourist destination, respondents in category A seem to be more frustrated. They are not just more disappointed regarding the present situation; they are also less optimistic regarding the revolution's impact on the image of Egypt in the near future (the following two years). Such aggravation could be justified by the fact that it is the category which has lost its business in Egypt.

Table 3: The current and future effect of the Egyptian revolution on the image of Egypt as a tourism destination

	Category A	Category B	Mean ($\bar{X}$)
Compared to pre-revolution, the recent events are currently contributing to the image of Egypt.			
Positively	8.3%	5.3%	6.8%
Did not change	20.8%	31.6%	26.2%
Negatively	66.7%	52.6%	59.7%
Do not know	4.2%	10.5%	7.4%
Compared to pre-revolution, it is more likely that in the near future (1 – 2 years) the current changes will contribute to the image of Egypt as a tourism destination.			
Positively	41.6%	57.9%	49.8%
Will not change	29.2%	21.1%	25.2%
Negatively	25.0%	5.3%	15.2%
Do not know	4.2%	15.8%	10.0%
Assuming Egypt will be stable again today, how long will it take to be back to normal?			
It is already normal	–	–	–
Less than 3 months	12.5%	10.5%	9.4%
3 – 6 months	12.5%	15.8%	18.3%
6 – 12 months	45.6%	57.9%	56.1%
More than 12 months	29.2%	15.8%	16.3%
Will not be back to normal	–	–	–

However, 41.6% of the respondents in category A deem that within the following one to two years, the image of post-revolution Egypt will likely be more positive compared to the image of pre-revolution Egypt. This segment is followed by 29.2% who think that even if the current events are resulting in political and social changes, this is not going to change the image of Egypt as a tourist destination in the near future. On the contrary, one of every four respondents in this category records that the image of Egypt will be still suffering from the negative impacts of the current events in the near future.

On the other hand, respondents in category B appear to be more optimistic with 57.9% of its members reckoning that the image of Egypt will be more positive in the near future; and only 5.3% suppose the opposite. Finally, the two categories agree that Egypt will need 6 to 12 months of stability to get tourism back to normal (45.6% and 57.9% respectively). Almost the same percentage (74.8% and 73.7% successively) in the two categories assert that tourism will require six months or more before thriving again in Egypt. Unsurprisingly, none of all the 43 respondents select the option "it is already normal" or "it will never be back to normal".

Table 4: Cognitive and affective attribute of the image of Egypt as a tourism destination

Image Attributes (Scale 1-10)	Category A	Category B	Mean ($\bar{X}$)	t-value	Sd.	Sig.
Affective						
Unpleasant - Pleasant	5.8	4.8	5.3	2.29	1.42	0.027 a
Sleepy - Arousing	6.2	5.4	5.8	1.80	1.45	0.080 b
Distressing - Relaxing	5.9	5.0	5.5	2.19	1.36	0.034 a
Gloomy - Exciting	6.3	5.4	5.9	1.69	1.86	0.099 b
Average of affective attributes	6.1	5.2	5.6			
Cognitive						
Boring- Interesting	7.7	6.2	7.0	3.06	1.59	0.004 a
Isolated - Accessible	6.6	5.4	6.0	2.48	1.58	0.017 a
Stagnant – Lively	6.9	6.3	6.6	1.33	1.37	0.190
Unfriendly - Friendly	7.9	6.9	7.4	2.04	1.56	0.048 a
Noisy – Quiet	4.4	5.6	5.0	-3.27	1.25	0.002 a
Overcrowded - Sparse	3.5	4.6	4.1	-2.63	1.40	0.012 a
Average of cognitive attributes	6.2	5.8	6.0			
Average of both attributes	6.2	5.5	5.8			
The overall impression of Egypt	6.6	6.0	6.3			

a Significance at 0.05 or better probability level

b significance at 0.10 or more than 0.05 probability level

Structured evaluation of destination image is a common procedure in related research, where a set of predetermined cognitive and affective attributes are evaluated (Pike, 2002). Analyzing the Egyptian structured image (table 4) reveals numerous issues. First, Egypt is generally perceived cognitively ($\chi = 6.0$) better than affectively ($\chi = 5.6$). This simply means that the relatively brighter side of the image of Egypt is built mostly upon a wise recognition of the travel intermediaries rather than a sentimental motivation. However, this result is logical considering that the research relies on the opinions of travel intermediaries rather than tourists, where the former will most probably evaluate destinations according to rational rather than emotional factors.

