

## URBAN HERITAGE AND DESTINATION MANAGEMENT: A STRATEGIC ANALYSIS OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT ALONG EGYPT'S HOLY FAMILY TRAIL

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### ABSTRACT

**Motives:** The Holy Family Trail in Egypt consists of twenty-five sacred sites across eight governorates, yet it operates more as a series of disconnected religious stops than as a coherent cultural heritage trail. Despite Papal endorsement and stretching across different bioclimatic zones ranging from Delta wetlands to Saharan caves, the Holy Family trail continues to receive limited scholarly attention and fragmented governmental support that is often confined to small-scale infrastructure improvements. Stakeholders promote differing development visions without any mechanism to align brand identity with reputation management. This disconnect has expanded the gap between policy ambitions and ground-level implementation. Recognising tourism trails as dynamic urban heritage infrastructures that include sequential narratives, not merely connected attractions, this study addresses the need to transform fragmented assets into a competitive cultural tourism ecosystem.

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**Aim:** The study develops a strategic destination management framework through a dual-matrix analytical method, including the Corporate Brand Identity Matrix (CBIM) and the Corporate Brand Identity and Reputation Matrix (CBIRM). A five-round Delphi process, conducted between December 2023 and February 2024, engaged twenty-three experts representing different stakeholder groups (e.g., cultural experts, tourism industry professionals, local community, and government officials) through iterative rounds were designed to build strategic coherence. The core aim of this study is to bridge the persistent execution gap by formalising a stakeholder-led brand identity while integrating reputation-governance mechanisms capable of translating the Holy Family trail heritage potential into sustainable tourism development.

**Results:** Participants reached a strong consensus despite differing perspectives. They identified the enhancement of Unique Selling Propositions as the most effective mechanism for improving recognition of the trail. Three competitive strengths were highlighted as central: its formal designation as a Christian pilgrimage route, the bioclimatic landscapes diversity, and its grounding in local community life. The resulting matrix-based framework provides policymakers with practical guidance for repositioning the trail within international tourism networks and offers a transferable methodology for managing heritage trails in other emerging economies.

**Keywords:** destination branding, tourism trails, stakeholder engagement, destination marketing, Egypt

## INTRODUCTION

In the realm of urban tourism attractions and destinations, the classification of “point, area, and line” serves as a fundamental typology, delineating the diverse tourism forms and patterns through which travellers engage with the world around them (Wall, 1997). While the first two typologies, point (e.g., the Hope Diamond or the Mona Lisa) and area (e.g., the Pyramids and the Eiffel Tower), readily evoke well-known examples, the nature of the third typology, line, requires further elucidation (Paulino et al., 2021; Timothy & Boyd, 2015). In geometry and mathematics, a line represents a sequence or path of connected points, each with a distinct beginning and end. In the context of tourism, this translates to linear features like tourism trails, paths, routes, roads, bridleways, and other descriptors for linear corridors, varying in scale and size (Boyd, 2017). Nonetheless, this study adopts a comprehensive approach by drawing on the broader definition of tourism trails proposed by Timothy and Boyd (2015, p. 4), who define them as “All natural or human-made linear corridors in rural or urban areas designated as trails, paths or routes for the use of recreationists, tourists or travellers regardless of their mode of transportation”.

The conceptual kernel of a tourism trail lies in its role as a curated path that connects multiple tourism attractions within a specific geographical area or theme. At its core, a tourism trail is a structured and sequential itinerary designed to guide visitors through a cohesive and thematic experience (Fafouti et al., 2023; Kling et al., 2017; Roy, 2016). It serves as a spatial narrative, revealing the unique stories, cultural aspects, or natural wonders of a destination along a defined route. Consequently, these tourism trails serve various purposes, including but not limited to natural trails (e.g., Appalachian Trail or Overland Track), religious trails (e.g., the Silk Road or the Camino de Santiago), or mixed-use tourism trails (e.g., Pacific Crest Trail or Lycian Way).

Tourism trails are considered a core element in the tourism industry for several reasons, significantly contributing to the appeal and success of various tourism destinations. First, they present a structured approach for tourists, providing a cohesive and sequential experience that guides them through a curated journey connecting multiple attractions (Roy, 2016; Stoffelen, 2018). This approach offers an efficient and guaranteed way for tourists to explore specific attractions without the need to invest time and effort in organizing their journey, calculating

costs, or prioritizing destinations within the area. This, in turn, enhances and enriches the overall experience for tourists. Second, the interconnectedness of attractions along a trail fosters exploration beyond isolated points of interest, contributing to a sense of discovery and adding depth to the tourist experience, creating a memorable and immersive journey (Fernandes, 2016). Third, beyond their experiential appeal, tourism trails optimize resource utilization, promote recreational activities, and often involve local communities in their development and maintenance (Beeton, 2006; Hayes & MacLeod, 2007). Fourth, the diversification of offerings, combining cultural and natural elements, makes tourism trails versatile and appealing to a broader range of tourists. And finally, the ease of marketing tourism destinations through tourism trails as packaged experiences further enhances their significance as a dynamic and sustainable typology of tourism attractions, contributing to the holistic development of destinations and achieving sustainability goals for the tourism industry (Al-hagla, 2010; Kołodziejczyk, 2020).

From the scientific and academic perspective, the study of tourism trails stands out as an intriguing research topic due to multifaceted reasons. Initially, the tourism trails with its both supply and demand side considered a unique avenue for researcher to explore them. Especially with the fact that much of the existing research emphasizes the supply side, ignoring understanding the demand side dynamics (Anuar & Marzuki, 2022; Pedrosa et al., 2022; Timothy & Boyd, 2015). This asymmetry makes tourism trails an undiscovered and compelling research area, urging scholars to conduct an in-depth exploration and examination of these tourism trails. Moreover, tourism trails serve as dynamic systems that connect various attractions within and between destinations. Understanding the sociocultural, economic, and environmental implications of tourism trails offers a multidisciplinary lens to researchers, making it a rich and relevant research area (Lukoseviciute et al., 2022).

Furthermore, within the scope of academic research, tourism trails are considered as site-specific

research studies. Consequently, findings from a study on a tourism trail in one country may differ from those of a case study in another country. This discrepancy presents a challenge to achieving a globally unified comprehension of tourism trails, prompting researchers to engage in more comprehensive studies within this research domain (Chodkowska-Miszczuk et al., 2025; Pedrosa et al., 2022; Timothy & Boyd, 2015). Moving beyond this, the evident geographical bias in current research in tourism trials provides another avenue for further research exploration. While tourism trails are extensively addressed in developed countries such as the USA, Australia, Canada, and the UK, there is a notable dearth of research in developing countries (Lin et al., 2024; Pedrosa et al., 2025; Timothy & Boyd, 2015). Therefore, studying tourism trails in less developed countries offers a chance to address disparities and contribute to a globally relevant body of knowledge concerning these unique spatial tourism patterns. Moreover, the existence of various types of tourism trails, such as natural-based trails and cultural and heritage trails, renders them a rich area for studies across different disciplines (Beeton, 2006; Chodkowska-Miszczuk et al., 2025; Fafouti et al., 2023; Kling et al., 2017; Leong et al., 2024; Timothy & Olsen, 2018).

In response to the identified gaps in tourism trail research, particularly the geographical bias toward developed contexts and the limited understanding of trail governance in developing countries, the objective of this study is to analyze brand and reputation management along the Holy Family Trail, with the aim of enhancing its competitiveness as a distinctive and high-quality cultural heritage tourism destination.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Religious and Heritage Tourism Trails

Religious and heritage trails are among the oldest and most popular tourism trails (Olsen & Trono, 2018). In addition to their role as a source of public enjoyment and recreation for the residents and

tourists, these trails play a crucial part in preserving the historical values of cultural resources. They contribute to a sense of place and are presented as a driving force for economic development, especially within the tourism sector (Fafouti et al., 2023; Roy, 2016).

Recent literature frames religious and heritage trails as a form of spatial governance mechanism that facilitates the movement of visitors, provides coordination for multiple levels of stakeholders, and enables trade-offs between the goals of preserving cultural heritage and fostering regional economic development (Lin et al., 2024; Pedrosa et al., 2025). Trails are unique from individual, or separate, heritage sites since they provide connectivity among cultural resources and a common experience and/or management model by which an area can transition from fragmented attractions based on tourism to a destination level of managed tourism (Lin et al., 2024; Timothy & Olsen, 2018). Additionally, pilgrimage trails have been identified as “hybrid” spaces in the intersection of spiritual motivations, cultural consumption, place identity, and local/regional economy (Andrade Suárez et al., 2025; Senbeto, 2024). Contemporary literature on modern pilgrimage is focused on the fact that today’s pilgrims do not travel primarily on pilgrimage routes solely for spiritual reasons; rather, pilgrimage routes have become highly attractive to a wide variety of visitor types including those with a mix of religious, cultural, experiential, and educational motivations (Leong et al., 2024; Nunes et al., 2025). As such, this diversity in the type of visitor has created the opportunity for destination management to transform pilgrimage routes into multi-layered forms of cultural heritage corridors capable of attracting larger tourist markets while retaining their religious legitimacy.

Religious and cultural trail systems serve as narrative infrastructure, creating meaning through sequencing, connectivity, and storytelling, rather than relying solely on individual monuments or attractions. A large body of recent research suggests that the success of heritage trail development depends on the creation of coherent interpretive stories at each

site along the trail, thereby providing a cohesive visitor experience (Chodkowska-Miszczuk et al., 2025; Gasparini & Cortes Vazquez, 2024). Religious trails require a strong narrative component to ensure credible histories, continuous symbolism and meaningful rituals are experienced by visitors, which increases their perceived trust and emotional attachment.

