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**THE IMPACT OF A CITY'S CULTURAL IDENTITY COMMUNICATION
STRATEGY ON THE CITY'S TOURISM INDUSTRY: CASE OF JEDDAH, SAUDI
ARABIA**

**By
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**A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillments of the Requirements of the Degree
Bachelor of Science in Marketing**

College of business

Effat University


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Certification of Approval

We hereby grant the approval of this dissertation report. The student has compiled the dissertation work as per the requirements of the University.

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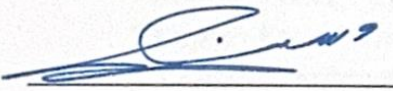
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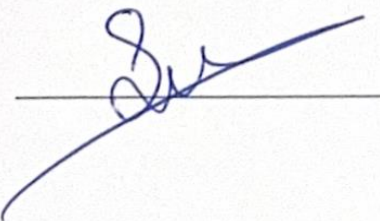
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Abstract

The research paper investigates the connection between cultural identity communication strategies and tourism in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Which highlights the city's cultural heritage and its potential influence on tourism. The study evaluates residents' perception of the city's cultural identity and how effective current marketing activities are by collecting data through a comprehensive questionnaire from Jeddah's residents.

The results indicate that a substantial number of respondents recognise the significance of the city's cultural heritage, while some of them are uncertain about the effectiveness of current marketing communication activities. However, when residents are asked about encountering marketing materials promoting the city's cultural heritage, a huge percentage of them reported that only occasionally. Moreover, the research emphasises the importance of engaging cities' stakeholders, especially residents, in improving tourism. The study provides valuable insights for developing Jeddah's tourism attraction by leveraging the city's precious cultural heritage, although it addresses challenges associated with marketing activities effectiveness and cultural commodification.

1. Introduction

The international tourism industry has demonstrated significant growth and resilience in recent years, recovering remarkably from the challenges presented by the Covid-19 pandemic. The tourism sector around the world is, according to UN tourism news, experiencing a significant recovery, with roughly 790 million tourists recorded in the first seven months of the year 2024, which is an increase of 11% compared to last year, 2023, and only 4% below before the Covid-19 pandemic levels in 2019. These numbers indicate a strong international demand for travel, which is driven by eased restrictions and enhanced air connectivity. Moreover, in this recovery the Middle East has shown a huge recovery percentage with a 26% increase in global arrivals above 2019 figures, with Saudi Arabia dramatically increasing its visitor arrivals by 73%.

Additionally, tourism receipts have shown an increase, with various countries reporting strong growth in contrast to pre-pandemic figures. For instance, Saudi Arabia's tourism revenues increased significantly by 207% in the months of 2024. In general, international tourism is expected to reach USD 1.8 trillion in export incomes, recovering to almost pre-Covid-19 crisis levels (UN Tourism, September 2024).

Nevertheless, challenges remain in the tourism sector because of inflation, global economic uncertainties, and high travel costs. While the UN Tourism Confidence Index suggests a positive view for the next half of 2024 with a continuance of growth in the industry.

However, cities around the world have a huge role in the tourism industry, acting as cultural hubs that attract tourists through their marketing strategies and distinct identities. For instance, destinations in Europe have a strategy that emphasises urban wellness tourism to attract visitors. While many European towns' locations are offering comprehensive wellness elements to tourists, the DMOs, Destination Management Organisations, are stressing these services in their marketing activities to distinguish themselves in the increasing competition (Saari, 2022).

In addition, Paris has achieved success in repeat visitors by creating strategies that attend to tourists' particular interests and motivations. These repeat tourists tend to distinguish themselves from new travellers by looking for experiences that allow them to avoid prime tourist locations and involve themselves in Parisian everyday life (Freitag, 2010). This strategy has helped Paris remain in its position as a leading tourism city. Also, London is one of the world's top tourism destinations and has continually been a gateway for national and

international tourists. Moreover, Singapore has strongly been attracting visitors through its dynamic tourism branding strategies.

Nevertheless, cities face some challenges in managing and planning tourism because of its complex social, political, and economic functions (Maxim, 2020). Other cities such as Dubai have shown success in attracting a huge number of visitors, but it faces similar challenges in preserving its competitiveness and sustainability (Maxim, 2020).

While Saudi Arabia in recent years has been focusing on developing its tourism sector, Jeddah is one of the most important cities that attracts a huge number of tourists from around the world. Jeddah is emerging as a thriving cultural hub and a gateway to the holy destinations of Mecca and Medina. In a world where cities are distinguishing themselves by communicating their unique attributes and cultural heritage, Jeddah's rich culture, history, art, and tradition provide a unique experience to tourists.

Also, Saudi Arabia initially expects to reach 100 million visitors by 2030. However, according to the Saudi Arabia Ministry of Tourism, in 2023 the number of tourists will reach 81.92 million. As a result, based on Arab News, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman instructed to revise up the target of 100 million to 150 million visitors by 2030 (Walid, 2023).

Destinations in Saudi Arabia are experiencing enormous cultural and architectural changes, influencing their marketing and identity communication strategies. These transformations are driven by rapid economic diversification, the country's Vision 2030 project, and urbanisation (Greco, 2021; Moscatelli, 2022). Saudi Arabia's traditional cultural identity is being reformed by civilisation and modernisation. For instance, in Buraydah, in Saudi Arabia, the traditional fabric has been significantly changed in socio-economic patterns, physical structure, and cultural norms, resulting in a loss of rhetorical identity (Al-Ansi et al., 2022).

Furthermore, prime cities such as Jeddah, Riyadh, and Dammam have undergone significant architectural developments because of rapid expansion and planning (Moscatelli, 2022). Nevertheless, there are attempts to maintain and integrate cultural heritage into modern advancements. For instance, some projects aim to integrate Saudi Arabian traditions of architecture into 3D-printed buildings, which integrate cultural heritage with advanced technology (Moscatelli, 2024). In Riyadh, there are efforts in strengthening cultural identity

through the architectural design of public structures that demonstrate Saudi heritage while following sustainable practices (Moscatelli, 2022).

Regarding marketing communication of the country, Saudi Arabia displays a unique challenge for global and national brands. Studies have indicated that promotional campaigns in Saudi Arabia are more likely to succeed and influence customers when they include common principles and maintain local identity (Abokhoza & Hamdalla, 2019). Moreover, social media marketing is more popular in Saudi Arabia when it comes to fashion businesses utilising it to increase awareness and brand value (Alatawy, 2021).

Additionally, economic, technological, and cultural factors impact the integration of digital marketing by small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Saudi Arabia (Algumzi, 2022). Furthermore, Saudis care about their Islamic values, traditions, and family values. Research has indicated that customers in Saudi Arabia's engagement levels increase with content associated with their Islamic and family custom values (Abuljadail & Badghish, 2021). These findings suggest that adhering to Saudis' traditional and Islamic principles is crucial, and marketing activities should think and act locally in their communication strategies.

However, Saudi Arabia has a diverse and rich cultural heritage that reflects a combination of pre-Islamic and Islamic civilisation, which is a precious legacy for various generations (Alshehaby, 2024). Also, the country has a cultural heritage that incorporates different aspects, including foods, clothing, rock art, traditional architecture, and language.

Saudi Arabia is among the most valuable rock art internationally, with more than thousands of painted rock art, ancient Arabian inscriptions, and petroglyphs demonstrating diverse cultural civilisation from the Neolithic generation till the recent past (Khan, 2013). There are efforts to preserve the cultural heritage; for instance, a law was newly introduced in 2014 to preserve the locations and art and fill the gap in the initial legislation in 1972 (Alshehaby, 2024).

However, this legal protection only preserves the tangible aspects of the culture, while the intangible cultural heritage is unprotected, which is equally important (Alshehaby, 2024). However, there are attempts to protect the symbolic and intangible cultural heritage, such as the Atlas of Saudi Arabia, which is an initiative aimed to preserve and document national clothing, Saudi dialect, traditional cuisines, and eating habits of each region (Abdessalem et al., 2021).

Jeddah, or as it is popularly called the (Bride of the Red Sea, has a precious cultural heritage originating as early as 646 AD. Its legacy core, the al-Balad area, since the city's establishment has been preserved, and in 2014 it was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage site (Elfadaly et al., 2019). Jeddah's historical values are traced back to 250 BC, with improvement happening in pre-Islamic and Islamic periods. The city's wealth was based on its ditions as a prime Red Sea merchandising centre and an entry point for pilgrims to Mecca, contributing to a diverse and thriving society (Abouhassan, 2020).

In addition, Jeddah's preservation can be credited to Mamluk Sultan Al-Ghori, who gave instructions to construct a reinforced wall in 1509, which protected the city from Bedouin and Portuguese attacks (Bagader, 2014). Despite that, early city development has led to a different pattern in space, impacting the historical destination with environmental challenges and unplanned improvement (Elfadaly et al., 2019). However, there are attempts to revitalise the cultural heritage of the city, such as the historical Hajj Route, which aims to enhance the sense of belonging and identity and provide a pleasing experience for visitors (Abouhassan, 2020). Also, efforts are being made to preserve the Al-Balad district, which has a diverse and rich cultural heritage.

