

# Re-branding Tourism Hotspots after Crisis: The Case of Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt

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## Abstract

After the 25<sup>th</sup> January revolution, Egypt wanted to disassociate itself from its negative past of political instability and violence including terrorism attacks, street demonstrations, public disorder, enforced curfews etc, which had contributed to negative publicity during that time. Unlike natural disasters, political crises can continue to negatively impact the image of a destination for months if not years. Disaster management for tourism has often focused on the post-crisis recovery phase. Based on an online survey (n= 1350) of international tourists, this paper examines tourists' reactions toward Sharm el Sheikh as a tourism destination. The study investigates the role of rebranding Sharm El Sheikh as a tourist destination as a mean of solving the current problem. It concurs that destinations can exploit the window of opportunities linking destination branding to their crisis management strategies. The study highlights that branding is an essential tool for re-positioning the destination, and in order to be effective, a need to re-study the destination marketing strategy is crucial. Furthermore, it emphasizes the importance of mass media to accelerate the lifecycle from revolution and attacks to a return to normalcy.

**Keywords:** *Destination branding, tourism, crisis management, media, Sharm El Sheikh.*

## 1. Introduction

The flow of tourists to destinations is affected by several external influences; such as: political chaos; natural disasters; terrorism; civil unrest, that can occur within its boundaries. However, the potential threat that accompanies political instability causes a severe reaction, affecting the future of tourism at the destination. In most cases they tend to damage a destination's image and to compromise perceptions regarding its overall safety and security, and shape the tourists' perceptions of the place in a very

negative way. Such negative developments often interrupt tourism industry operations resulting in a drop in tourist arrivals. The downward spiral, in turn, generates a distressful cumulative effect on the country's economy. Thus, a tourism crisis occurs when circumstances in a destination pose a change which is potentially destructive to the destination and to its tourism industry.

The relationship between tourism and terrorism can be manifested in various possible scenarios: Terrorism that is aimed at civil targets yet sometimes victimizes tourists as well; terrorism that is directed at economic targets that are functionally related to tourism; and finally, terrorism that targets tourism and/or tourists since both are regarded as "soft targets" with relatively high- impact media coverage.

Sharm el Sheikh's reputation for security is only 10 years old. In July 2005, militants detonated three coordinated bombs that ripped through an upscale hotel, a local market and a parking lot, killing at least 90 people. It was the deadliest terrorist attack in Egyptian history at the time, and it came less than a year after a similar bombing in another resort to the north, at Taba. A few months later, bombings in the nearby town of Dahab killed more than 20 people. (<http://www.nytimes.com/2015>)

Managing a destination is different from managing a product. Whereas a product can easily be taken off the market, destinations cannot. It is therefore important not to underestimate the potential harm that a crisis can cause for a destination or the scope of the influence that the media can have.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

The Egyptian government has long promoted Sharm el sheikh resort as both the crown jewel of its tourist industry and a redoubt of security against jihadist violence. As a militant insurgency based in northern Sinai has raised alarms about travel to broad sections of the country, the Egyptian authorities and

Western governments held out Sharm el Sheikh as a safe destination. It was a bright spot in Egypt's deeply troubled tourism industry, attracting a steady flow of sun-seekers, and increasingly budget-minded Russians. But, due to non-stopped attacks, Sharm El Sheikh is now gripped by uncertainty. The crash of the Russian passenger jet that took off from Sharm el Sheikh has threatened the resort's reputation. Although the cause of the crash remained unknown pending investigation of the wreckage, the Egyptian arm of the Islamic State, known as ISIS, has claimed responsibility. It has been quoted by the Interfax news agency, the press secretary of the Russian Tourism Industry Union, said that tourism agencies were reporting up to a 50 percent drop in sales, the day of the crash (<http://www.nytimes.com/2015>).

Tourism is clearly seen as a national priority involving all areas of public policy and thus can be a major contributor to consolidate the transition. Given the current difficulties in the region, it is important for the industry to get a positive image and a clear message out that the new Egypt is stable and open for business. Potential tourists' travel behavior is influenced to a certain extent by the risk assessment conducted and published by some of their respective governments. Many tourists tend to highly value the accuracy of these assessments as they lack the ability to make their own judgment as to the real risks involved. Affected destinations have learned the hard way that it is extremely important to understand the serious consequences of such warnings and to try to influence governments in the generating countries to make them objective and unbiased as well as update them periodically.