Religious and cultural trails also represent unique governance challenges for destination management organizations (DMOs), because the trails often span multiple jurisdictions and involve a variety of stakeholders (e.g., religious organizations, local community groups, municipal governments, and national government agencies). Research has identified that one of the major risks with the lack of coordinated management between these stakeholders is the potential for fractured decision-making and inconsistent branding of the trail system (Fafouti et al., 2023; Lin et al., 2024). While it has been argued that heritage trails can be successful at converting symbolic capital into long-term competitive advantage for destinations, this is difficult when there is a lack of integrated management approaches to coordinating stakeholders’ efforts. This lack of institutional coordination creates significant barriers to success in many developing country contexts.

Comparative research on existing well-known pilgrimage routes in Europe (e.g., Camino de Santiago and Via Francigena) demonstrated the importance of formal recognition, institutional cooperation and identification of the destination for the transformation of religious routes into highly competitive global tourist attractions. These studies also illustrated how to develop successful trails through the establishment of structured governance frameworks that connect branding, infrastructure investments, preservation of heritage sites and engagement with stakeholders throughout the length of the trail. Successful trails can serve as regional economic drivers by distributing the flow of visitors, supporting local economies, and creating place-specific identities (Andrade Suárez et al., 2025; Carballo-Cruz & Silva, 2026).

More recent literature has also indicated the increasing importance of a trail's reputation and credibility within religious tourism trails. With the increased use of social media and experience-sharing platforms, both pilgrims and cultural tourists have come to rely upon perceived authenticity, institutional support, and consistency in narratives when making destination choices (Li et al., 2023; Torres-Moraga & Barra, 2023). Official recognition from religious authorities, transparency in the interpretation of heritage sites, and the visibility of local community involvement were each found to be critical in establishing a trail's reputation for trustworthiness and international exposure.

### **Destination Branding Management: Leveraging Identity and Reputation for Cultural Tourism Trails Enhancement**

In contemporary times, tourism destinations have emerged as some of the most influential and recognized brands globally. This evolution reflects the increasing importance of the economic dimension within the tourism industry (Dedeoğlu et al., 2019; Morgan et al., 2002). Destinations, including tourism trails like the Holy Family Trail examined in this study, are now viewed as products or service offerings that benefit from effective marketing and branding strategies to enhance their appeal and popularity. Establishing robust branding management practices for these trails is essential for attracting tourists and fostering sustainable tourism development through its economic, social, and environmental dimensions (Rather et al., 2020). From an economic perspective, a well-developed and managed branding system can improve the financial stability of tourism trails through better positioning, attracting higher-value visitor segments, and extending the length of stay of visitors. Furthermore, developing a strong and consistent brand image for the Holy Family Trail can generate increased revenue for local businesses located along the trail and establish stable long-term economic bases across all the trail destinations. From a social

and socio-cultural perspective, a well-managed destination branding program can strengthen the sense of identity among locals, as well as the narrative of common heritage and the relationship between local communities and the tourism development process. A well-coordinated and cohesive branding program for the Holy Family Trail can promote stakeholder collaboration, increase the level of community pride in the development of tourism, and create socially inclusive types of tourism that respect local customs and traditions. From an environmental perspective, destination branding programs contribute to sustainability by creating behaviors and patterns of movement for visitors along the trail. Additionally, promoting the Holy Family Trail as a single route that encompasses several individual sites, can assist in distributing visitor traffic more evenly throughout the route, reducing the concentration of visitor traffic at specific sites, and enabling more controlled and sustainable methods of managing visitor traffic.

In general, branding for goods and products can be complex, but this complexity is further compounded when it comes to tourism destinations, especially cultural tourism trails. Unlike tangible goods, whose value is primarily embedded in physical attributes, tourism destinations involve a multitude of intangible factors, including experiences, emotions, and perceptions, which makes branding them a multifaceted challenge (Pike, 2005; Ruiz-Real et al., 2020; Torres-Moraga & Barra, 2023). Additionally, tourism destinations are dynamic entities shaped by various stakeholders, cultural influences, and environmental factors. Therefore, effectively branding a tourism destination requires a deep understanding of its unique identity, value proposition, and target audience. Furthermore, successful destination branding involves not only promoting its attractions but also managing its reputation and ensuring alignment with the expectations of visitors. This requires collaboration among various stakeholders, including local communities, government authorities, and tourism industry players, to develop and implement branding strategies that enhance the

destination's appeal and competitiveness in the global tourism market (Cavdar Aksoy & Yazici, 2025; Pike, 2005; Torres-Moraga & Barra, 2023).

Consequently, the complexity of branding management for tourism destinations, including cultural trails, has given rise to various terminologies and concepts in this field, such as brand image, brand personality, brand awareness, brand quality, and brand trust, among others. However, at its core, tourism destination branding is driven by two main factors that represent the fundamentals of a destination brand: identity (referred to as branding) and perception (referred to as reputation).

The branding aspect of tourism destination management focuses on the internal perspective of developing this destination (Escobar-Farfán et al., 2024; Urde & Greyser, 2016). In the context of the Holy Family Trail, branding plays a crucial role in shaping and communicating its identity as a unique cultural tourism destination. This entails identifying and showcasing the trail's distinctive features, values, and experiences that differentiate it from other destinations/trails. Through strategic branding initiatives, the Holy Family Trail focuses on creating a memorable identity that captures the imagination of visitors. This involves developing visual elements such as logos, slogans, and promotional materials that reflect the trail's rich history, cultural significance, and spiritual resonance (Blain et al., 2005; Ford et al., 2022; Majeed et al., 2024). Additionally, crafting compelling narratives and stories that highlight the trail journey and historical landmarks helps to present a sense of connection with potential travelers, enticing them to explore the trail's unique features.

Reputation, on the other hand, focuses on the external perspective, as it pertains to how the Holy Family Trail is perceived by various stakeholders, including visitors, locals, industry professionals, and the media (Urde & Greyser, 2016). It encompasses the collective impressions and experiences associated with the trail, reflecting its quality, safety standards, and overall appeal. A positive reputation enhances the trail's attractiveness and competitiveness in the tourism market, while negative perceptions can deter

potential visitors (Greyser, 2009). Managing the trail reputation involves actively monitoring feedback, addressing concerns promptly, and fostering positive relationships with stakeholders to build trust and credibility. Additionally, highlighting the trail's unique cultural heritage, historical significance, and commitment to sustainable tourism practices can further enhance its reputation as a premier cultural tourism destination.

In this study, the focus will be on utilizing a comprehensive tool that integrates both branding and reputation management aspects of tourism destination management within the same framework. Consequently, the study relies on the Corporate Brand Identity and Reputation Matrix (CBIRM) as a strategic model to assess and enhance the branding and reputation of the Holy Family Trail as a cultural tourism destination in Egypt.

### **Case Study: Holy Family Trail in Egypt**

The Holy Family Trail is considered one of these diverse and globally recognized cultural trails, serving the realm of religious standards, particularly pilgrimage. Interestingly, the journey of the Holy Family did not commence in Egypt but rather in Jerusalem, where the family sought refuge after persecution by King Herod. Fleeing with Jesus to Egypt to escape the threat, the Holy Family's journey in Egypt began from the Far Northeast (Sinai) and extended over 3500 km to Upper Egypt (Assiut) over a period of three and a half years of hidden (Kupelian, 2020).

The importance of the Holy Family Trail, serving as a cultural tourism route not only for Egyptians but also for millions of Christians, and being the core of this study (main case study), can be categorized into two main pillars: the intangible and the tangible importance. Regarding the intangible importance and purpose of the Holy Family Trail, this trail is not merely a geographical path; it is a spiritual journey imbued with the essence of faith. Pilgrims traversing this trail are not just following a route; they are engaging in a sacred pilgrimage that transcends

the tangible world. Faith, as an intangible but potent force, guides the footsteps of those on the Holy Family Trail, fostering a deep connection with the divine and the historical narrative it represents (Wiśniewski, 2018). This intangible dimension is supported by Pope Francis's endorsement of the Holy Family Trail as an official Christian pilgrimage trail comprising multiple sacred sites in 2017, catering to more than two billion Christians worldwide. Additionally, this intangible importance of the Holy Family in Egypt is associated with the cited statistic by UNICEF indicating that 60% of the global population actively engages in religious practices such as pilgrimage (Youssef & Abed, 2021).

The allure of the Holy Family Trail lies not only in its intangible significance but also in its tangible physical elements. This trail encompasses 25 locations across eight Egyptian governorates, including pilgrimage churches and monasteries (e.g., Hanging Church, Virgin Mary Church, Al-Mahareq Monastery, and Saint Bishoy Monastery), sacred wells and springs (e.g., Holy Virgin spring in Al-Matariyyah), historical landmarks in urban centers (e.g., Virgin Mary Tree), and caves and grottoes (e.g., Abu Mandur cave in Minya) (Khalil et al., 2017). These locations can be seen on the Holy Family Trail map in Fig. 1.