The tourism sector presents huge opportunities for countries to enhance their economic condition, while marketing communication efforts and cultural identity play a significant role in improving the tourism industry of a city. Furthermore, with Saudi Arabia's 2030 Vision project, which aims to diversify the economy, promoting the tourism sector is a key pillar of the country's development. While Jeddah is one of the most important cities in Saudi Arabia that encompasses unique attributes, cultural heritage, and traditions, the city seeks to improve its position as an attractive visitor destination. Therefore, understanding and investigating the city's communication strategy of its cultural identity and its tourism industry performance is hugely important. As well as the relationship between these two factors.

This research paper is significant because it provides insights on how marketing communication activities of cities' cultural identity can impact the tourism industry; especially, it can potentially inform Jeddah's tourism enhancement strategies. The research paper aims to investigate the effect of a city's cultural identity communication strategy on the city's tourism industry, especially the case of Jeddah in Saudi Arabia.

Additionally, the objectives of this study are assessing the impact of Jeddah's cultural identity communication strategies on its tourism industry and the effectiveness of these strategies. As well as the residents' perceptions of the communication and marketing efforts of the cultural identity of Jeddah.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The concept of city branding

City branding is defined as a tool to attain a competitive advantage that enables a city to strengthen its investment and tourism attraction and enhance local identity in order to avoid social elimination (Kavaratzis, 2004). Furthermore, it defines city branding as 'City branding is a strategic instrument to publicise a city's competitive advantages' (Zhang and Zhao 2009). Therefore, both authors agree that city branding is an instrument to achieve a distinctive selling point that differentiates the city from other cities.

The competitive advantage of a city is achieved by managing and communicating the unique image of the city. Nevertheless, city branding has a significant role in the tourism industry, as it improves the visibility and attractiveness of a city to potential tourists. If a city branding strategy is well-executed, it allows and enhances the city's marketability, which allows the city to distinguish itself in such a highly competitive tourism industry. Additionally, productive city branding can result in growth in local infrastructure and service investments, eventually enhancing the tourism industry through developing the quality of tourist attractions and facilities accessible to visitors (Pellokila et al., 2023).

2.2 The role of cultural identity in city branding

According to V. H.-H. Chen and the Centre for Intercultural Dialogue (2014), cultural identity is defined as an individual who identifies himself or feels a sense of belonging to a particular group of individuals, and these homogeneous groups are based on diverse cultural classifications such as religion, gender, nationality, and race. Cultural identity is formed and preserved by the process of sharing and communicating collective wisdom, including customs, language, heritage, norms, values, principles, and aesthetics.

While humans normally associate with many cultural groups, not only one specific group, but cultural identity is also complex and has multiple factors. In the past, scholars assumed individuals' affiliation with cultural groups to be stable and clear; however, nowadays scholars' points of view have changed to view identification with cultural groups as contextual and reliant on changes in place and time (V. H.-H. Chen & Centre for Intercultural Dialogue, 2014). Cultural identity is continually behaved, preserved, negotiated, and challenged by communication activities due to the globalised world with increasing cross-cultural interactions.

Cultural identity directly affects city branding, as it influences how a city is perceived by its citizens and visitors. It is an essential element that shapes the city's narrative and image, contributing to its unique and appealing characteristics. According to Luo and Ren (2020), cultural heritage serves as a fundamental tourism resource. It fosters direct interactions between tourists and cultural legacy, allowing them to experience the social and cultural values inherent in the culture.

The tourism industry is transforming and improving, as tourists' cultural taste has been constantly increasing, and the industrial position of cultural heritage tourism has become significant (Fu & Luo, 2023). Therefore, integrating cultural legacy and tourism has become an effective strategy to build a competitive advantage and promote the city image.

Additionally, people's interpretation of a place through three important lenses, which are personal experiences, forms of culture representation (novels, art, and movies), planning, and city design (Ashworth, 2009). City branding is effective if it builds the city's unique personality and features, which fosters interconnected relationships with tourists through satisfying experiences. By communicating cultural heritage, city branding can be enhanced, establishing a profound emotional connection that motivates tourism and local engagement (Soltani et al., 2017). We can say that the relationship between personal experience, cultural demonstration, and urban design is fundamental in building a city's branding and its unique cultural identity. City branding that includes these aspects can establish profound emotional connections, increase tourism, and stimulate local engagement, eventually contributing to the uniqueness and vitality of the city.

Moreover, cultural identity is crucial when it comes to attracting visitors to destinations because it gives an authentic and a distinguished experience that differentiates the city from

other destinations. The uniqueness of cities becomes significantly essential in the face of globalised cultures, which result in urban environment homogenisation (Hermawan & Sholihah, 2020). Therefore, destinations with great cultural identities, for example, Denpasar and Bali, attract a huge number of visitors from around the globe by effectively leveraging their unique cultural practices and landscapes (Prajnawrdhi et al., 2015).

Nevertheless, there might be a conflict between developing tourism and preserving cultural identity. For example, the significance of the place can be diminished at cultural heritage tourism areas when sometimes there is a disconnect between the original local culture and the presented identity (Anuar et al., 2021). In addition, commercial activities that aim to promote a city's culture to tourism can lead to compromising cultural sustainability and authenticity (Lestari & Paryanto, 2023). Therefore, cultural identity has a great potential to attract visitors and improve tourists' experiences by offering a sense of the city's authenticity.

Moreover, destinations that effectively leverage their unique cultural image into their strategies to attract tourists are more likely to develop a different experience that satisfies visitors who are actively seeking meaningful connection with local architecture, traditions, and art (Ardelean & Badulescu, 2022). Nevertheless, it is becoming increasingly important for cities to balance preserving their cultural heritage with tourism development to achieve authentic and sustainable journeys for tourists (Lestari & Paryanto, 2023).

2.3 The Relationship Between Cultural Identity and Tourism Experience: Factors Affecting Tourism Satisfaction

Cultural identity plays a crucial role in the travel experience of a destination. A study experiment has been done to explore whether cultural heritage has an impact on the perceived value of tourists' destinations or not. Where researchers divided cultural identity into two categories—transient active and stable cultural identity—the result demonstrated that stable cultural identity has an influence on the tourism destinations perceived value (Xue, 2014). Therefore, the perceived value of the destination is influenced by the cultural identity of the country, and countries with strong cultural identity are perceived as more valuable destinations.

Nevertheless, according to Fu and Luo's (2023) research, tourists' satisfaction is not hugely impacted by the cultural identity of the visited destination. The research paper statistics do not

indicate a direct relation between tourists' satisfaction and cultural identity. Alternatively, it shows that thorough mediating factors, travel experience, place attachment, and cultural identity influence visitors' satisfaction indirectly (Fu & Luo, 2023). As a result, considering mediating factors is essential to enhance and maximise the impact of cultural identity on tourism perceived values.

However, according to Marques et al. (2021), a research paper proposes a conceptual model on the relationship between the destination image of emerging tourist destinations and tourism satisfaction, indicating that effective city image communication has the most significant influence on tourists' satisfaction level and after-visit behaviour. Moreover, the study examines how the affective, cognitive, and unique components of a place's image affect tourists' satisfaction. Concluding that cognitive image and unique image have minimum to no influence on tourist satisfaction, while affective image has a significant effect on visitors' satisfaction. This study proves that the affective image of a city hugely influences visitors' satisfaction with the destination.

Another academic paper examines tourism satisfaction and destination attributes. The study finds that the destination attributes—accommodation, food and beverage, transportation, attraction, and food and beverage—significantly impact tourists' satisfaction. However, the study reveals that a city's safety does not influence tourism satisfaction (Biswas et al., 2020).

In addition, the effect of visitors' emotional involvement, defined as customers' emotional reaction during or after utilising a product (Sthapit et al., 2017), is an intermediary variable in the relationship between destination attributes and tourism satisfaction. Therefore, the study argues that tourism satisfaction is enormously affected by the destination features, which are accommodation, transportation, food, and attractions. Recommending that the more attractive the city features, the stronger the visitors' emotional involvement, eventually boosting tourism satisfaction.

2.4 Resident Engagement in City Branding

The global tourism industry has been hugely competitive, with various countries pushing their branding strategies to achieve competitive advantages. According to Thompson (2024), customers believe they are partners with the brand once the relationship with the brand is built.

While all the brand's stakeholders are important, many studies prove that residents (stakeholders) are most of the time excluded from the city branding effort, and tourists are the main focus. Research indicates that concentrating only on tourism can hinder branding productivity and can be misaligned with the aspirations of residents.

Based on Dastgerdi and De Luca (2019), an empirical analysis has been done on 24 cases of branding practices, indicating that most city branding research papers focus on external stakeholders (tourists). As a result, the brand is perceived as an outsider community event that does not relate to or impact the local population. Focusing the marketing activities on targeting visitors significantly limits the branding strategy's effectiveness and the city's unique characteristics (Dastgerdi & De Luca, 2019). Productive city branding includes both visitors and citizens of the city in the marketing communication strategy.