### 2.1 Destination Branding post crisis

Destination branding is a recent trend in place marketing and a powerful tool available to academics and marketers who dedicate their research to promote geographical units, and to improve the image with adverse conditions after climate, economic or political crisis. Avraham and Ketter (2008) reported by Glaesser (2006: 12) the crisis is "a critical change in an important variable that endangers or destroys either parts of or the entire system". A destination can be viewed legitimately as a composite product that comprises a mix of various components (the destination mix) (Morrison & Anderson, 2002:10). According to Heath (2004:40), a "destination represents a mental picture in the minds of current and potential visitors". Perceptions, such as cheap versus exclusive or safe versus dangerous, often overshadow reality. Thus, the tourism industry operates in a complex and changing environment that is characterized by several

challenges (Heath, 2007:263). In most cases, destination marketers have little control over the elements of the destination mix that they are branding.

According to Dr. Taleb Al-Rifai, secretary general, the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) (Gulf Times, Nov 2015); destination branding is a crucial element in how well a country's tourism system can function cohesively. Destination branding literature reveals that every destination should offer its authentic experiences rooted in the nation's culture and heritage, in order to position its country as a premium tourist destination. "It is more important to create a unique experience than a marketing tagline," Al-Rifai said (Gulf Times, Nov 2015). The brand has to be authentic, personal, and credible. Developing genuine tourism products would in turn make tourists, as well as industry partners and locals, the greatest brand ambassadors to promote a destination.

The growing competition between destinations over attracting investments, tourists, capital, national and international status, and means that, today, a negative image is more harmful than ever. This global competition is no longer limited to the leading countries, or big cities, but with technological advances (e.g. mass media) and market deregulations, even small places can compete in the *world wide arena*, such as the case of *Penang State* in Malaysia or *Sharm El Sheikh in Egypt*, thus the competitors are now global.

Destination branding has become a strategic marketing component with considerable importance in promoting the (re)discovery of tourism destinations severely impacted by global crises. It is a critical tool in resurrecting international travel to countries that seek social security and economic recovery through tourism, and must rely upon a uniquely identifiable brand attraction and targeted visitor niche in the initial stages of market development and recovery. The successful resurrection of a destination's tourism industry depends largely on its ability to reshape the beliefs of international visitors.

### 2.2 The Media Influence and Communication Strategies

In the age of the *World Wide Web*, satellites, global TV networks and the global economy, different crises are widely covered in the international media and can empty out hotels, cancel flights and leave tourist attractions deserted overnight (Avraham & Ketter, 2008). Sudden unexpected crises, affecting cities and regions in more developing countries, can gradually develop negative images as the cumulative

result of a problematic past, peripheral location, neglected tourism infrastructure, high crime rates and social problems. The sudden downturn in image resulting from a particular crisis and the development of a gradual negative image—an unfavorable image is projected in the media and has a correspondingly negative effect on the national and international tourism industry and on the place’s economics, investments, commerce and its attractiveness to current and potential residents (Avraham & Ketter, 2008).

The main problem is the continual broadcast of the catastrophes regarded by the media as important news generators. Worldwide, the tourist customer is exposed to newspapers and travel supplements; magazines; television travel programs; and guidebooks (Cleverdon & Fabricius, 2006:10). Thus, when they take place, the media becomes preoccupied in providing its customers with the most vivid and explicit information and analyses of these incidents. Consequently, potential tourists in the generating markets are saturated with up-to-date and real life information which consciously or unconsciously establishes a perceived high risk image of the affected destinations. In some cases it was evident that the information and assessment provided by the media about the severity of the incidents were biased and the media exaggerated the real risk involved in traveling to the affected areas.

The spreading of negative events in the media has a several negative impact in the image of geographical units and asks for new marketing and branding strategies. Empirical evidence so far shows that the higher the frequency of such incidents and the more media coverage they obtain, the greater the negative impact on tourist demand. In addition, a high frequency of security incidents causes changes in tourists’ booking and cancellation behavior, selective spatial behavior in the affected destination, and other tourism demand characteristics (Abraham, Pizam and Yoel, Mansfeld, 2006). According to Bianchi (2003:18), ‘a destination should be prepared for any eventuality; it should have a crisis plan and update the plan regularly’. The plan may involve the setting up of crisis communication centers as sources of information during and after a crisis. Marzano & Scott (2005:205) advise that during a crisis, a destination should act speedily by providing regular updates on the prevailing situation. In such a case, the media can be used to rebuild the destination. Such preparedness calls for the training of the spokespersons of the destination on how to deal with the media. In addition, the crisis should be contextualized, without attempting to cover up the seriousness of the situation, while simultaneously remaining positive about the outcomes (Cleverdon &

Fabricius, 2006:9). The media remain potentially harmful, but nevertheless powerful channels for a destination and can be used in respect of the image-modification process.