Further analysis of table 4 reveals five additional results. First, despite being more aggressive when describing the negative impacts of the recent events on the image of Egypt (table 3), in both affective and cognitive evaluations, respondents in category A are still seeing the Egyptian image in a more positive way ($\chi = 6.2$ cognitive and 6.1 affective) comparing to category B ($\chi = 5.8$ cognitive and 5.2 affective) (chart 1). Second, category A estimates the Egyptian cognitive attributes ($\chi = 6.2$) slightly higher than its affective attributes ($\chi = 6.1$); whereas the difference in estimations is larger in the case of category B ($\chi = 5.8$ for cognitive and 5.2 for affective attributes). Third, while the difference between the two categories' cognitive estimations is relatively small ($\chi = 6.2$ and 5.8 in respective), a significant difference exists between their opinions regarding the affective attributes ($\chi = 6.1$ and 5.2 in respective). Fourth, in all the affective elements, category A has higher evaluations than category B. This could be justified considering that category A is selling Egyptian packages and its members have visited Egypt more than category B, which might enhance their sentimental bonds with the destination. This assumption fits with the early-motioned theory presented by several researchers (e.g. Russell, 1980; Russell & Snodgrass, 1987; Tasci, 2009) that the more rational knowledge which individuals have about a certain destination, the more emotional links they have with that destination. Fifth, Egypt is surely suffering from a serious problem concerning crowdedness and noisiness. Unsurprisingly, members of category A, who have been to Egypt more times, are aware of the problem more than members of category B.

Finally, respondents were asked to record their overall impression of the current image of Egypt. Comparing the overall impression of the two categories ($\chi = 6.6$ and 6.0 in respective) against their averages of both cognitive and affective attributes ($\chi = 6.2$ and 5.5 successively) expose clearly that their overall impressions are higher than their averages of attributes (chart 2).

Chart 1: Categories A and B cognitive and affective attributes

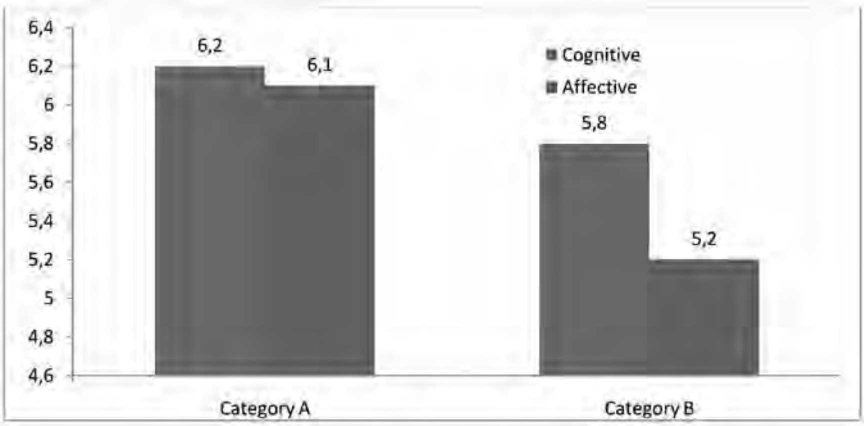
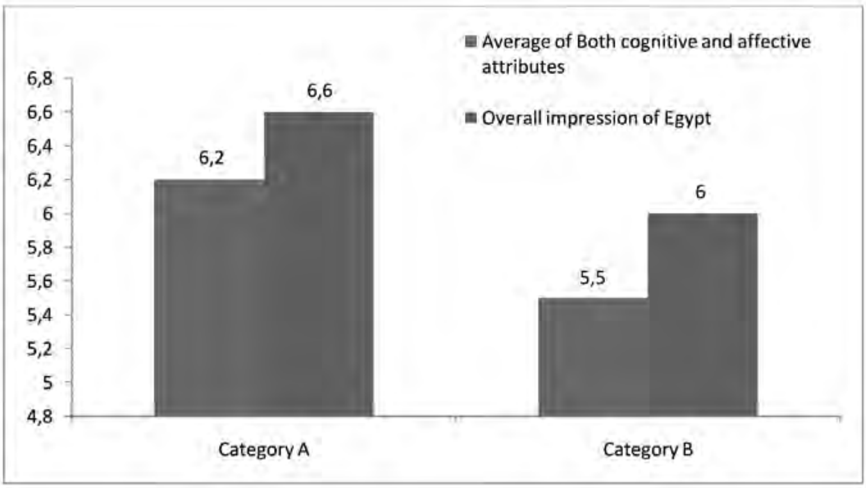