Castillo-Villar (2018) argues that residents should be an important part of the branding process, as they help to strengthen local identity and pride. Residents who feel valued and involved develop a positive perception of their countries, ultimately enhancing the overall city brand. Therefore, the paper strongly emphasises the importance of involving citizens in the branding process, as the more they are satisfied and proud, the more likely the citizens will serve as ambassadors for the city, which means communicating its values and benefits to external stakeholders. Furthermore, understanding and investigating how respondents perceive and relate to their hometowns and what they value about their cities are fundamental. Because governments and marketers can gain knowledge of local meanings and views attached to various aspects of the city, as a result, the marketing activities can resonate with both residents and visitors (Castillo-Villar, 2018).

According to Braun et al. (2013), residents are an essential part of branding a city because they are an integral part of the destination's brand, ambassadors of the city, co-creators of the city's values, and providers of valuable feedback. Local characteristics, norms, behaviours, and interactions play a huge part in the social milieu of the country, shaping the overall brand experience. Residents serve as brand ambassadors, as they communicate their hometown values through word of mouth, personal experience, and social networking, and they are perceived as credible sources of information. Also, by contributing to local activities and developing social connections, residents add to the city's value. Moreover, residents can shape and improve the brand identity by providing their feedback (Braun et al., 2013).

2.5 Communicating Designation's Cultural Identity

Cultural identity is a key factor in shaping the identity of towns and cities' communication strategy. A study on cities cultural identity in Boka Kotorska, especially Herceg Novi and Kotor, highlights the significance of emerging intangible cultural heritage in modern spaces. Which is important for maintaining the symbolic principles for the social community of the city and ensuring the familiarity of cultural identity in contemporary community. Furthermore, the paper investigates the influence between cultural heritage and tourism, finding that promoting cultural items from coastal destinations can improve tourists' images and positions of the destination as rich cultural locations. Sustainable cultural practices are highlighted in the paper, with the continued use of symbolic cultural elements being crucial for the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage in Boka Kotorska. The results also demonstrate the importance of spiritual and symbolic values associated with intangible cultural heritage in creating the cultural identity of the city. Therefore, the research paper emphasises the significance of intangible cultural heritage contribution to cultural and tourist affirmation in Boka Kotorska, promoting its efforts in preserving and integrating culture into modern practices (Lepetić, 2024).

Destinations most of the time utilise their cultural heritage as an instrument to secure symbolic principles of the social community and immerse them into modern cultural locations. Also, the decisive factor in the evolutionary course of destinations is the preservation of collective memory and identity (Samourkasidou & Kalergis, 2022).

Nevertheless, the increase in conflicts between states and nationalism has in some cases led to the marginalisation of important elements of cities' cultural heritage in an effort to develop a new national narrative. Which has led to the dissolution of urban continuity, influencing city development processes and dynamics, as well as city identity and self-definition in global urban networks (Samourkasidou & Kalergis, 2022). Also, cultural identity is increasingly associated with urban identity and image, especially in the context of the regeneration process in urban areas ("Culture, Heritage and Territorial Identities for Urban Development," 2022).

Cities often depend on tools from cultural heritage and creative fields to redevelop their identity and capitalise on place memory and traditions for place attachment and national identity. The administration of urban physiognomy and cultural heritage is a key element in shaping a city's identity (Samourkasidou & Kalergis, 2022). For example, local market streets can mobilise

beauty, traditional forms, and collective memory of local integration to stimulate feelings of belonging and local identity (Zukin, 2012).

Cultural identity is prime to the local community and societal identity of destinations and plays a major role in cities competitiveness in global and local contexts (Trumpp, 2019). Moreover, countries are increasingly acknowledging the significance of cultural identity in urban sustainability and are investigating innovative approaches to finance, govern, and observe urban performances, especially addressing underutilised and abandoned cultural heritage (Cerreta et al., 2021).

However, the challenge for modern destinations is to convert potential conflicts in intercultural environments into good synergic energy (Laotan-Brown, 2020). Additionally, the development of multidisciplinary approaches to address urban concerns associated with sustainability and heritage (Naheed & Shooshtarian, 2022). Communicating a destination's unique cultural identity is important in representing the city's identity, traditions, and history. The communication process involves many actors who are key to its effectiveness, especially if a city's heritage is acknowledged by more than its locals (Harlov-Csortán, 2023). Therefore, it suggests that local communities, cultural organisations, heritage specialists, and governments should collaborate their efforts to demonstrate and promote the destinations' unique heritage.

For example, the Fertő/Neusiedlersee transnational UNESCO World Heritage website recognises and demonstrates how cultural landscape is embedding multiculturalism, highlighting the significance of various actors' participation in communicating cultural heritage values (Harlov-Csortán, 2023). Eventually, effectively communicating cultural identity in specific heritage places requires balancing diverse factors. However, the process can be challenging because of the various stakeholders involved in the process, as well as considering the tourists' emotional interaction with sites' heritage (Fu & Luo, 2023).

Local music is a significant tool in communicating to define urban identity and represent cities because it connects people, local cultures, and destinations (Jucu, 2021). For instance, in Lugoj, Romania, where classical music plays a crucial role in defining the city's culture. The research paper recommends that cultural development strategies should include local music and improving touristic resources (Jucu, 2021).

Nevertheless, Chiang Mai city heritage in Thailand emphasises demonstrating its local identity through architectural design in the hospitality industry. Architecture designs convey different concepts that reflect the destinations' authentic identities (Kanchaikham & Takagi, 2024). The research paper suggests that local identity can be communicated in accommodation architecture through various important dimensions (Kanchaikham & Takagi, 2024). Firstly, the authors stress the significance of including traditions and culture in the design features because it demonstrates the unique identity of the destination and evokes stories about the local culture. As these traditional elements, which are incorporated in the architectural design, resonate with local heritage. Additionally, the authors highlight the importance of creating designs that help in promoting social communication and engagement with residents' lives, suggesting including communal gardens, sites, and facilities that improve cultural engagement and communication. Lastly, they address the need for visual access to green landscapes, advising that indoor areas should include green spaces that can visually enrich the visual appeal and atmosphere of the cultural destination. In general, the research paper recommendations focus on creating a comprehensive experience that preserves and honours the destination culture identity while resonating with tourists (Kanchaikham & Takagi, 2024).

Additionally, according to S. Chen and Shih's (2019b) research paper, which used content analysis of 81 Hong Kong films produced between 2008 and 2015, there are four important themes that create a framework for promoting a city through cinema in Hong Kong. Also, the findings highlight the prominence of communicating local identity and focusing on films as a tool of communication. The movies illustrate daily experience and various cultural dimensions—language, norms, cuisine, and customs—resulting in the communication of the original and unique characters of Hong Kong. Secondly, local films serve as a medium by which Hong Kong used it to demonstrate its local identity.

Moreover, the cinema emphasises specific area attributes, enriching distinct city communication strategies, and ultimately resonates with both national and international audiences. The study finds that local production of films enormously contributes to shaping the distinct city's image. Overall, the research paper focuses on that cinema is significant in city branding activities, recommending that although films are effective communication tools, they are only part of a larger strategy that incorporates diverse factors to communicate the local identity (S. Chen & Shih, 2019b).

However, according to Chan et al. (2019a), communication strategies of smart cities might slightly be different because tourists expect to be provided with essential characteristics that improve their quality of life. Also, the study highlights that hard attribute such as infrastructure and soft attributes including welfare, community members, public service, and governance are fundamental in commuting to smart destinations (Chan et al., 2019b).

Furthermore, Boes et al. (2016) demonstrate the interaction between soft and hard smartness as an essential competitive advantage in smart destination brand identity. In addition, this interplay results in an ecosystem infrastructure that has the potential for sustaining competitive advantage and improving the quality of life for tourists and locals in smart destinations (Boes et al., 2016).

2.6 Marketing strategies in communication approach

Traditional media communication relies on offline approaches, including magazines, newspapers, radio, broadcasts, and television (Andrews & Shimp, 2018). While digital media communication depends on online communication methods, including social media, search engine optimisation, websites, and online platforms. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of traditional approaches compared to digital communication methods differs across diverse purposes and situations.

In the rapidly evolving world, online communication strategies have become hugely significant in demonstrating and communicating cultures digitally, presenting opportunities for establishing cultural bonds and experiences (Semenko et al., 2024). Digital communication strategies have demonstrated positive influences on the perception of stakeholders in destination branding. Which includes platform accessibility, engagement rate, and content relevance in pirated as fundamental components of digital communication, with relevance of content being the most important predictor of perceived local attractiveness (Beddaa & Bentalha, 2024).

Nevertheless, countries are enormously integrating online communication strategies to improve their government and management paper, as well as marketing activities and stakeholder participation. Therefore, to enhance efficiency and reach in city management, outdated paper-based methods are replaced by digital technologies (O Fabiyi, 2020). This shift

has been seen in diverse aspects of city administrative and communication activities around the world.

Furthermore, in urban governance, websites and online platforms are being installed to replace traditional paper-based systems, providing more effective administrative efforts for developing cities (O Fabiyi, 2020). Additionally, in the domain of public broadcasting, the change from analogue to online television shows that digital advanced technologies can overcome obstacles of old approaches of communication (Sutanto & Rahmadiana, 2024).

Cities are improving their digital channels, including social media pages, mobile applications, and official websites, to position and define the cities' brand online (Manoharan & Wu, 2021). This digitised system enables town councils to promote their unique characters and position themselves as desirable areas or cities for investors, visitors, and residents (Manoharan & Wu, 2021; Manoharan et al., 2024).