Beyond its tangible elements, the Holy Family Trail boasts a diverse and unique landscape. The trail can be divided into four main geographical areas/zones: The Coastal Road linking Palestine to Egypt, The Nile Delta, Greater Cairo, and the Nile Valley (see Fig. 1). Beginning with the coastal road, this trail starts against a backdrop of maritime allure, infusing the sacred experience with coastal charm. Moving westward, the trail unfolds into the lush and fertile expanse of the Nile Delta. The vibrant fields and greenery paint a vivid contrast to the coastal scenes, setting the stage for a spiritual passage through nature's abundance. Progressing further, the trail leads to the bustling urban centers of Greater Cairo, where the ancient meets the contemporary. Amidst the urban sprawl, the trail introduces tangible relics and landmarks that punctuate this revered trail. Subsequently, the journey delves into the heart of Egypt's timeless landscapes, transitioning

to the expansive Nile Valley. Here, the landscape becomes a silent narrator, unfolding into undulating dunes, rugged terrains, and ancient rural villages, all contributing to the holistic tourism/pilgrimage experience along the Holy Family Trail (Elbehary et al., 2021; Youssef & Abed, 2021).

Another notable tangible element of the Holy Family Trail in Egypt is its distinctive status as a binational or multinational trail, commencing in Palestine and extending into Egypt. While the Egyptian segment of the trail holds the record as the longest pilgrimage route within a single country and carries historical significance more than the Palestine segment, known as the "Jerusalem pilgrimage", the latter is the most famous segment of the entire Holy Family Trail (Fleischer, 2000; Youssef & Abed, 2021). This segment, the Jerusalem segment, is considered one of the three great pilgrimages of Christendom, attracting significant worldwide attention and reverence. This interesting contrast between spatial extent and global visibility represents a significant disparity in how the various segments of the same pilgrimage route are promoted, branded, and presented to the public. Whereas the Jerusalem segment has a high level of international recognition and established pilgrimage imagery, the Egyptian segment has limited international recognition or branding despite its rich history and great length. The disparity in recognition between the Egyptian segment and the Jerusalem segment of the Holy Family pilgrimage trail provides the foundation for this study and demonstrates the necessity for developing strategic brand and reputation management for the development of multi-site international cultural tourism routes/trails.

While the Holy Family Trail possesses considerable potential as a rich subject for study and investigation, the level of official attention it receives, both from the government and academic circles, remains uneven and fragmented rather than entirely absent. Although government discourse and media coverage often highlight the trail, concrete implementation of policies and strategies on the ground is limited, with sporadic initiatives addressing infrastructure

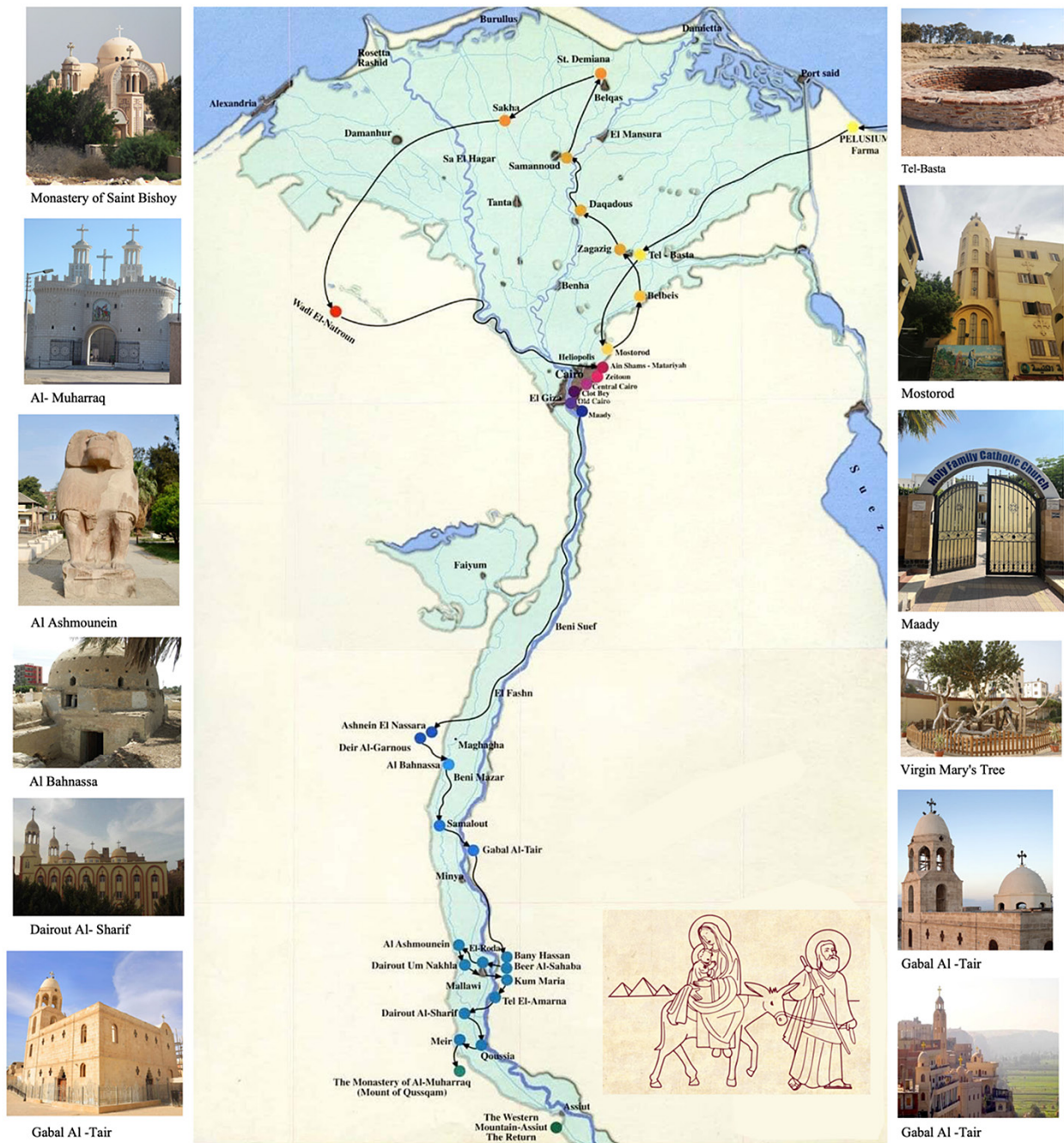


Fig. 1. The Holy Family Trail in Egypt  
Source: own elaboration.

and cultural site renovation. This discrepancy is mirrored in the academic society, where scholarly engagement with this unique cultural trail is relatively weak. While several studies have addressed specific aspects of the Holy Family Trail, scholarly engagement with the trail as an integrated, multi-site cultural tourism system remains relatively limited, particularly in relation to comprehensive destination branding and reputation management. Despite the limited involvement of academia in studying the Holy Family Trail, existing studies tend to converge on the same set of challenges faced by the trail in its pursuit of becoming a world-class destination. These challenges can be broadly categorized into two main types: physical obstacles and marketing obstacles.

The physical obstacles confronting the Holy Family Trail encompass various infrastructural deficiencies and logistical challenges. These include inadequate transportation networks, poor signage, insufficient facilities for tourists (e.g., accommodations, visitor centers, safety features, and Interpretive centers), and maintenance issues along the trail route. On the other hand, marketing challenges revolve around promoting and positioning the Holy Family Trail as a premier cultural tourism destination. These obstacles have been consistently highlighted as a primary challenge in academic research on the Holy Family Trail in Egypt. For example, a study by Youssef and Abed (2021) emphasizes the pivotal role of marketing, particularly through social media channels, in branding and advancing the Holy Family Trail. They contend that an improvement in the trail's reputation can be achieved through intensive campaigns for targeted at specific countries.

Echoing similar findings, research conducted by Elbehary et al. (2021), Khalil et al. (2017), and Kupelian (2020) underscores the significance of branding the trail and meticulously documenting its major artifacts as critical steps to position it prominently on the tourism world map. For example, Elbehary et al. (2021) analyzed the Holy Family Trail within the framework of post COVID-19 tourism recovery and found that weak institutional branding, disconnected promotional narratives, and limited digital presence

significantly limit the Holy Family Trail's potential to serve as a niche tourism product. Furthermore, their analysis found that there is no integrated marketing strategy available to transform the Holy Family Trail from being a series of religious sites to being a single, identifiable and branded tourism destination. In contrast, Khalil et al. (2017) viewed the Holy Family Trail from a heritage management perspective and found that inadequate documentation, interpretation, and presentation of its tangible cultural heritage assets severely impact both the quality of the visitor experience and the perception of the destination. They argued that a systematic registration and interpretation of the tangible cultural heritage assets of the trail would provide the necessary prerequisite for the success of the branding process. Furthermore, Kupelian (2020) provided a cultural-historic analysis and demonstrated that the Holy Family Trail has a very high level of symbolic, artistic, and religious value in terms of its historical significance. However, he also found that this rich cultural and symbolic capital base is being underutilized in contemporary tourism development and branding processes.

Accordingly, we can state that although the Holy Family Trail has a substantial amount of cultural and symbolic capital, its relatively small level of successful translation into formal branding and destination management processes limits its global visibility. Therefore, the key factor for the development of the Holy Family Trail is the implementation of effective tourism destination marketing and branding management, which forms the core objective of this study.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

To achieve the study's aim, the research method was structured into two stages. The first stage focused on presenting the main research methodology, which was centred on brand identity and reputation management. The second stage concentrated on collecting data through the implementation of the Delphi technique.

## Stage (I): Research Methodology – Brand Identity and Reputation Management

This study employed two tiers/levels of brand and reputation matrices, namely: (I) Corporate Brand Identity Matrix (CBIM) and (II) Corporate Brand Identity and Reputation Matrix (CBIRM) as presented by Urde (2013) and Urde and Greyser (2016). While these matrices are traditionally associated with economic tools for enhancing institutions such as companies or firms, their versatility extends beyond economic applications and is increasingly applied in tourism research as structured analytical tools for assessing destination identity and reputation.