Chart 2: Categories A and B overall impression



Understanding the unstructured image is critically important as it enables forming the destination image as described in the respondents' own terms. As shown in table 5, Egypt's main strength locates, as expected, in its cultural and historical background, which still dominates the formation of its image. The vast majority of the respondents (37 out of 43) refer in a way or another to the Egyptian enrooted culture and/or history. Descriptions such as "culture", "ancient", "monument", "history", "Pyramids", "Tut Ankh", and "Luxor" represent 28.7% of the total meaningful words. Second, the incremental demand on recreational activities, especially in the Red Sea resorts, forms a major part of the current image of Egypt. Comments such as “beaches”, “exclusive resorts”, “Sharm el Sheikh”, and “Red Sea” represent 15.5% of the total provided descriptions. Weather comes then as the third most recognized element in forming the Egyptian image with 12.4% of the responses. The current political and social changes stand out as the fourth element distinguishing the image of Egypt with 10.9%.

Table 5: UK-based travel intermediaries unstructured image of Egypt

Rank	Description (examples)	N	% of meaningful words
1.	Culture, ancient, monument , history, pyramids, Tut, Tut Ankh, Luxor	37	28.7%
2.	Beaches, exclusive resorts, Sharm el Sheikh, Red Sea	20	15.5%
3.	Hot, heat, sun	16	12.4%
4.	New Egypt, exciting change, revolution, Tahrir Square	14	10.9%
5.	Instability, volatile, hectic, violence	12	9.3%
6.	Crowded, noisy, traffic jams	11	8.3%
7.	Charming, fascinating; great travel destination, attractive	8	6.2%
8.	Friendly, Arabs, Muslims	5	3.9%
9.	Value, good price, cheap packages	3	2.4%
10.	Others (poor, dirt, sharks)	3	2.4%
Total		129	100%

On the contrary, the negative side of the Egyptian image emerges at the fifth, sixth and tenth ranks (jointly, 20% of the unstructured features). Resembling the structured image analysis, crowdedness and noisiness appear as one of the major negative unstructured features. The other negative features vary from recent and temporary problems such as “shark attacks” to what could be described as chronic problems such as “violence” and ”instability”. These late problems could be noticed as well in Baloglu and Mangaloglu’s research (2001) where 9% of the respondents (i.e. USA travel intermediaries) used words such as dangerous, militaristic or terroristic to describe the image of Egypt. At that time, these descriptions were linked to the terrorist attacks, which had taken place in Egypt during the 1990s. Nowadays, almost the same features emerge again with nearly the same percentage (9.3%), and from relatively similar participants (i.e. UK travel intermediaries) but for different reasons (i.e. domestic violence).