The application of smart city projects across industries, for example, smart environments, ICT (information and communication technology), and smart economies, are evidence of how destinations are utilising data-driven and technology approaches to improve residents' involvement, economic growth, and environmental sustainability (Kadiri et al., 2023). Furthermore, the transition to linguistic strategies in digital communication has an important role in the way destinations create engagement and meaning to connect with their stakeholders in the digital world (Almamoory (Ph.D.) & Al-Khazaali, 2024).

In addition, cities are moving towards data collection approaches that boost the digitalisation of local governmental processes to encourage informed decision-making and sustainable development (Hernández et al., 2022). This methodology facilitates monitoring processes of KPIs (key performance indicators) and enhances the execution of strategic plans.

Moreover, online platforms such as TikTok and Instagram are being used by companies to communicate their corporate social responsibility (CSR) projects, showing the potential advantages of online strategies in developing target customer perceptions of sustainability activities (Syafrizaldi et al., 2023).

The shift from traditional to digital communication strategies in cities demonstrates an enormous transition in urban administration and stakeholder participation. Although traditional approaches such as town hall meetings are still used, the implementation of online platforms

provides cities with huge opportunities for more effective governance, branding, and residents participation (Sabil & Al-Battat, 2024). As a result, the more cities continue to leverage digital communication tools, the more digital tools are important in shaping cities' development and citizens' and visitors' experiences.

As evidence, we have seen city marketing communication strategies have been improving hugely in recent years, using diverse advanced technologies to improve their information and technologies (ICTs). This digitalisation movement allows cities to develop and communicate their position strongly across their nation and worldwide, particularly through tourism advertisement (Lestari & Agustiningsih, 2020).

Debatably, in industries such as the automobile sector, online digital communication tools were discovered to be useful and reliable, while traditional approaches such as word of mouth and television advertisements continued to have a greater influence in attracting potential customers to showrooms (Samson et al., 2014).

The contrast between digital and traditional communication methods uncovers fascinating contradictions. Although offline strategies of hiring Internet-based epidemiological research are more effective in sustaining participation in follow-up in contrast to digital campaigns (Nixon et al., 2022). Additionally, in retail advertisement communication, almost 80% of clients responded equally to online and print flyers, with 20% showing a higher response to print flyers (Ziliani et al., 2018). Therefore, these research papers indicate that traditional communication approaches still hold enormous value in certain saturations and conditions.

The comparison between the effectiveness of digital and traditional communication methods depends upon the particular target customer and context. While digital communication has demonstrated strong potential in areas like B2B sales processes and place branding (Licong & Ghosh, 2023). Traditional approaches continue to be relevant in customer relationship management and retail promotion (Ziliani et al., 2018).

Significantly, digital communication often strengthens instead of displaces traditional forms of communication, especially in interpersonal relationships (Danielsbacka et al., 2022). A balanced method that integrates the advantages of traditional and digital communication approaches can result in greater influence in reaching and interacting with various audiences (Crețu, 2021).

Moreover, city branding is one of the important strategies in marketing a city, which is achieved by utilising diverse means, including advertising content, social media platforms, and cultural events. For example, the Sparkling Surabaya dance in Surabaya, which is a traditional event to demonstrate the city's unique identity through the dance (Lestari & Agustiningsih, 2020). Likewise, Saudi Arabia, London, Paris, Rome, etc., are utilising their official online platforms to develop and communicate cities' brand images.

However, the period of deindustrialisation in the UK, Europe, and North America has resulted in a transition in the city's economy, with urban industry being replaced with service industries like finance, marketing, and communication. This shift has encouraged redevelopment initiatives that most of the time use cultural identity as a strong tool for rebuilding city image (Hocaoğlu, 2017).

For example, Bangkok, Thailand, has been designated by UNESCO as 'Creative City of Design,' which demonstrates how cities can utilise their culture and creativity in their branding efforts (Prayudi et al., 2022). As a result, cities should concentrate on creating distinguished identities that interpret their goals and values, as well as addressing challenges (Putri, 2024).

Additionally, by combining social activities and totemic planning with physical development, cities can develop sustainable and vibrant images that attract and influence investment and cultural activities, eventually boosting cities' competitive advantage in such a competitive world (Putri, 2024). Overall, effective city marketing communication activities require both digital and traditional approaches, with integrated digital tools, creative projects, and cultural events.

2.7 Challenges in Communicating Cultural Identity

Various studies indicated that cities face enormous challenges in communicating their cultural identity. The large number of stakeholders involved in the city branding process is one of the main challenges, potentially leading to the elimination of support and understanding among key participants (Moilanen, 2015). This difficulty is further increased by cooperative issues, such as lack of managers to lead and struggles in securing sufficient funding used in branding projects (Moilanen, 2015).

Furthermore, embracing moralisation while preserving cultural heritages addresses a huge contradiction for many cities. For example, in Kanazawa, Japan, that maintains a delicate balance between historical destinations and traditional art while developing an innovative and contemporary identity (Prayudi et al., 2023). As well as Indian cities are facing obstacles with integrating modern architectural and planning approaches with cultural identity in the construction of temple corridors (Khandelwal et al., 2024). Cities should include effective branding strategies that balance both culture and innovation, engage various stakeholders, and integrate advanced technology to improve their communication activities of the city's cultural identity (Li et al., 2024). By considering these challenges, cities can develop enduring and impactful cultural images that appeal to both visitors and citizens.

Additionally, globalisation phenomena and advanced technology present a threat to eliminating local culture, making it difficult to preserve and represent a city's unique identity (Oladokun et al., 2024). Marketing and advertising strategies across cultures are standardised, potentially resulting in homogenous cultural messages, compromising the distinct and authentic attributes of a destination (Retnowati, 2016).

Another fundamental obstacle is the complexity in effectively communicating activities to audiences from various cultural backgrounds. Which requires a delicate consideration of language, visual representations, cultural norms, and communication style to deliver a message that resonates with the intended people and meaning (Retnowati, 2016). Moreover, the balance between adapting and standardising cultural messages in promotion and communication activities presents a challenge for cities that are trying to maintain their authenticity while attracting a greater number of audiences around the world (Retnowati, 2016).

The significant focus on modernisation and digital data can potentially lead to ignorance of cultural heritage and traditions, ultimately neglecting a significant part of society (Allam & Newman, 2023). Nevertheless, if it is implemented carefully, digital means such as storytelling might be a strong digital technology for demonstrating information about the cultural heritage that can lead to positively impacting public views of a destination (Nosrati & Detlor, 2021).

2.8 Case Studies of City Branding and Tourism

Across diverse destinations, city branding strategies have been globally implemented to advertise locations in order to attract tourists and tourism. Enormous case studies investigate the execution and effect of these strategies; for instance, in Medan, Indonesia, the city's tourism office has implemented digital marketing as a tool to promote the city as "Colourful Medan," which is the competitive advantage of the city. The aim was to develop the tourism industry through the utilisation of diverse social media and websites to communicate the city's image and attributes to potential visitors. Nevertheless, the study results indicate that foreign visitors did not know about these digital platforms (Zulmaini & Dirbawanto, 2022).

Similarly, a study investigates place branding literature on years from 2014 till 2018, which studied the effect of influencing elements on case selection trends, which focuses on seven hypotheses and examines them in similar cases. Findings indicate that scholar proximity hugely impacts case selection, but branding strategies, urban characteristics, tourism attraction, and marketing strategies have less influence on case selection. The concentration has changed from Europe to North America, Oceania, and Asia in the last several years (Lu et al., 2020).

Additionally, unique approaches have been adopted by some cities. For example, Tanjungsari Batok Tourism Village has implemented a branding strategy that focuses on distinguishing the city by positioning it as the main hub for shell carts in Indonesia (Andari & Suprayitno, 2020). Also, the strategy includes diverse marketing methods: attraction marketing, image marketing, community involvement, infrastructure marketing, local office collaboration, and event-based promotion. Furthermore, the local administrations manage tourism events to promote the village's attractive features and cultural identity. However, findings show that culinary offerings, traditional games, and shell coin purchasing experiences draw in tourists. Also, infrastructure improvement and official websites boost visitors' satisfaction. Local communities such as the Pokmas group involve the village's craftspeople and citizens in tourism improvement, as well as event-based promotion communicating traditional games and local handicrafts. Therefore, successful destination branding should include cooperation between local governments, culture observers, the community, and private industries to create appealing and holistic brand identity (Andari & Suprayitno, 2020).

However, rural tourism locations in Indonesia faced obstacles. For example, Pasuruan, one of the cities in Indonesia, struggles with poor management systems and a lack of resources to

cover innovative marketing strategies expenses, resulting in the solution of a destination branding strategy focusing on green space, positive brand experience, and an identified image. (Risanto & Yulianti, 2016). Overall, based on the discussed studies, city branding strategies are key factors in attracting tourists and promoting tourism. Although digital marketing and event-based advertisements are commonly utilised, the effectiveness of these plans and tools differs.