The Corporate Brand Identity Matrix (CBIM) serves as a foundational tool in brand management, providing a systematic framework to articulate and enhance the distinct identity of an entity, such as the Holy Family Trail, based on the inside-out perspective. This matrix consists of nine essential elements: Brand Core, Value Proposition, Relationships, Position, Personality, Competences, Culture, Mission & Vision,

and Expression (Urde, 2013). Each of these elements is internally rooted in specific questions that clarify the true brand identity of the Holy Family Trail as a cultural tourism destination in Egypt. Fig. 2 presents the Corporate Brand Identity Matrix (CBIM) with its nine elements and the main questions that represent the identification of each element.

On the other hand, the Corporate Brand Identity and Reputation Matrix (CBIRM) expands the scope by integrating reputation management elements into the equation. Beyond establishing a unique brand identity, CBIRM assesses how this identity is perceived and reputed by various stakeholders. It adds layers of complexity by considering the broader socio-cultural context, community sentiments, and external influences impacting reputation (Urde & Greyser, 2016).

CBIRM incorporates two main groups of elements: the four diagonal reputation elements and the four horizontal and vertical elements (see Fig. 3). The four diagonal reputation elements include Relevance, Differentiation, Performance, and Willingness-

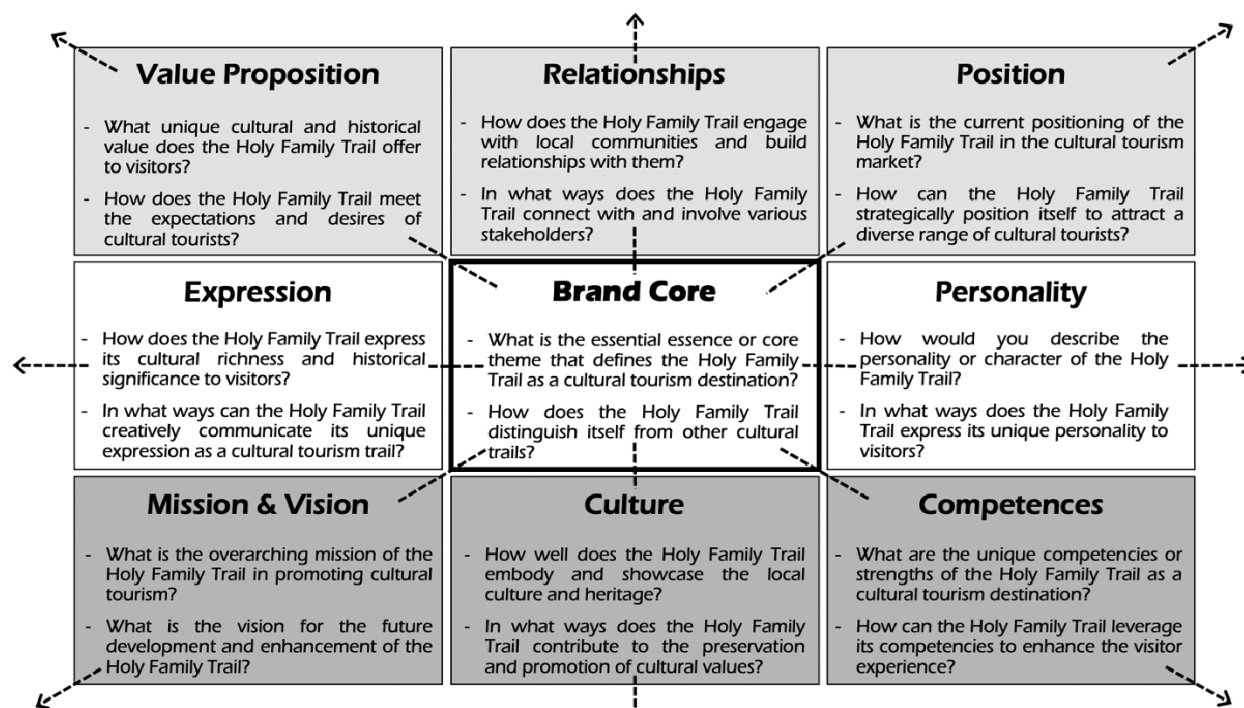


Fig. 2. Adaptation of the Corporate Brand Identity Matrix (CBIM) for the development of the Holy Family Trail in Egypt  
Source: own elaboration based on (Urde, 2013).

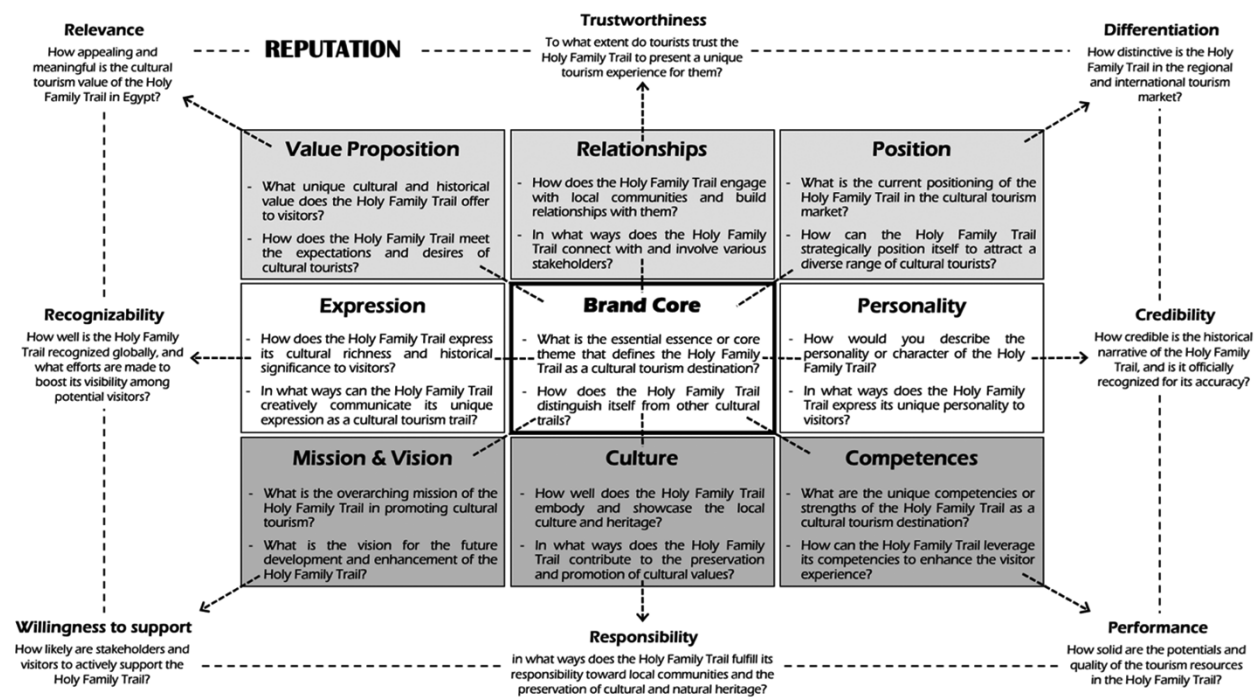


Fig. 3. Adaptation of the Corporate Brand Identity and Reputation Matrix (CBIRM) for the development of the Holy Family Trail in Egypt

Source: own elaboration based on (Urde & Greyser, 2016), and were subsequently assessed, refined, and validated through the Delphi technique.

-to-support. The other four horizontal and vertical elements comprise Trustworthiness, Credibility, Responsibility, and Recognizability (Urde & Greyser, 2016). Fig. 3 presents the Corporate Brand Identity and Reputation Matrix (CBIRM) and its eight elements, along with the questions that identify each element as it pertains to the Holy Family Trail.

### Stage (I): Stage (II): Data Collection – Delphi Technique

To identify the aforementioned elements of CBIM and CBIRM, this study relied on the Delphi technique as a primary qualitative research tool to gather the opinions of experts and stakeholders regarding these core elements. The Delphi technique is widely recognized and utilized in the scientific academia to distil the opinions of an expert panel on specific issues across various academic fields, including tourism (Okoli & Pawlowski, 2004). This technique

involves a series of iterative rounds, typically 3 or 5, contributing to the refinement and convergence of expert opinions.

The Delphi technique was used for this study for three primary reasons. First, considering the historical and cultural significance of the Holy Family Trail, employing experts through the Delphi technique promised a comprehensive understanding of the complexities involved in its development (Hasson et al., 2000). Second, as the development of the Holy Family Trail in Egypt involves various stakeholders (e.g., local communities, NGOs, government entities, tourism academics and professionals, tourism investors, and tour operators), the Delphi technique offers a platform to incorporate the diverse perspectives of these stakeholder groups. Third, the development of CBIM and CBIRM, with its unique multi-layer elements, is a complex process that requires meticulous long-term planning with continuous feedback loops until an acceptable consensus is reached (Urde & Greyser, 2016).