Analyzing the sources of information, which have affected the participants’ perception of the image of Egypt before and during the revolution resulted in table 6 and charts 3, 4, 5 and 6. Examining the data of category A (chart 3) shows that before the revolution, respondents were heavily depending on two major sources for establishing their image: "overt sources" including Egyptian suppliers and promotion; and "organic sources" embracing personal travel and customers' feedback. This is rational as category A is definitely more exposed to the Egyptian promotional activities, Egyptian suppliers and UK customers. In addition, its members have been traveling more to Egypt. However, this situation did not continue during the revolution where category A was depending completely on different sources for composing its image including television, radio, newspapers and internet. Clearly, they are all "autonomous sources". This simply means that during such ambiguous circumstances, category A did not rely chiefly on overt sources (e.g. Egyptian suppliers); most probably, assuming that these sources may provide less credible information about the situation. Alternatively, they preferred to go to more neutral and unspecialized sources.

Table 6: Sources of information contributing to the image before and during the revolution

Rank	Elements contributing to image formation	Before			During		
		Category A	Category B	Mean	Category A	Category B	Mean
1.	Television	87.5%	84.2%	85.9%	100%	100%	100%
2.	Radio	58.3%	52.6%	55.5%	87.5%	89.5%	88.5%
3.	Newspaper	79.2%	84.2%	81.7%	83.3%	89.5%	86.4%
4.	Internet	91.2%	89.5%	90.4%	79.2%	73.7%	76.5%
5.	Documentaries	45.8%	31.6%	38.7%	-	-	-
6.	Magazines	41.2%	36.8%	39.0%	16.7%	10.5%	13.6%
7.	Movies	12.5%	10.5%	11.5%	-	-	-
8.	Non-fiction books	29.2%	15.8%	22.5%	-	-	-
9.	Novels and stories	8.3%	10.5%	9.4%	-	-	-
10.	Egyptian tourism suppliers	100%	10.5%	55.3%	45.8%	-	22.9%
11.	Promotional materials	100%	31.6%	65.8%	8.3%	-	4.2%
12.	Customers' feedback	91.7%	15.8%	53.8%	20.8%	-	10.4%
13.	Friends & such alike	54.2%	47.7%	51.0%	33.3%	15.8%	24.6%
14.	Personal Travel	95.9%	84.2%	89.9%	4.2%	-	2.1

Chart 3: Sources of information contributing to the image of category A before and during the revolution

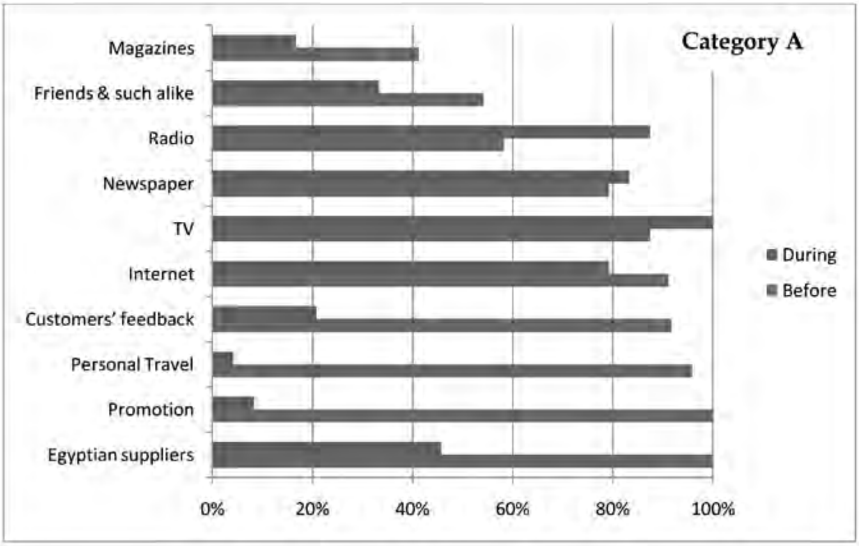


Chart 4: Sources of information contributing to the image of category B before and during the revolution