On the other hand, many cities emphasise communicating their cultural identity in their branding strategies, demonstrating the fundamental need to preserve and promote urban heritage, as well as adopting contemporary needs. For instance, in Doha and Singapore, local authorities have successfully negotiated the balance between local and international identity. These two cities have utilised identities and transnational regional networks as a cultural hub to be their main competitive advantage. Furthermore, these cities recognise their various cultural heritage and display it in the city landscape (Molho, 2019). This strategic approach showcases that destinations can preserve their cultural identity and position themselves on the international stage.

Additionally, other cities have utilised cultural institutions as a prime tool for urban renewal. For instance, the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, the city used museums as an instrument to attract tourism and address economic and urban problems (Kamar & Ismail, 2017). In addition, the study emphasises the significance of local involvement and balancing heritage and innovation. The importance of community involvement is to avoid potential community displacement and conflicts. Similarly, infrastructure issues must be addressed to encourage new constructions, as demonstrated in Luxor, a city in the southern part of Egypt (Kamar & Ismail, 2017). Overall, the implemented strategy in the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao preserves cultural heritage while contributing to the city's economic growth and universal recognition. Also, the study shows that constant evaluation of urban regeneration initiatives is important to be aware of their influences and adjust accordingly.

The importance of the research question and hypotheses lies in their capacity to direct the investigation towards valuable findings and conclusions. The study aims to fill existing gaps that may occur in current academic papers, as there is no academic study that addresses how cultural identity communication strategies influence the tourism industry in Jeddah. This study is relevant to Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, which highlights the significance of tourism and cultural heritage as factors that influence economic growth.

Nevertheless, there are five hypotheses of the research paper that are aligned with the research question and contribute significantly to the research investigation. The first hypothesis is that residents and citizens of Jeddah possess a comprehensive understanding of the city's cultural identity, which impacts their perception of Jeddah. This hypothesis is testable and predicts a connection between the two variables. H1 states that residents and citizens of Jeddah have a strong understanding of the city's cultural identity, which ultimately forms their perception of Jeddah. The aim of this hypothesis is to investigate how awareness of cultural identity impacts residents' and citizens' behaviour towards their urban environment, which can influence their overall engagement and satisfaction with the city.

The second hypothesis assumes that marketing communication activities currently are inadequate to reflect the precious cultural identity of Jeddah. Suggesting that there is a misalignment between marketing strategies implemented to promote Jeddah's cultural identity and its actual attributes. This hypothesis aims to evaluate whether the city's residents and citizens view these marketing activities as ineffective in communicating Jeddah's cultural heritage. H2 is based on the philosophy that successful marketing strategies should actually value a destination to resonate with a city's residents, citizens, and potential visitors. If marketing efforts do not interpret the essence of the city's cultural identity, they potentially result in misrepresentation, which can compromise both local pride and visitors' interest.

The third hypothesis is that locals who view marketing strategies as effective are more likely to believe these activities attract visitors. This hypothesis assumes a positive connection between locals' views of marketing strategies effectiveness and their opinions regarding the strategies' influence on tourism attraction. Its aim is to explore if locals believe that the implementation of marketing advertisements and campaigns can effectively attract tourists to Jeddah. The justification behind H3 is that successful marketing communication potentially can form public behaviour and perceptions hugely. Residents and citizens are more likely to engage with the marketing activities when they view marketing strategies as effective, resulting in a more profound belief that these efforts can draw in tourists. The resulting engagement can facilitate a sense of city pride and motivate locals to promote Jeddah.

The fourth hypothesis is that highlighting particular cultural aspects, like local traditions and historical sites, significantly improves the city's appeal as a tourist destination. This hypothesis posits that emphasising specific cultural attributes of Jeddah potentially enhances the city's attractiveness to potential visitors. The purpose is to investigate which are the cultural features

locals believe are most significant in promoting Jeddah as a tourism destination. The reason behind this hypothesis is based on the principle of cultural tourism, which indicates that tourists desire an authentic experience.

The last hypothesis is the strong relationship between locals' pride in Jeddah's cultural heritage and the perception of the city's development and increasing tourism over recent years. This hypothesis suggests that a profound feeling of cultural pride among locals is associated with their perspective of increased tourism in the city. The aim of the hypothesis is to investigate how nationals' emotions towards cultural identity can impact tourism performance. This theory is based on the concept that cultural identity pride can strongly influence society's behaviour regarding tourism. If locals are proud of their cultural identity, they tend to perceive tourism as an opportunity to improve their community instead of a threat to their cultural identity. This perception can result in increased encouragement towards tourism projects and motivation to engage with tourists, which can positively impact tourism performance.

3. Methodology

This section of the research paper emphasises the systematic methodology implemented to explore and investigate the influence of Jeddah's cultural identity communication strategy on its tourism sector. The methodology is significantly important, as it highlights the research data collection approach, design, and framework for analysis that guide the research paper. This section's aim is to ensure transparency in the research process, ultimately improving the findings' credibility. Through clearly and accurately explaining the methodologies used in the research paper.

Additionally, the most significant elements of the study are the research question and hypotheses, which act as the foundation for the whole investigation. The research paper formulates a question to explore the complex relationships between cultural identity communication strategies and the performance of the tourism industry in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, the research hypotheses give testable and particular propositions that estimate the connections among the primary two variables involved in the study: cultural identity communication strategies and the tourism industry of Jeddah.

However, the systematic approach was implemented to explore the connection between Jeddah's cultural identity communication strategies and their influence on the tourism sector. The research paper used mixed methods—quantitative and qualitative approaches—because the survey included both closed and open-ended questions. The closed-ended questions allow for numerical data collection, which is interpreted by utilising descriptive statistics. While the open-ended questions are developed to gather qualitative insights, which are analysed by highlighting common themes and patterns from respondents' feedback. Aiming to encourage participants to provide their opinions and advice regarding the communication strategies of Jeddah's cultural identity

Moreover, the study employed a structured questionnaire to gather insights from residents and citizens of Jeddah. The questions were formulated based on questionnaires from existing academic studies that implemented questionnaires as a methodology to collect data on cities' cultural identity and tourism, including Peters & Pikkemaat (2019) and Yu & Kim (2020) Chen, who investigated residents' satisfaction and experience in city branding to ensure the questionnaire's credibility and relevance.

Additionally, the sample population of the research paper is residents and citizens of Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. The sample size is ranged between 50 to 100 participants, which enables manageable data that can provide valuable insights and remain feasible for analysis. Survey respondents are from a diverse age group, gender, duration of residence in Jeddah, and occupation. The diversity is important because it allows exploring various perspectives towards Jeddah's cultural identity and tourism, which enhances the credibility of the findings. Furthermore, the survey is distributed via Google Forms, utilising local community groups and Effat University networks within Jeddah. This approach allows access to a large audience in Jeddah from diverse segments, and the online format facilitates effective data collection and analysis.

Nevertheless, the survey consists of six main sections, including demographic data, Jeddah cultural identity and heritage, awareness of the city's marketing activities, perceptions of the marketing communication strategies of the city, tourism sector performance in recent years, and opinions and suggestions.

Overall, the research paper aims to investigate the relationship between the variables by conducting a correlation analysis of the quantitative data. This analysis identifies if there are

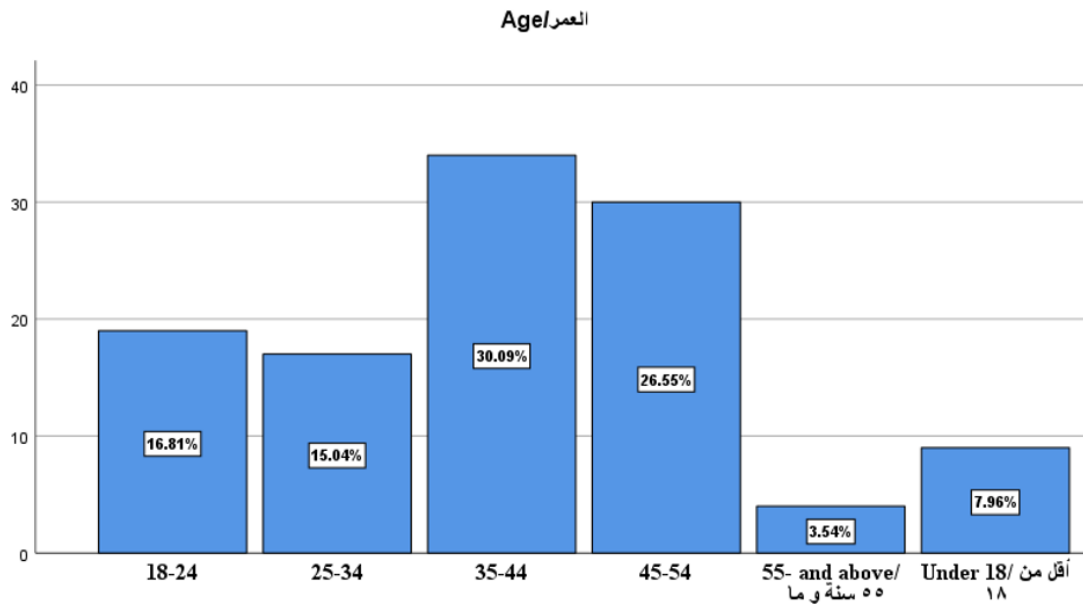
major associations between cultural identity communication strategies and the tourism sector of Jeddah by asking residents and citizens of the city.