The Delphi technique employed in this study spanned a three-month period, commencing from December 2023 and ended in February 2024. The process initiated with the careful selection of the main participants (the expert panel), followed by a five-round iterative process. 23 participants were selected for their expertise, carefully organized into four core classification groups that encompassed key stakeholders involved in the development of the Holy Family Trail in Egypt. These groups comprised historical and cultural experts (3), tourism industry professionals (5), local community representatives (7), and government officials and policymakers (8). The selection of Delphi technique participants was based on three primary criteria. First, expertise played a pivotal role, ensuring that each participant brought a wealth of knowledge and experience relevant to their respective stakeholder group (Borden et al., 2017). This included historians well-versed in Egypt's cultural heritage, tourism professionals with a deep understanding of the industry, community representatives intimately familiar with local contexts, and government officials involved in cultural preservation and tourism policymaking. Second, diversity was a key criterion to capture a wide spectrum of perspectives. Participants hailed from different backgrounds, ensuring a holistic understanding of the multifaceted challenges and opportunities associated with the Holy Family Trail. This diversity encompassed various professional roles, gender representation, and regional perspectives. Third, active engagement and commitment to the development process were crucial criteria. Participants were selected based on their demonstrated passion for and commitment to contributing actively throughout the iterative Delphi rounds, fostering a collaborative and informed approach to shaping the future of the Holy Family Trail (Dalkey & Helmer, 1963; Diamond et al., 2014; Goodarzi et al., 2018). The details of the Delphi technique expert panel in this study are presented in Table 1.

The Delphi technique employed in this study comprised five main rounds, preceded by an introductory round called the “basic round”. The basic round aimed to elucidate the study’s objectives, the

**Table 1.** Characteristics of expert panel participants in the Delphi Technique for the development of the Holy Family Trail in Egypt

Participants	Classification	Gender Participation in Delphi Rounds						
		M	F	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5
Participant A	Cultural Experts 13% (n=3)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Participant B			*		*	*	*	*
Participant C		*		*	*	*	*	*
Participant D	Tourism Industry Professionals 22% (n=5)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Participant E			*	*	*	*	*	*
Participant F		*		*	*	*	*	*
Participant G	Local Community Representatives 30% (n=7)	*		*	*	*	*	*
Participant H			*	*	*	*	*	*
Participant I		*		*	*	*	*	*
Participant J			*	*	*	*	*	*
Participant K			*	*	*	*	*	*
Participant L			*	*	*	*		*
Participant M			*	*	*	*	*	*
Participant N	Government Officials and Policymakers 35% (n=8)	*	*		*	*		*
Participant O			*	*	*	*	*	
Participant P		*		*	*	*	*	*
Participant Q			*	*	*	*	*	*
Participant R		*		*	*	*	*	*
Participant S			*	*	*		*	*
Participant U			*	*	*	*	*	*
Participant W		*		*	*	*	*	*
Participant X		*	*	*	*	*	*	
Participant Z		*	*	*	*	*	*	

Source: own elaboration.

potentials, and challenges of the Holy Family Trail based on the literature review. The subsequent rounds were: Exploring CBIM and CBIRM elements along the Holy Family Trail, open and semi-structured questionnaire, CBIM and CBIRM insights refinement, building consensus, and finalizing CBIM and CBIRM visualization.

The first round initiated an open discussion about the study and the proposed methods, CBIM and CBIRM. Participants received information about the nine elements of CBIM and the eight elements of CBIRM. They were tasked with evaluating the current status of these elements along the Holy

Family Trail and suggesting any additional questions representing each element. In the second round, open and semi-structured questions for each CBIM and CBIRM element were presented. Participants were asked to provide clear, open answers within the context of each element, drawing on their expertise. The third round involved participants engaging in discussions about the various answers they presented for each CBIM and CBIRM element question, refining insights in the process. In the fourth round, participants began developing consensus, presenting final answers and results for each element. The fifth and final round involved presenting the final CBIM and CBIRM matrices through visualizations that explained all the results of the Delphi technique rounds. It is noteworthy that some volunteers assisted in collecting information on-site. The use of trained volunteer facilitators was an important supportive step due to the unavailability of some key stakeholders

(e.g., church bishops). The volunteers were given ethics training and were prohibited from influencing participant responses, thereby preserving the study's epistemological validity. Additionally, the rounds were conducted online through the author, who asked participants to answer questions related to CBIM and CBIRM elements, then informed all of them about the answers, and so on until reaching consensus and the final visualization of these two brand and reputation management matrices (CBIM and CBIRM). Also, all participant responses and quotes were originally in Arabic, the language of the questions, and have been faithfully translated into English for broader accessibility and understanding.

For the consensus level used in this Delphi technique, this study depended on the percentage of agreement among the participants, which is recommended as a consensus level measurement for Delphi technique in early studies (Loughin & Moore,

**Table 2.** Consensus levels for CBIM and CBIRM elements across Delphi rounds in Holy Family Trail development study

CBIM and CBIRM Elements	Round 2 (n=22)		Round 3 (n=22)		Round 4 (n=22)	
	Agree %	Disagree %	Agree %	Disagree %	Agree %	Disagree %
<b>CBIM Elements</b>						
1. Brand Core	72.1	27.9	80.4	19.6	82.1	17.9
2. Value Proposition	58.4	41.6	77.0	23.0	87.8	12.2
3. Relationships	47.0	53.0	71.9	28.1	80.8	19.2
4. Position	55.8	44.2	63.0	37.0	91.4	8.6
5. Personality	64.3	35.7	82.7	17.3	95.0	5.0
6. Competences	72.9	27.1	87.1	12.9	91.7	8.3
7. Culture	62.6	37.4	73.9	26.1	83.4	16.6
8. Mission & Vision	78.2	21.8	89.0	11.0	92.4	7.6
9. Expression	80.9	19.1	82.7	17.3	89.4	10.6
<b>CBIRM Elements</b>						
1. Relevance	55.3	44.7	72.0	28.0	84.8	15.2
2. Differentiation	76.6	23.4	82.0	18.0	94.1	5.9
3. Performance	53.9	46.1	78.8	21.2	86.7	13.3
4. Willingness to support	84.6	15.4	88.0	12.0	95.5	4.5
5. Trustworthiness	44.7	55.3	68.4	31.6	92.1	7.9
6. Credibility	72.3	27.7	82.3	17.7	99.4	0.6
7. Responsibility	79.0	21.0	84.1	15.9	85.2	14.8
8. Recognizability	76.1	23.9	79.3	20.7	91.4	8.6

*Note:* The bold numbers indicate the consensus level, where 80% or more of the participants agreed with the answer to questions in each element of the CBIM and CBIRM.

*Source:* own elaboration.

1979; McKenna, 1994; Sumsion, 1998). Also, this approach is particularly suitable, given the open-ended nature of the questions used in this Delphi rounds, as opposed to closed-ended questions (e.g., Likert Scale). In this study, the level of consensus ignored the first and fifth rounds of Delphi technique and only applied in the second to fourth rounds. The reason for that is because the first round was just a public discussion about the Holy Family Trail and the used method in this research, while the fifth round visualized the CBIM and CBIRM metrics. Table 2 shows the level of consensus for the participants during the various rounds in the Delphi technique used in this study.

## RESULTS

The primary outcome of this study was the identification of branding and reputation management for the Holy Family Trail from the diverse perspectives of various stakeholders, as gathered through their responses in the Delphi technique using the CBIM and CBIRM matrices.

## Tier (I) Results: CBIM Outcomes for the Advancement of the Holy Family Trail in Egypt

Fig. 4 illustrates the stakeholders' responses to the questions related to each element of the CBIM, providing a comprehensive view of their varied perspectives. Through the exploration of this matrix, it became evident that the diverse viewpoints of stakeholders contributed to shaping a robust framework for branding, consequently enhancing the reputation of the Holy Family Trail as a unique cultural tourism destination.

For the Brand Core and Mission & Vision CBIM elements, participants underscored the importance of enhancing post-experience feelings and creating unforgettable memories for visitors to the Holy Family Trail. They emphasized making this trail a central aspect of its brand, going beyond being just a tourist destination. Furthermore, there was a shared vision among participants about transforming the Holy Family Trail into a symbol of unity and understanding.

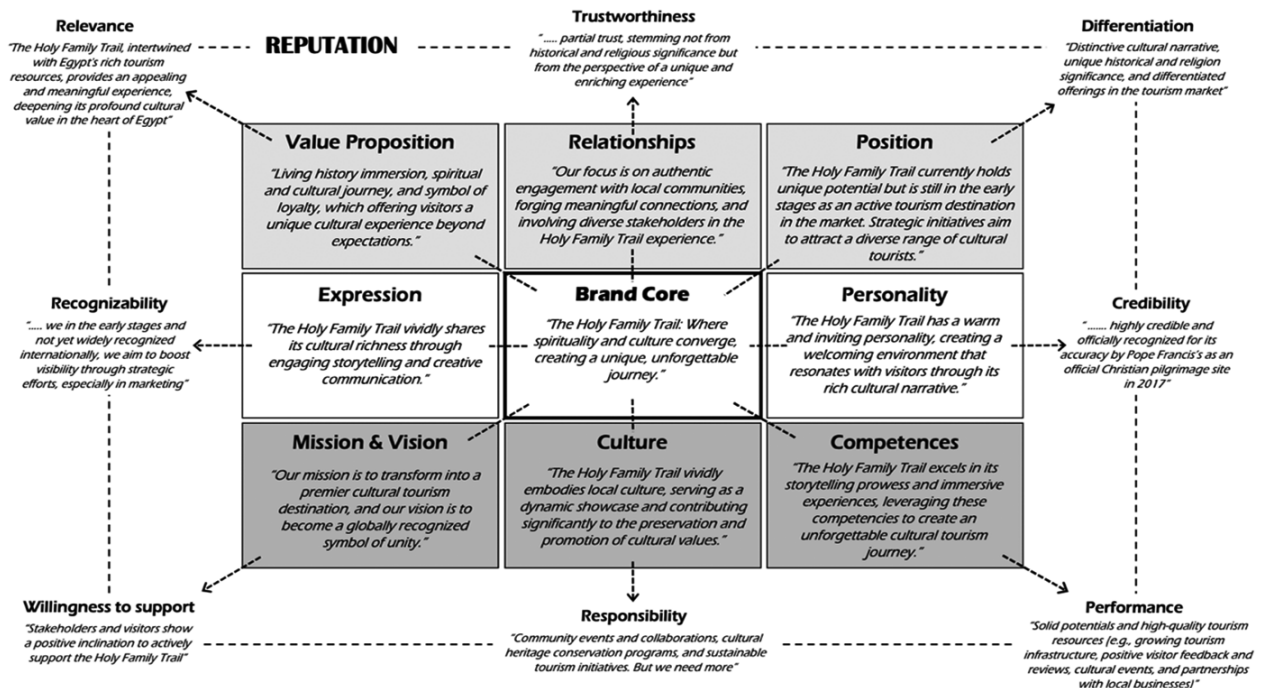


Fig. 4. Result of the Corporate Brand Identity Matrix (CBIM) for the development of the Holy Family Trail in Egypt  
 Source: own elaboration.