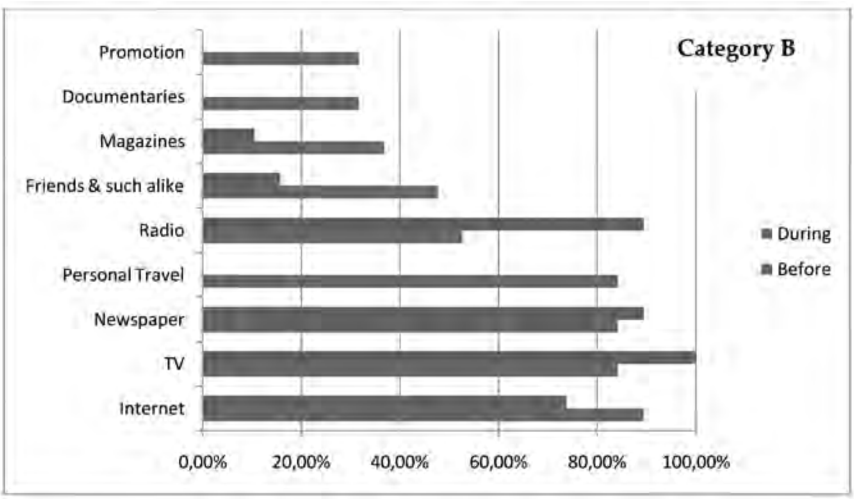


Chart 5: Sources of information contributing to the image of categories A and B before the revolution

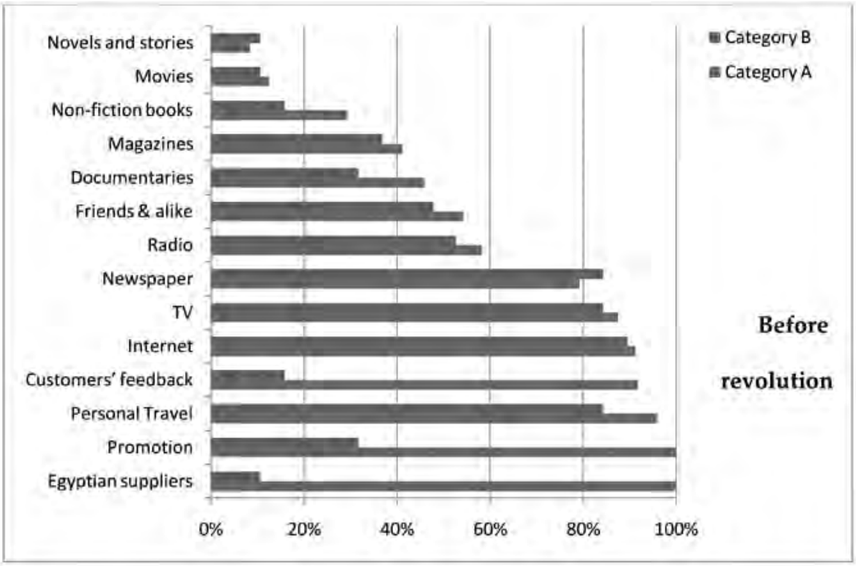
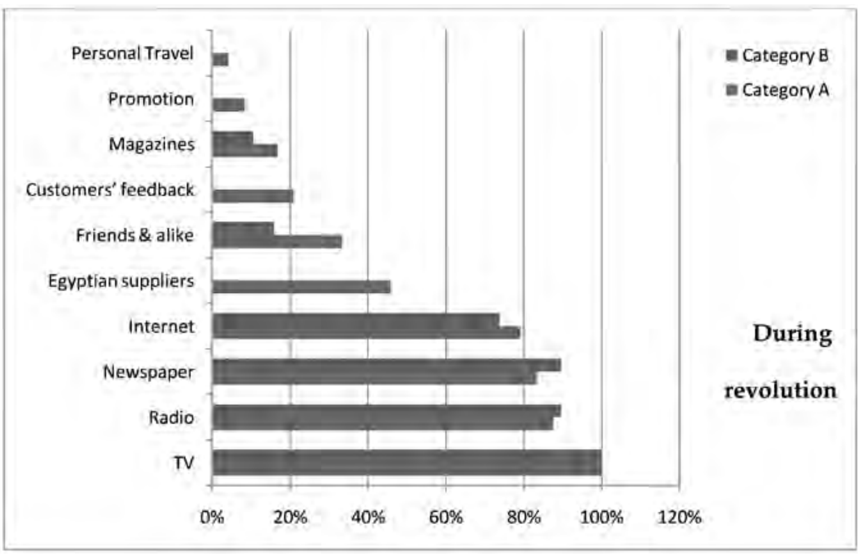