4. Findings and Discussion

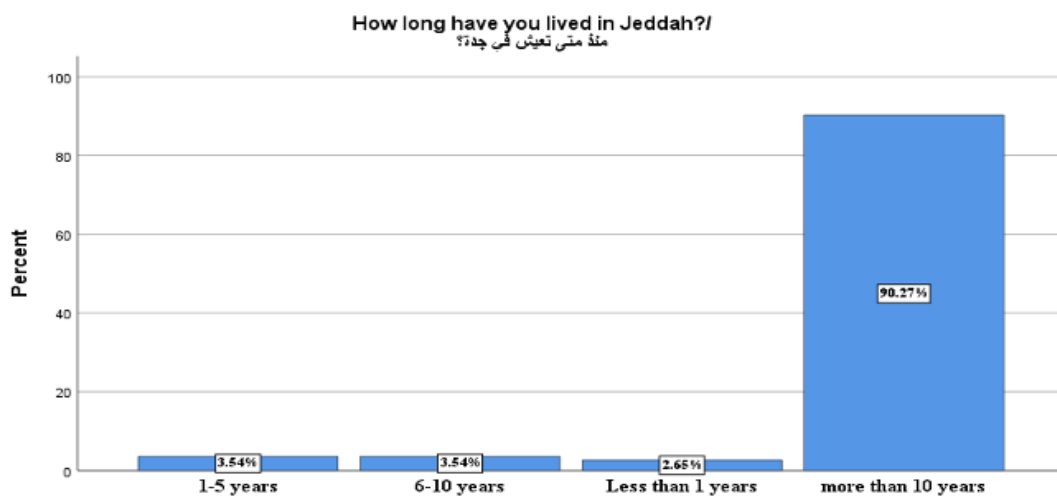
The findings and discussion are based on a questionnaire designed to investigate the relationship between cultural identity and tourism in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. The questionnaire includes six main categories, each aiming to evaluate specific areas of interest. Firstly, demographic information, which includes gender, age, length of residence, occupation, and nationality. Then the second section, which evaluates participants' perception and description of the city's cultural identity, emphasises the perceived importance of cultural heritage and its influence on locals' view of Jeddah. The third category assesses the reach and effectiveness of marketing communication strategies intended to promote the city's cultural identity. The fourth category aims to understand residents' point of view about the efficiency of current marketing communication strategies in demonstrating Jeddah's cultural heritage and attracting visitors. Following that, the fifth section investigates the integration between cultural heritage and growth in tourism, providing information about cultural identity impacts on tourism attraction. The final category enables respondents to share their opinions and suggest improvements to Jeddah's marketing communication strategies. Overall, the collected data from residents of Jeddah will provide a detailed overview of locals' perspectives on the city's cultural identity and its influence on tourism. Which offers valuable insights that may inform future projects and strategies of Jeddah.

4.1 Demographic information

The demographic data collected from the participants are important, which gives a fundamental context for the subsequent analyses. This section includes more than the represented questions; however, the following questions are on age and length of residence.



The bar chart shows that the most significant age group of participants is between 35 and 44 years old (30%). Followed by 26.5% of respondents, who fall between the ages of 35 and 44 years old. While the younger generation age groups (18-24 years old and 25-34 years old) represent only almost 17% and 15%, respectively, of the whole population. While the data collected of Jeddah's cultural identity and tourism sector are hugely influenced by the perspective of middle-aged people, they have a better understanding of the culture and traditions of the city compared with younger generations. However, the young participants can have a different perspective on the cultural identity of the city.

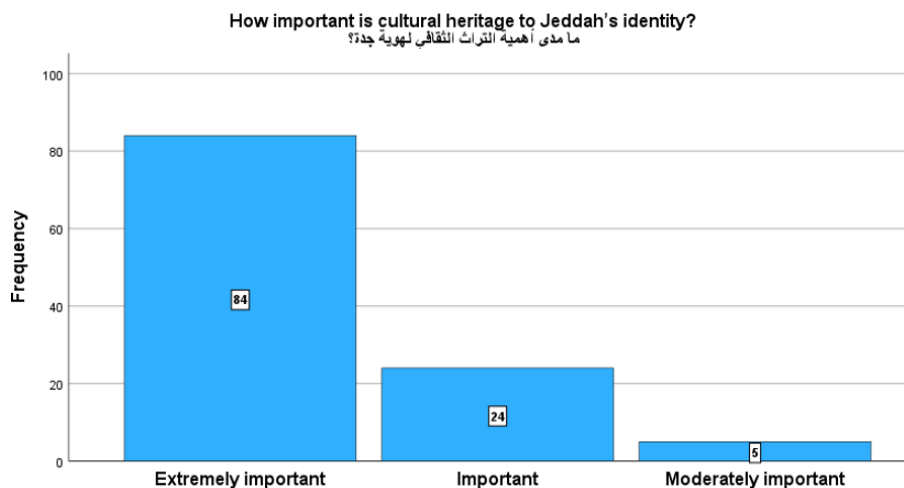


As it is illustrated, the majority of respondents have lived in Jeddah for more than a decade, with approximately 90% of respondents. Whereas only 11 responses came from individuals

who lived for 10 years and less. Which indicates that questionnaire participants are strongly familiar with the city and its culture. Additionally, long-term residents may have a deeper appreciation and understanding of the city compared to new residents.

4.2 Locals' understanding of Jeddah's cultural heritage

The survey aims to evaluate respondents' perspective of the city's cultural identity; as a result, it includes a set of questions to gather residents' insights. Also, how effective the cultural identity of the city is reflected in its marketing communication strategies.

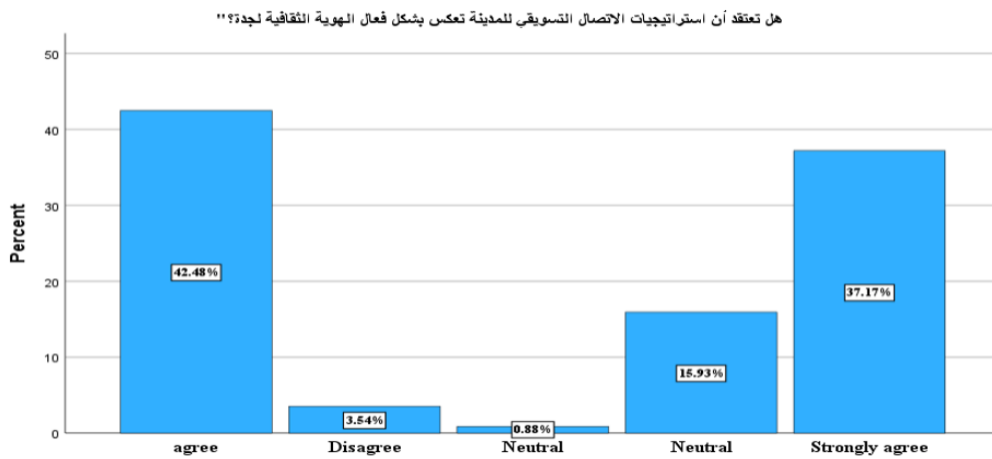


The bar chart indicates a significant consensus belief among participants that Jeddah cultural heritage is extremely essential, with 84 respondents, while 24 respondents think that it is important. Nevertheless, no one thinks that the city's cultural heritage is not or slightly important. These insights illustrate that cultural heritage is fundamental in shaping Jeddah's cultural identity.

Additionally, H1 states that residents and citizens of Jeddah have a strong understanding of the city's cultural identity, which ultimately forms their perception of Jeddah. This hypothesis is proved by the significant importance associated with the city's cultural heritage, which shows that locals have a strong understanding and appreciation of the city's cultural heritage.

"Do you believe that the city's marketing communication strategies effectively reflect Jeddah's cultural identity?"

		Frequey	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	agree/ أوافق	48	42.5	42.5	42.5
	Disagree/ لا أوافق	4	3.5	3.5	46.0
	Neutral	1	.9	.9	46.9
	Neutral/ محايد	18	15.9	15.9	62.8
	Strongly agree/ أوافق بشدة	42	37.2	37.2	100.0
	Total	113	100.0	100.0	



The responses are significantly between strongly agree and agree that the city marketing communication activities reflect its cultural identity, with 37.17% and 42.48% of respondents, respectively. With a small fraction who disagree (3.54%). However, the respondents who selected neutral are almost 16% of responses, indicating that some residents are uncertain of the marketing communication strategies if they effectively reflect the city cultural identity.