Rather than being framed solely as a physical journey, the trail was perceived as a platform for fostering unity and embracing differences. This perspective aims to position the Holy Family Trail as a symbol of authenticity, rich historical significance, and a spiritual and cultural adventure. Two participants expressed this vision, stating:

“The aim is to position the destination as a reference point for spiritual and cultural tourism, aligned with current governmental initiatives, including the Great Transfiguration Project in Saint Catherine.” Participant X; (Brand Core Element).

“The aspiration is to develop the Holy Family Trail as an inclusive space where visitors engage with its narrative and experience values of unity and cultural diversity.” Participant L; (Mission & Vision Element).

Moving to the Value Proposition and Position CBIM elements, stakeholders delved into the unique and compelling aspects that set the Holy Family Trail apart for cultural tourists. Responses highlighted a desire to offer more than a typical tourist destination. Additionally, they shared insights into the distinctive place the Holy Family Trail holds among cultural tourism destinations. Examples of participant responses to questions related to these CBIM elements are as follows:

“The emphasis is on providing a comprehensive and comfortable experience that immerses visitors in local culture throughout the journey, encouraging active engagement rather than passive visitation.” Participant J; (Value Proposition Element).

“The Holy Family Trail is viewed as a cultural destination that extends beyond pilgrimage, integrating historical and spiritual dimensions into a cohesive visitor experience.” Participant E; (Position Element).

For the Personality, Competences, and Culture CBIM elements, participants passionately collaborated to mold the unique character, competencies, and cultural richness of the Holy Family Trail. The central theme revolved around nurturing an identity that harmonizes with the spiritual and historical tapestry of the trail. For the Personality element, participants expressed a collective vision of imbuing the Holy Family Trail with a distinctive and

inviting character, one that resonates with pilgrims and tourists alike. The Competences element was highlighted by a unanimous desire to leverage the trail's strengths, turning it into a beacon for a rich and meaningful cultural tourism experience. As for the Culture element, participants emphasized the profound impact of the Holy Family Trail's cultural heritage, underscoring its contribution to the trail's allure as a cultural tourism destination. Together, these elements form a robust foundation, painting a vibrant picture of the Holy Family Trail's personality, competencies, and cultural significance. The following presents participant perspectives on these CBIM elements:

“The Holy Family Trail is perceived as a distinctive tourism asset with a defined identity, where emphasis is placed on conveying an atmosphere characterised by spirituality and a welcoming experience.” Participant G; (Personality Element).

“Our competence lies in moving beyond basic guiding to curating experiences that reflect historical and spiritual values. Drawing on initiatives such as the Great Transfiguration Project in Saint Catherine, a similar development approach across the stations of the Holy Family Trail could enhance its overall tourism value.” Participant S; (Competences Element).

“Culture is the heart of the Holy Family Trail. We want it to be more than a site; it's a cultural pilgrimage and spiritual journey. The way we preserve and present our heritage adds layers to the visitor's experience.” Participant C; (Culture Element).

Shifting focus to the Relationships and Expression CBIM elements, participants delved into the intricate web of connections the Holy Family Trail fosters and the means through which its unique identity is communicated. Stakeholders expressed the importance of establishing strong bonds with various stakeholders, including local communities, tourists, and government entities. Simultaneously, they underscored the importance of effective communication to convey the trail's unique identity. Insights from participants regarding these CBIM elements are as follows:

“The emphasis is on building long-term relationships among local communities, tourists, and government actors, rather than purely transactional interactions. This perspective was also raised during government consultations in 2022 concerning the marketing development of the Holy Family Trail.” Participant S; (Relationships Element).

“Expression is understood as communicating the identity of the Holy Family Trail through visual elements, signage, events, and design details that collectively convey its narrative.” Participant M; (Expression Element).

### Tier (II) Results: CBIRM Outcomes for the Advancement of the Holy Family Trail in Egypt

In the context of the second matrix (CBIRM), which focused on linking the brand elements with reputation elements, the outcomes derived from stakeholder responses were grouped into four strategic

pathways, as illustrated in Fig. 5. These pathways include Strategy (1st diagonal pass), Competition (2nd diagonal pass), Interaction (vertical pass), and Communication (horizontal pass). Each pathway represents a specific analytical direction through linking identity and reputation elements, shaping a clear brand and identity framework to enhance the Holy Family Trail in Egypt. Additionally, the visual representations in Appendix A provide a comprehensive overview of how these pathways play a vital role in shaping the overall identity and reputation management of this tourism trail, as perceived and influenced by the diverse perspectives of the stakeholders involved.

The first diagonal pathway, Strategy, intricately connects three CBIM elements (Mission & Vision, Brand Core, and Position) with two CBIRM elements (Differentiation and Willingness-to-support). This strategic pass revolves around delineating the Holy Family Trail distinct position in the cultural tourism trails market, driven by a well-defined mission

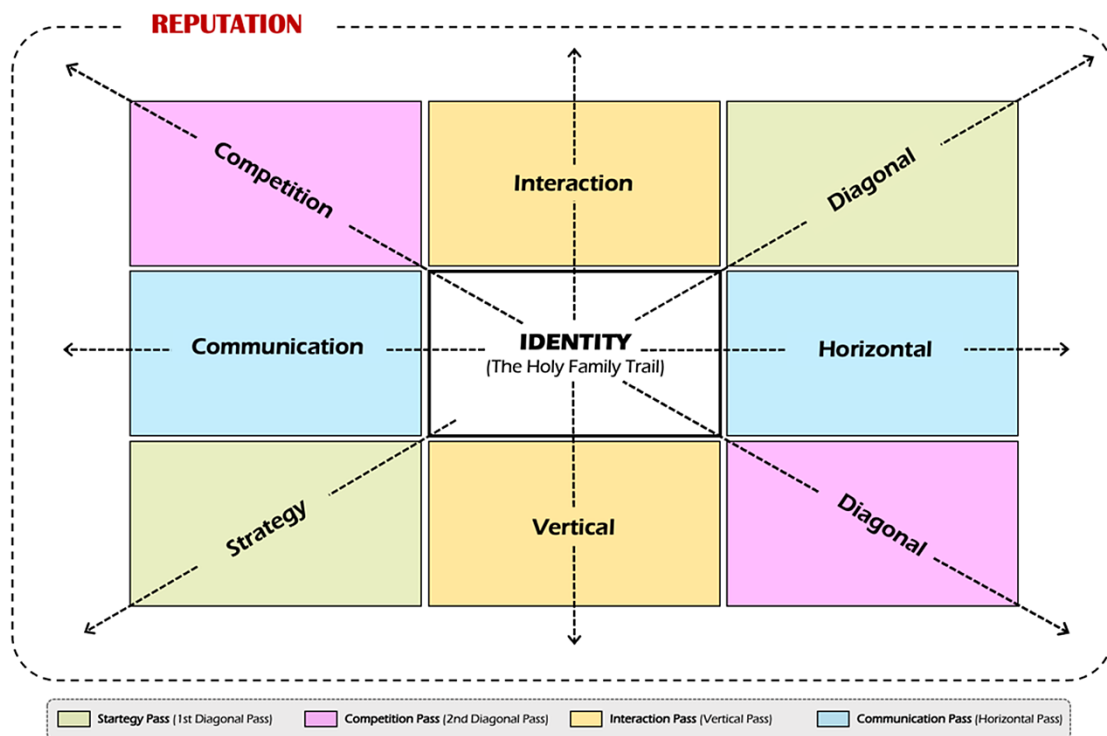


Fig. 5. The four main passes of the Corporate Brand Identity and Reputation Matrix (CBIRM)

Source: own elaboration.

and vision for its future development. Stakeholder responses in this pass elucidate the collective insights that affirm the Holy Family Trail commitment to being not just a destination but a transformative cultural experience. For example, participant K captured this idea, “For local residents, the Holy Family Trail represents a deeply personal heritage shaped by family narratives and lived experience. The importance of presenting the trail not only as a pilgrimage site but as an inclusive space where history is made meaningful and accessible to families and visitors.”

The second diagonal pathway, Competition, interlinks CBIM elements (Value Proposition, Brand Core, and Competences) with CBIRM elements (Relevance and Performance). This pathway revolves around highlighting the unique value proposition and competencies that distinguish the Holy Family Trail in the regional and international tourism market. Participants in this study delved into aspects that set the trail apart, ensuring its relevance and solid performance. For example, participant J stated that “We aim to provide comprehensive and participatory experiences along the Holy Family Trail, where visitors actively engage with local culture and become part of the trail’s narrative rather than remaining passive tourists.”