Chart 6: Sources of information contributing to the image of categories A and B during the revolution



Regarding category B, no significant difference emerges concerning what they were relying on before and during the revolution. Before the revolution, respondents were mainly affected by autonomous factors including Internet, TV and newspapers, as well as personal travel. During the revolution, little difference exists as all the first three autonomous factors as well as radio were the major elements affecting their image of Egypt. Comparing responses of both category A and B (charts 5 and 6) reveals that while there was significant difference between their sources before the revolution, they both depended on exactly the same sources to establish their image during the recent events.

CONCLUSION

Despite the importance of identifying the image of Egypt for setting proper marketing strategies, and the undeniable importance of travel intermediaries for the success of the tourism sector especially for a country like Egypt, where the major share of incoming tourists arrives through travel agencies, few studies have been conducted to investigate these two areas. In the same context, over the last two decades, Egypt has been through several irritating situations which have negatively affected its image as a tourism destination. Recently, Egypt has been into a new situation, where thoughts have been interfering. On one hand, pessimists deem that these incidents will add more dirt to the image of Egypt. On the other hand, optimists assume that the potential, positive social and political changes as well as the massive, supportive media coverage will enhance that image in the medium or long term.

The incidents taking place are currently affecting the image of Egypt negatively. Travel intermediaries who sell Egyptian packages receive these incidents more dismally than other travel intermediaries do. However, the participants' viewpoint changes considerably regarding the near future as almost half of the participants assume that these incidents will end up contributing positively to the image of Egypt. Egypt will most probably need 6 to 12 months of stability to get back the normal volume of tourism demand. Thus, longer instability would definitely make it more difficult for tourism to get back to normal as soon as the Egyptian stakeholders wish.

The Egyptian current image could hardly be described as a shiny one, where both cognitive and affective attributes are barely satisfactory. In general, Egypt is perceived more positively concerning its cognitive attributes, where it has an acceptable image as a friendly, interesting, lively and accessible destination. On the contrary, Egypt is recognized poorly regarding quietness and sparseness. In terms of unstructured image, cultural and historical themes still stand out as the most sparkling component of the Egyptian image. Recreational activities then come as the second most important element. In addition to the frequent crowdedness and noisiness quandaries, instability and violence emerge as serious problematic issues, where most of them have been part of the Egyptian image for long time. Definitely, the continuity of such problems will contribute to building up a negative image instead of the current barely satisfactory one.

Examining the factors contributing to the Egyptian image reveals that different sources are applicable in different periods and by different categories. For travel intermediaries that sell Egyptian packages, a combination of "overt" and "organic" factors played the key role in forming the image of Egypt before the revolution. During the revolution, respondents in this category switched completely to use autonomous sources including TV, radio, newspapers and Internet. This should alert the Egyptian tourism stakeholders that the UK travel intermediaries do not rely on sources such as Egyptian tourism suppliers, promoters or official authorities when it comes to information during crisis. Accordingly, during similar situations, efforts of enhancing the Egyptian image should be redirected to international and public (not specialized) means of communication. On the other hand, autonomous sources have always been the main factor contributing to forming the image of Egypt in case of travel intermediaries that are not selling Egyptian packages. However, more efforts are necessary to enhance the Egyptian positive features (e.g. friendly and exciting destination) and to improve the drawbacks (e.g. crowded and noisy) of the Egyptian current image.

Finally, Egyptian researchers are invited to analyze the influence of social, political and economic factors on the Egyptian image, as well as explore the relationship between affective and cognitive image. It will also be significant to examine and compare between the image of Egypt from the perspective of different nationalities (e.g. British, Germans, Arabic segments), practitioners (e.g. recreational tourists, cultural tourists, adventure lovers), genders (i.e. male and female), and age.

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