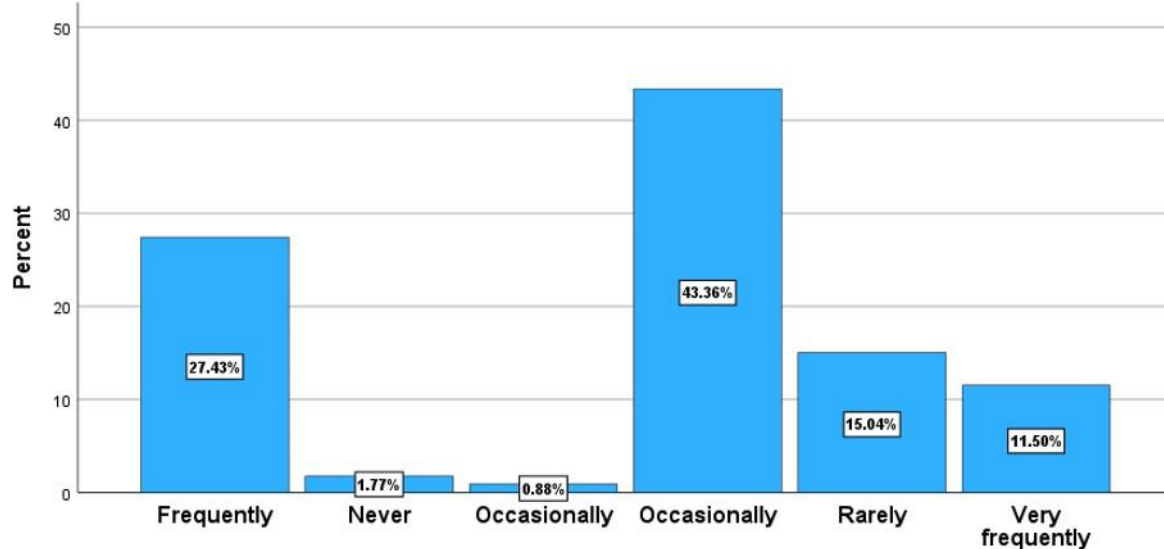
Moreover, hypothesis 2 (H2), which suggests that marketing communication activities currently are inadequate to reflect the precious cultural identity of Jeddah, while residents' insights show that the hypothesis is incorrect, as the majority agree that the marketing communication strategies reflect the cultural identity, with only approximately 20% natural

and disagree responses. However, the responses could show that there are areas where the strategies could be enhanced.

4.3 Residents' awareness of marketing communication strategies

In this section of the questionnaire, a set of questions was developed aiming to evaluate the reach and effectiveness of marketing campaigns and efforts to promote Jeddah's cultural identity.

How frequently do you encounter information about Jeddah's cultural heritage in marketing materials (e.g., brochures, social media, advertisements)?!
كم مرة تصادف معلومات عن التراث الثقافي لجدة في المواد التسويقية؟ (مثل الكتيبات، وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي، الإعلانات)



The chart shows that a great percentage of responses encounter marketing materials of Jeddah's cultural identity occasionally, with roughly 43% of responses, while 27.43% of responses do encounter information about the city's cultural identity. Nevertheless, 15% of respondents encounter such information rarely, and only a small fraction (11.5%) does so very frequently.

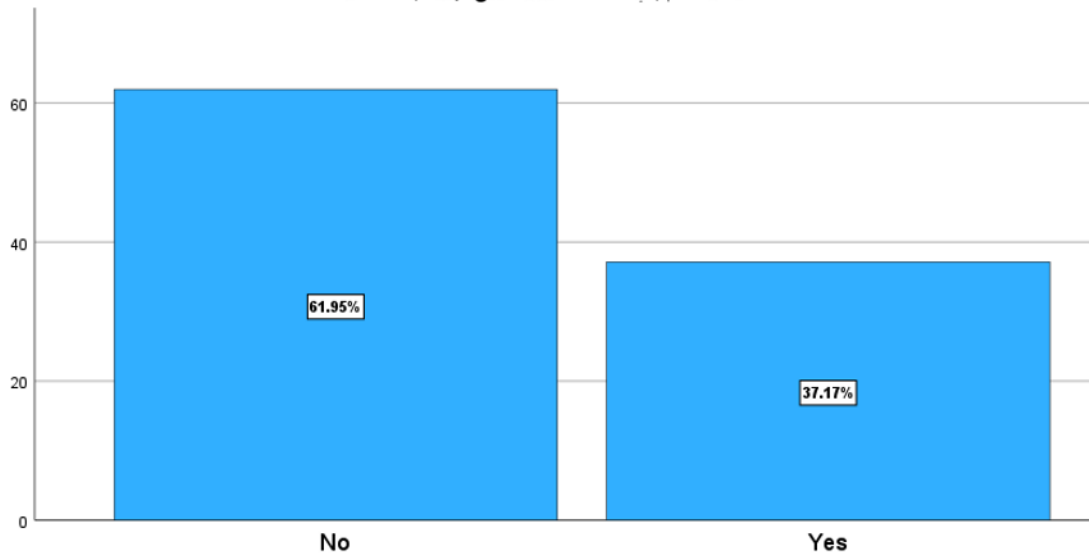
Furthermore, the fourth hypothesis, which suggests focusing on cultural attributes, hugely influences the city's opportunity to attract more tourists. The collected data from residents indicates that the marketing communications strategies of Jeddah should be enhanced to include more of the city's cultural elements.

Are you aware of any marketing campaigns promoting Jeddah's cultural identity? /

هل لديك علم بأي حملات تسويقية تروج لهوية جدة الثقافية؟

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No/ لا	70	61.9	61.9	62.8
	Yes/ نعم	42	37.2	37.2	100.0
	Total	113	100.0	100.0	

Are you aware of any marketing campaigns promoting Jeddah's cultural identity? / هل لديك علم بأي حملات تسويقية تروج لهوية جدة الثقافية؟

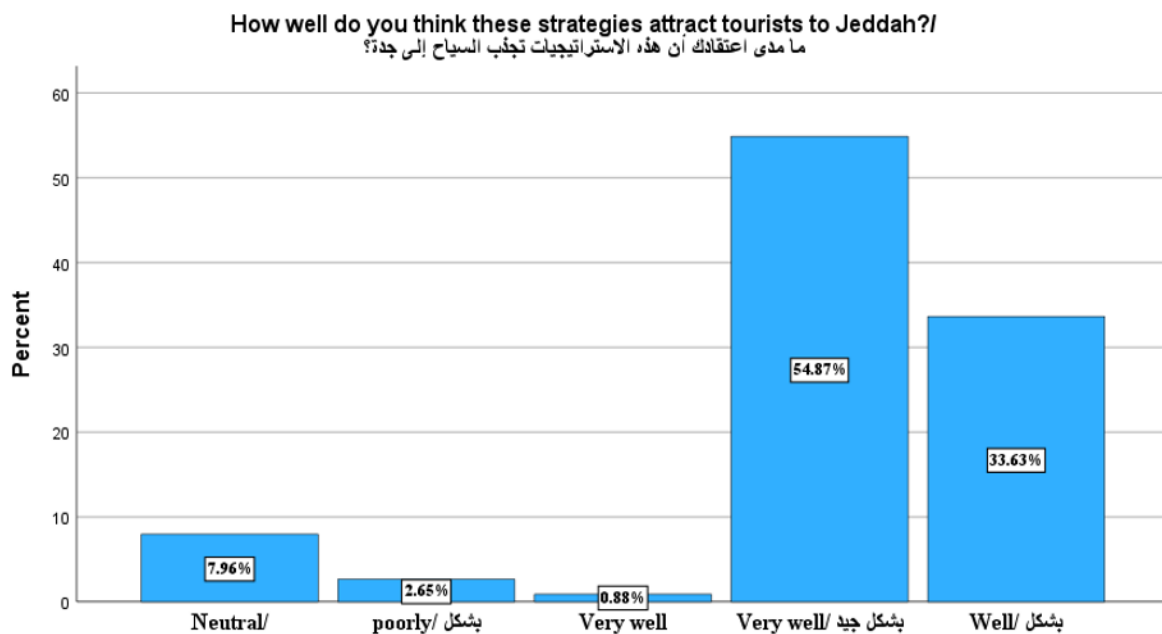


It is illustrated by the chart that a significant percentage of responses are unaware of any marketing campaign of Jeddah's cultural identity, with approximately 62% of responses. While 37% of respondents report that they are aware of the campaign. Which indicates that there is a huge gap that suggests current marketing activities of Jeddah's cultural identity lack visibility to its residents.

Nevertheless, this significant percentage of respondents reporting they are unaware of any marketing effort to promote the city's cultural identity supports the H2, which assumes that marketing communication activities currently are inadequate to reflect the precious cultural identity of Jeddah.

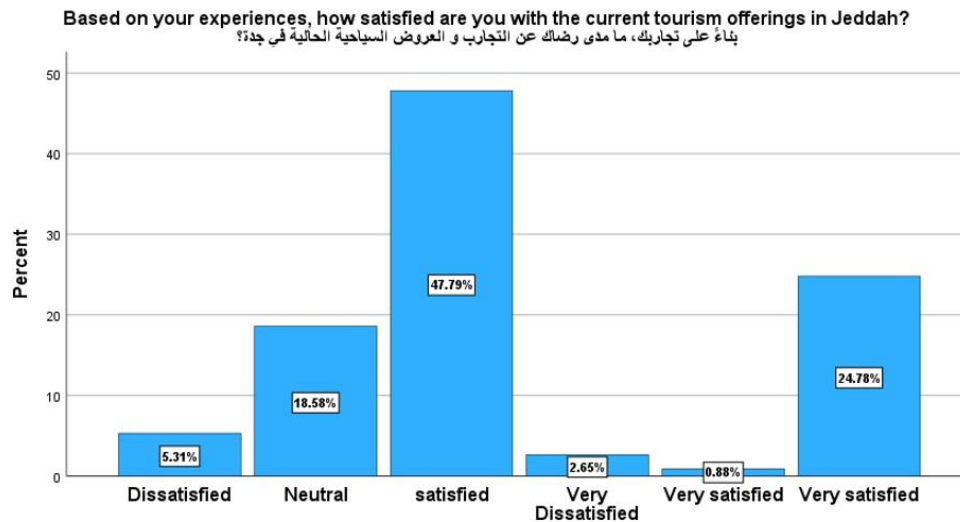
4.4 Residents' perception of current marketing strategies

The purpose of this set of questions is to collect data on residents' points of view regarding the effectiveness of Jeddah's marketing activities to demonstrate its cultural heritage and attract visitors. Which emphasises assessing how effective these strategies communicate Jeddah's culture to tourism.