The third pathway, Interaction, vertically connects three CBIM elements (Relationships, Brand Core, and Culture) with CBIRM elements (Responsibility and Trustworthiness). This pathway is the nexus where the Holy Family Trail’s essence converges with its societal impact. It is about fostering meaningful relationships, building a brand core that resonates, and embedding the cultural fabric of the Holy Family Trail (its religious narratives, heritage values, and local traditions) into stakeholder interactions. Participants underscored the significance of fostering meaningful connections, fulfilling responsibilities, and establishing trust. For example, participant U emphasized the approach, stating: “The Holy Family Trail is understood as a coherent narrative rather than a collection of sites, with emphasis placed on expressing its identity through storytelling and visitor

interactions that foster meaningful connections beyond visual promotion.”

Lastly, the fourth and final pathway, Communication, horizontally connects three CBIM elements (Expression, Brand Core, and Personality) with two CBIRM elements (Credibility and Recognizability). This pathway is the heart of storytelling, where the Holy Family Trail doesn’t just communicate visually but emotionally. For example, during the Delphi technique rounds, Participant P stated: “The Egyptian government is interested in this type of tourism, which includes the diversification of the Egyptian tourism product, as was the development of the Great Transfiguration Project in St. Catherine. Many solutions are always offered to develop the Holy Family trail, such as the establishment of a Coptic Tourism Committee whose activity is to pay attention to the pattern of visiting Christian tourism in Egypt”.

## DISCUSSION

The results show an obvious conflict between a “brand” approach and a “market” perspective to develop the Holy Family Trail strategically. A brand-oriented perspective is focused on developing a consistent image based on history, spiritual values and heritage; it emphasizes internal understanding of meaning and a longer-term symbolic value. On the other hand, a market-oriented perspective is focused on adapting to visitors’ needs, providing customized experiences and evaluating performance using metrics such as visibility, accessibility and quality of service. The conflict shows a major challenge in managing linear cultural trails: how to find a balance between maintaining a cohesive identity for the trail while being adaptable to the market demands and keeping the cultural integrity intact.

Using the CBIM and CBIRM frameworks to analyze these conflicts helps to identify more than just a descriptive map of stakeholders. It also helps to identify the internal alignment (or lack thereof) of identity components such as mission, culture, and value proposition for CBIM. CBIRM also provides a way to understand how those identity components

translate into the external reputation of the trail, which includes credibility, trustworthiness, and willingness to support. More importantly, when combining the two frameworks, it can demonstrate that the challenges of governance of the Holy Family Trail are not simply operational or promotional in nature, but rather structural in nature because they result from how identity and reputation are negotiated by different actors and at different levels. Therefore, from a policy perspective, this means that destination governance frameworks for religious and heritage trails need to go beyond simple marketing coordination, and to focus on identity governance, where public authorities serve as mediators between maintaining brand consistency and adapting to market demands. By operationalizing both internal identity development and external reputation evaluation, CBIM/CBIRM provide a structured analytical framework that can be used in conjunction with current destination management research, particularly in complex, multi-site, faith-based tourism environments, where traditional market-based approaches will not suffice.

Additionally, insights gleaned from various interviews conducted with stakeholders shed light on some strategies to enhance the branding of the

Holy Family Trail in Egypt as a prominent local and international cultural tourism destination. Despite their diverse backgrounds, most participants underscored the critical importance of marketing and branding the unique selling propositions (USPs) of the Holy Family Trail. Rather than engaging in comparisons with other internationally recognized cultural tourism trails (e.g., Camino de Santiago) or regional ones such as the first part/sector of the Holy Family Trail “Jerusalem pilgrimage”, stakeholders emphasized the need to capitalize on the Holy Family Trail’s inherent strengths and potentials. These included its official recognition as a Christian pilgrimage site, its diverse landscape, historical and cultural sites (e.g., churches, monasteries, caves, and historical landmarks), and the enthusiastic support from local communities and government officials for its enhancement and development. By prioritizing the marketing and branding of these USPs, the Holy Family Trail can position itself as a distinctive and compelling destination, capable of attracting both local and international visitors. Fig. 6 illustrates the strategic concept of the USPs highlighted by stakeholders during the Delphi technique process.



Fig. 6. Conceptualisation of the Unique Selling Propositions (USPs) of the Holy Family Trail in Egypt  
Source: own elaboration.

## CONCLUSIONS

The Holy Family Trail in Egypt stands as a significant cultural asset with immense potential for tourism development and regional growth. Through this strategic analysis, this study explored the various dimensions of destination management and tourism competitiveness along the trail, aiming to enhance its status as a premier cultural tourism destination. By leveraging branding and reputation management strategies, this study sought to capitalize on the trail unique heritage and attract a diverse range of visitors while fostering sustainable tourism development. This study utilized a two-tiered approach, employing the Corporate Brand Identity Matrix (CBIM) and the Corporate Brand Identity and Reputation Matrix (CBIRM), to assess and enhance the Holy Family Trail brand identity and reputation. Through the Delphi technique with participants representing various stakeholders, this gained valuable insights regarding the various elements of the CBIM (e.g., Brand Core, Value Proposition, Relationships, Position, Personality, Competences, Culture, Mission & Vision, and Expression) and CBIRM (e.g., Relevance, Differentiation, Performance, Willingness-to-support, Trustworthiness, Credibility, Responsibility, and Recognizability). Despite differing ideologies among stakeholders, the consensus highlighted the importance of focusing on the trail unique selling propositions (USPs) to elevate its recognition and attract more visitors.

Moving forward, it is essential to continue collaborative efforts among stakeholders to implement the recommendations derived from this study effectively. By doing so, the study can further elevate the Holy Family Trail status in the global tourism landscape, contributing to regional development, economic growth, and cultural preservation. This research aims to realize the full potential of this remarkable cultural asset, embarking on a journey towards creating memorable experiences for visitors and enriching the lives of local communities along the Holy Family Trail. Additionally, fostering community engagement and empowerment is crucial for developing such trails, as local communities play

a pivotal role in connecting diverse geographical areas, including villages, towns, cities, remote areas, and indigenous communities.

While this study offers valuable insights into the strategic analysis of regional development along the Holy Family Trail, it is essential to acknowledge its limitations. One limitation is the context-specific of the study's findings that may not be directly applicable to other cultural tourism destinations or regions. Factors such as cultural features, political dynamics, economic conditions, and environmental considerations unique to the Holy Family Trail in Egypt may limit the generalizability of the study's conclusions. Another limitation pertains to the methodology used in this research, which involves the application of CBIM and CBIRM metrics. While these metrics enhance the utility of the study in certain scientific areas or practices, caution should be exercised when applying them to various contexts due to potential implications that may arise. Additionally, the study reliance on the Delphi technique maybe represent another limitation, given controversies in academia regarding its sensitivity to design factors, potential bias, risk of superficial consensus, and subjective conclusions (Garrod & Fyall, 2005).

Regarding the future research agenda, there is a need to conduct comparative studies with other cultural tourism trails, particularly in developing countries. These studies could offer valuable insights into best practices and lessons learned, thereby enhancing the generalizability of findings and the applicability of strategies and frameworks. Additionally, exploring the socio-economic impacts of tourism development along the Holy Family Trail and assessing the effectiveness of community engagement initiatives are important avenues for future research. Furthermore, investigating the role of digital technologies, such as augmented reality and virtual tours, in enhancing visitor experiences and promoting the Holy Family Trail as a cultural tourism destination deserves attention.

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contributed to this work as follows: M.K., M.M.M., and L.D.D. developed the concept and designed the study, M.K. and M.M.M. collected the data, Y.E.A. and T.A. analyzed and interpreted the data, M.K., M.M.M., and J.K. drafted the article, J.K. and L.D.D. revised the article critically for important intellectual content.

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## APPENDIX A

Participants' responses to the Corporate Brand Identity and Reputation Matrix (CBIRM): This appendix provides in-depth information about the participants/stakeholders' responses to the CBIRM

elements. The data is organised into four primary passes: Strategy (1st diagonal pass), Competition (2nd diagonal pass), Interaction (vertical pass), and Communication (horizontal pass).

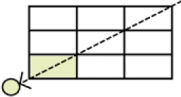

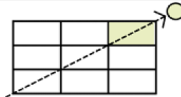

<b>Strategy</b>		
<b>Identity Element (CBIM)</b> <b>Mission &amp; Vision</b>		<b>Reputation Element (CBIRM)</b> <b>Willingness to Support</b>
What is the overarching mission and vision for the development of the Holy Family Trail, guiding its future growth and enhancement?	? <b>Guiding Question</b>	How likely are stakeholders and visitors to actively support the Holy Family Trail, indicating a positive commitment to its ongoing development?
<i>"Our vision is a living tapestry of culture and spirituality. The Holy Family Trail should be more than a destination; it's an invitation to immerse yourself. I remember taking my students to the Virgin's Church and Mary's Tree, and it wasn't about teaching; it was about experiencing history in every stone and story."</i> Participant E	 <b>Participants Answer</b>	<i>"I've seen firsthand the passion people have for the Holy Family Trail. It's more than support; it's a commitment. I remember a local artisan once told me, 'I don't just create souvenirs; I craft memories of the Holy Family Trail'. That's the level of dedication we're talking about. It's a collective effort, not just from stakeholders but from everyone who walks this path."</i> Participant U
<b>Identity Element (CBIM)</b> <b>Position</b>		<b>Reputation Element (CBIRM)</b> <b>Differentiation</b>
What distinctive position does the Holy Family Trail hold among cultural tourism trails, and how is it perceived in the broader tourism market?	? <b>Guiding Question</b>	How distinctive is the Holy Family Trail in the regional and international tourism market?
<i>"Being a part of the Council, I see the Holy Family Trail as a living heritage. It's not just about monuments and artifacts; it's about preserving a narrative. The distinctive position it holds is as a guardian of history. When we work on its development, we're not just talking about tourism; we're preserving a legacy."</i> Participant Z	 <b>Participants Answer</b>	<i>"The Holy Family Trail is an archaeological gem in tourism. Last year, some skeptical archaeology students visited. By the end, one said, 'It's not just a historical site; it's an adventure through time.' That sums up the Holy Family Trail; more than a destination, it's an archaeological odyssey."</i> Participant B

Fig. A1. Strategy pass of the Corporate Brand Identity and Reputation Matrix (CBIRM) (From "Willingness to Support" to "Differentiation")

Source: own elaboration.