The overall results show that a huge percentage of respondents respond that the marketing strategies are successful in attracting visitors to the city. A substantial percentage rated the marketing communication strategies as (very well) in attracting tourism, roughly 55% of responses, and almost 33.5% of respondents reported them as (well). While only 2.7% of responses rated the strategies as poorly, and almost 10% of respondents remained neutral. However, respondents showed positive perception of the marketing strategies, illustrating that residents perceive the marketing activities as effective, which potentially correlates with locals' pride in Jeddah and its cultural offerings.

However, this insight indicates that H2, which suggests that marketing communication strategies are ineffective in reflecting the city's precious cultural identity, is proved to be incorrect. Because a significant percentage of respondents believe that the strategies are successful in attracting tourists.

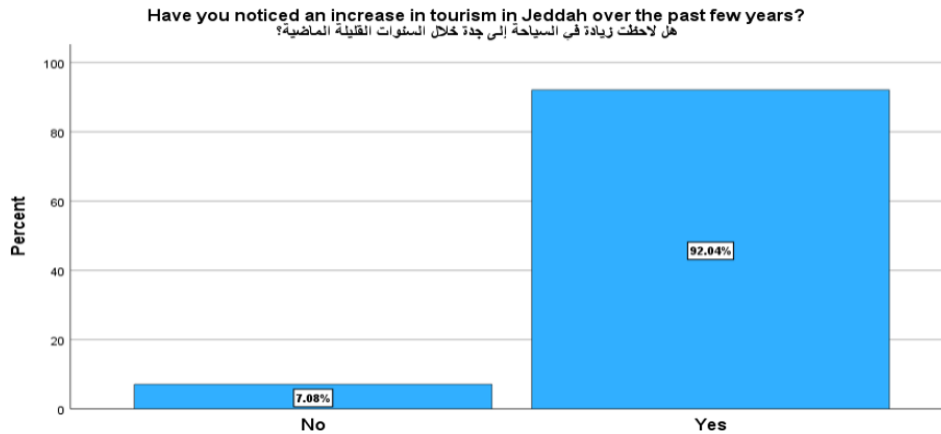


The results illustrate that 54 of the respondents reported that they are satisfied with current tourism offerings in Jeddah based on their experience, and 28 of the respondents reported that they are very satisfied. Which shows that residents have a positive perception of the current tourism experience in Jeddah. In contrast, a small portion of “dissatisfied” responses (5.3%) and 2.5% of very dissatisfied respondents. Also, roughly 18% of responses are neutral, indicating that some locals might feel uncertain about tourism offerings.

In addition, hypothesis 3 (H3) states that locals who view marketing strategies as effective are more likely to believe these activities attract visitors. While the majority of respondents express satisfaction with the current tourism offerings, they potentially believe that the city’s marketing activities are effective in attracting tourists.

4.5 Tourism performance in Jeddah

This section investigates the relationship between Jeddah’s cultural identity and its tourism performance, providing information about how cities’ cultural heritage impacts tourism attraction. Therefore, residents were asked to evaluate the tourism growth in Jeddah over the past few years.



A substantial number (104 responses) of respondents reported that they have seen an increase in tourism over the past few years. Which indicates that residents have a positive perception of the tourism performance increasing in Jeddah, which could be credited to diverse factors, including marketing communication strategies and cultural attributes of the city that play a huge part in attracting tourists.

Nevertheless, the fifth hypothesis (H5) suggests that a profound feeling of cultural pride among locals is associated with their perspective of increased tourism in the city. Therefore, the majority of respondents believe that tourism in Jeddah has been increasing over the past few years, which may suggest a correlation between their pride in Jeddah's cultural heritage and positive perception of the city's tourism growth.

5. Limitation

While the study investigates the connection between cultural identity communication strategies and tourism in the case of Jeddah, there are several limitations. Firstly, the sample size limitation, because the majority of its respondents are aged between 35 and 44, which leaves out the perception of younger residents. Also, because of the short time of collecting responses most of the participants are female with almost 90% of respondents, which does not balance the gender diversity of male and female. Secondly, the study only emphasises on residents' perceptions without incorporating tourists' point of view, which potentially provide a more thorough evaluation of the city's communication strategies. Moreover, the study does not include external elements that influence the tourism industry of Jeddah, including international

travel market trends and economic conditions. Therefore, by addressing these limitations, the findings will be enhanced to provide a more thorough perspectives and insights.

6. Conclusion

This research paper explores the relationship between cultural identity communication strategies and the tourism sector in the case of Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. The study finds that Jeddah holds a previous cultural heritage that potentially improves its position as a tourism destination.

Additionally, the study reveals that a city's cultural identity is an essential asset in differentiating itself in such a competitive industry. Jeddah has a profound history, vibrant traditions, and diverse cultural heritage, which create captivating narratives that can attract a huge number of tourists. By including these cultural factors into the city's communication strategies, Jeddah can offer unique experiences and build a strong connection between the city and its visitors and residents. As it was mentioned before, studies have proven that visitors are increasingly looking for authentic travel experiences that reflect local heritage.

Additionally, the study highlights the importance of aligning marketing activities with recent trends, specifically through utilising digital platforms. The increase of using social media and online communication tools has greatly changed how cities advertise themselves. Therefore, Jeddah can leverage digital platforms and tools to effectively communicate with national and international audiences.

Nevertheless, the study highlights various challenges facing cities in communicating their cultural heritage. The most significant challenge is that original cultural heritage might be diluted or promoted in ways that do not illustrate the local community or the city's cultural identity. To navigate these challenges, governments, offices, and marketers should create comprehensive communication strategies to promote the city's unique cultural characteristics.

Furthermore, the research paper emphasises the significant role of stakeholders in the branding process. Effective city branding should include diverse stakeholders such as local businesses, government offices, and residents. The more residents are engaged in the branding strategies of the city, the more they feel a sense of ownership and pride, which transforms them into the

city's ambassadors. Ultimately, residents share their positive experience influencing the perception of potential tourists.

To investigate this correlation, a questionnaire was developed to evaluate this relationship between cultural identity and tourism in Jeddah. The survey was answered by mostly residents aged between 35 and 44 who have lived in the city for more than 10 years, showing a profound knowledge of the city's culture. The findings indicated that a huge number of participants acknowledge the significance of the city's cultural identity, with 37.17% and 42.48% reporting its importance.

Moreover, the questionnaire assessed the success of the current marketing campaign aimed at promoting the city's cultural heritage. Roughly 43% of residents reported that they have encountered marketing materials about Jeddah's cultural heritage occasionally. Suggesting that marketing communication activities should be enhanced to include more information about the city's cultural attributes and ensure bigger visibility among targeted tourists.

Additionally, residents' perceptions of existing marketing strategies were analyzed. A significant percentage of respondents rated these strategies as successful in attracting tourists, with 55% and 33.5% describing them positively. However, a small portion expressed dissatisfaction, and 18% remained neutral regarding their effectiveness. This feedback highlights the necessity for future projects to better understand local perspectives and improve efforts to promote Jeddah's cultural identity. By addressing these concerns, city planners and marketers can develop more effective strategies that resonate with both residents and visitors.

Overall, the results of this research paper emphasise the importance of cities' cultural heritage in improving the tourism sector, especially for cities with a strong cultural heritage such as Jeddah. The study indicates that Jeddah should enhance its communication strategies in promoting its captivating cultural heritage and unique characteristics while actively involving its residents in the branding process. The case of Jeddah can serve as a framework for guiding other cities that seek to distinguish themselves by communicating cultural identities to retain and attract visitors. By effectively communicating cultural heritage and actively engaging residents in the branding process, destinations can develop thriving tourism ecosystems that celebrate their precious heritage and facilitate sustainable economic growth.

The research recommends future research papers investigating the connection between cultural identity and the tourism industry, emphasising the urgent need for effective strategies that can be flexible to adapt to changes in the global tourism market while preserving local authentic identity. While the tourism sector is continually evolving, cities that acknowledge and accept the importance of their cultural heritage will have a strong position to thrive in such a competitive industry. Also, the study advises more research to investigate the long-term influence of cultural identity on tourism industry performance. Exploring how destinations can successfully balance the marketing communication strategies of their cultural heritage with modernisation, which is fundamental to ensure that local culture remains authentic in the tourism development process. Comparative research papers, including those of other destinations, both nationally and internationally, potentially could provide beneficial observation and insights about the best procedures for efficiently communicating cultural identity in the tourism industry.

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