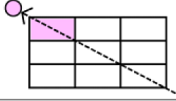


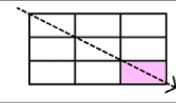


<b>COMPETITION</b>		
<b>Identity Element (CBIM)</b> <b>Value Proposition</b>		<b>Reputation Element (CBIRM)</b> <b>Relevance</b>
What unique and compelling value does the Holy Family Trail offer to cultural tourists, setting it apart from other destinations?	 <b>Guiding Question</b>	How appealing and meaningful is the cultural tourism value of the Holy Family Trail in Egypt?
<i>"Look, the Holy Family Trail value isn't come from it as a destination; it's an emotional journey. It's not about places; it's about connecting with the heartbeat of history. Every step, every story, makes it a unique experience you can't find elsewhere.."</i>	 <b>Participants Answer</b>	<i>"The Holy Family Trail isn't just bricks and stones; it's a living testament to our heritage. Walking in its footsteps, you feel a narrative that belongs to everyone here. The appeal? A shared connection to something ancient yet alive. Pilgrims don't just tour; they step into a larger story, a cultural journey that resonates with every step."</i>
Participant G		Participant L
<b>Identity Element (CBIM)</b> <b>Competences</b>		<b>Reputation Element (CBIRM)</b> <b>Performance</b>
What are the key competencies and strengths of the Holy Family Trail in providing a rich and meaningful cultural tourism experience?	 <b>Guiding Question</b>	How solid are the potentials and quality of the tourism resources in the Holy Family Trail?
<i>"Our strength? It's turning history into an unforgettable experience. The Holy Family Trail isn't just a route; it's our cultural competence. Every site, every step, is a meaningful journey connecting visitors to our rich heritage. Also, the rich history of Egypt can help to make this kind of connected trips with the Holy Family Trail."</i>	 <b>Participants Answer</b>	<i>"Our trail's performance? Let me tell you, it's not just about numbers or sites. It's about weaving a tapestry of experiences. Every potential is a story waiting to be explored. From historical gems to cultural richness, our resources are the backbone of a journey, not just a destination."</i>
Participant Q		Participant P

Fig. A2. Competition pass of the Corporate Brand Identity and Reputation Matrix (CBIRM) (From “Relevance” to “Performance”)

Source: own elaboration.

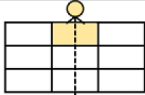


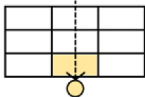


<b>Interaction</b>		
<b>Identity Element (CBIM)</b> <b>Relationships</b>		<b>Reputation Element (CBIRM)</b> <b>Trustworthiness</b>
<p>How does the Holy Family Trail connect with and foster relationships with various stakeholders, including local communities, tourists, and government entities?</p>	 <b>Guiding Question</b>	<p>To what extent do tourists trust the Holy Family Trail to present a unique tourism experience for them?</p>
<p><i>“Relationships, It’s the heartbeat of the Holy Family Trail. It’s not just about tourist numbers; it’s about connecting with locals. I remember sitting down, having tea, and hearing their stories. It’s about making locals feel this trail is theirs. Last year, we organized an event where tourists and locals shared traditions. It’s not just a trail; it’s a community. Connecting people, creating memories – that’s what the Holy Family Trail is about.”</i></p> <p><b>Participant W</b></p>	 <b>Participants Answer</b>	<p><i>“Trust? It’s the heart of our trail. See, it’s not just about selling a trip; it’s about creating an experience people can believe in. Once, a group came skeptical, you know, unsure about what they’d find. But by the end, they trusted the journey, felt the authenticity. It’s not about flashy ads; it’s about the stories people tell after, the trust they share with friends. That’s the Holy Family Trail - not just a trip, but a trusted tale.”</i></p> <p><b>Participant C</b></p>
<b>Identity Element (CBIM)</b> <b>Culture</b>		<b>Reputation Element (CBIRM)</b> <b>Responsibility</b>
<p>How does the cultural heritage of the Holy Family Trail contribute to its identity and attractiveness as a cultural tourism destination?</p>	 <b>Guiding Question</b>	<p>In what ways does the Holy Family Trail fulfill its responsibility toward local communities and the preservation of cultural and natural heritage?</p>
<p><i>“Cultural heritage is very important pillar in the Holy Family Trail. It’s not just about showcasing history; we’re living it. Last summer, locals shared their traditions in a cultural night in Assiut. It’s a living, breathing heritage that draws people in. Walking those paths is like stepping into a time machine, experiencing the richness that makes the Holy Family Trail unique.”</i></p> <p><b>Participant Z</b></p>	 <b>Participants Answer</b>	<p><i>“Responsibility, It’s the backbone of our trail. You see, it’s not just about bringing in tourists; it’s about giving back. I remember a time when a local community needed help preserving an ancient site. We didn’t just stand by; we organized volunteers, raised funds. It’s not just history; it’s living history. The Holy Family Trail isn’t a burden on communities; it’s a partner.”</i></p> <p><b>Participant R</b></p>

Fig. A3. Interaction pass of the Corporate Brand Identity and Reputation Matrix (CBIRM) (From “Trustworthiness” to “Responsibility”)

Source: own elaboration.

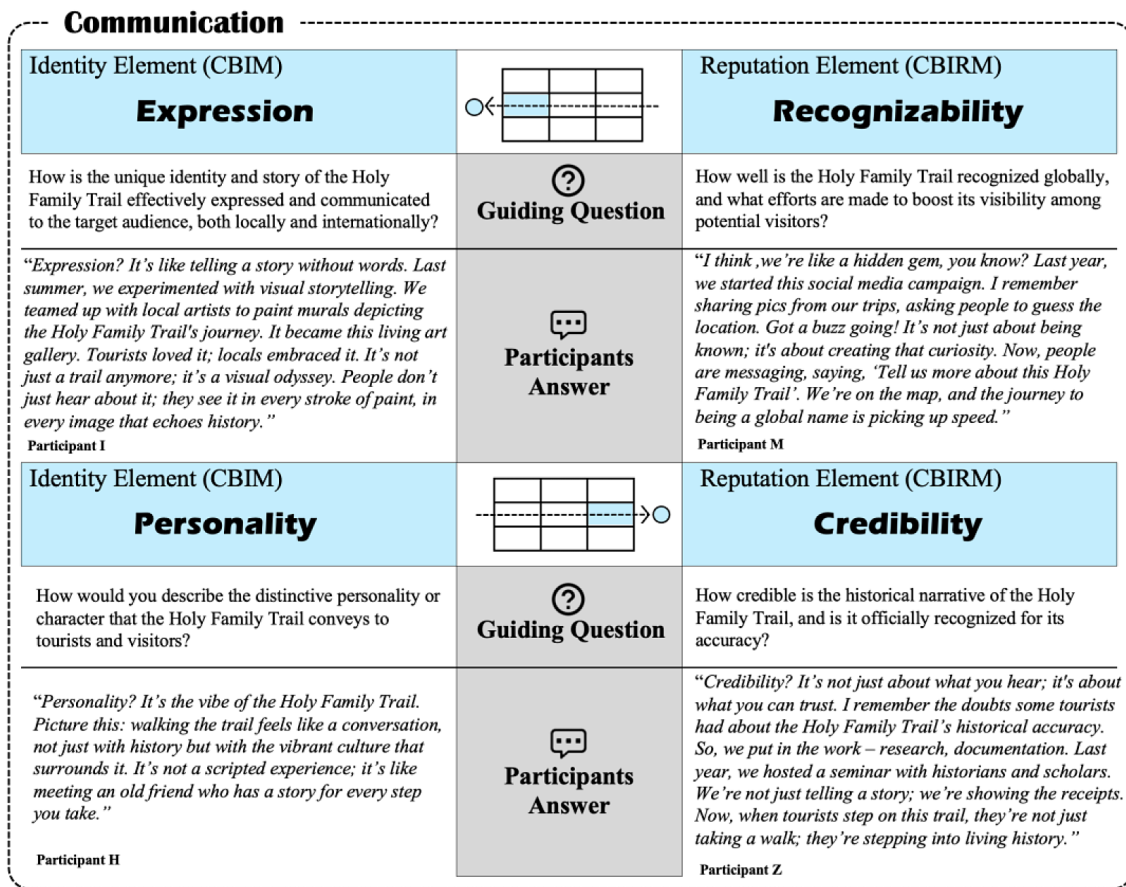


Fig. A4. Communication pass of the Corporate Brand Identity and Reputation Matrix (CBIRM) (From “Recognizability” to “Credibility”)

Source: own elaboration.