Coombs (1999: 92) identifies six communication strategies for the place in crisis:

	Justification	Excuse
Communication strategies for the place in crisis:	Full apology	Attacking the accuser
	Ingratiation	Corrective action

Figure 1: Six communication strategies for the place in crisis Coombs (1999: 92)

(Coombs, WT 2007b) underlines the primary crisis response strategies. Starting by *The stage of excuse* and the justification is an effort to minimize the perceived damage. Then, *the attack of the accuser*; the crisis manager confronts the person, the group, the media claiming something is wrong in the system or the organization and they assert the start of investigations. *The stage of apology* and compensation where there is an obligation to communicate the consciousness of full responsibility toward all victims and ask for forgiveness and apology acceptance, offering services and help. *The stage of reminder and ingratiation* by informing the stakeholders about security past of Sharm as a tourist resort and the quality brand offered during peace time. *The corrective action* on all the systems functionality is the integration of application of the Situational crisis communication theory (SCCT) in the whole sector of tourism operation management is beneficial and could achieve promising results.

Coombs, W.T listed three objectives relative to the crisis response strategies and communication including; shaping attribution of the crisis; the change of perceptions of the organization and reduction of the negative effect generated by the crisis. The terror itself is a crisis either it is manifested or not in an action. The complexity of fighting terrorism has grown and spread up in many countries and locations, not only targeting the tourism industry but other infrastructure such as malls, underground stations.etc, what is unexpected could turn expected. It is strongly asserted that the tourism industry could never be isolated from airports and/or transportation’s security, accommodation and restaurants’ security, beaches and market’s security, etc.

The empirical studies show that the higher the frequency of terror and violence acts accompanied with media alerts which raise fear of travel, the

greater the negative impact on tourism industry, reflected on the slowdown of the overall sector of tourism. As, in case of Sharm el sheikh the impact was harmful and drastic represented mainly in cancellation of air flight booking, hotel and restaurant reservations, tourism program operations and activities. The expansion of such influence hurt the survival at the social level for Sharm local community. Taxi cabs are queued outside Sharm El Sheikh International Airport, with drivers standing outside their cars hoping to catch a 'guest'. The situation is harsh. "We used to see at least 70 flights to Sharm El Sheikh coming from Russia, the United Kingdom, Germany and Italy; now it is all gone," drivers said. Before the plane incident, taxi drivers were used to make at least six to seven trips from the airport. "Now I only make EGP 150 per day, which I spend on cigarettes and car fuel" a driver added. Locals expect all foreigners working in the City to be evacuated if international airlines continue to suspend their flights to sharm El-Sheikh. They also disagreed with the domestic demands to visit Sharm El- Sheikh to boost tourism. As, they see that Egyptian Tourism will only benefit hotels and travel firms, and there won't be an added- value to the country.

According to the independent Africa news section reported on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2016, Egypt is losing 120m £ a month as UK's Sharm el sheikh flights ban continue. The visitors' number has declined 85% since the Russian plane shot down in Sinai in October killing 224 passengers on board moreover the Russian immediately banned the landing of both Russian flight in Cairo and cancelled as well all Egypt air flights to Moscow, a double edge hit. Subsequently the United Kingdom suspended the operation of UK airlines in the area. The web sites on the open cyber tackled the subject either by different ideologies, objectives and opinions reflecting positive and negative apprehension. Accordingly international travel agents such as Thomas cook and Astra have cancelled their future booking and hotel reservation and additional tourist program integrated. The impact on the investment is also noted by famous investor in the tourism market who lost approximately \$20 millions over the stagnant period and delay of extra infrastructure projects execution ([www.independent.co.uk](http://www.independent.co.uk)).

### 2.3 Tourists return to Egypt: The Future of Sharm El Sheikh

Foreign visitors are reappearing at Egypt's capital's tourist sites by statistics, showing that Egypt's tourism industry, the former mainstay of its struggling economy, has experienced a modest

recovery, as the country's broader economic picture may be improving ([www.ft.com/world/middleeast](http://www.ft.com/world/middleeast)). The tourists are returning despite continued political tensions. European countries, including: Italy; Belgium; Germany (the second- largest market for Egyptian tourism after Russia), have lifted or eased travel advisories, giving the green light to tour operators and travel agencies to begin marketing the land of the pharaohs to customers.

Russian tourism accounts for about 35% and British tourism represents 11% of the total inbound tourism to Egypt. Inbound tourism is expected to recover by beginning of 2016, depending on the security reports that will be issued by foreign delegations measuring airport security. Minister of Tourism Hisham Zaazou said that Egypt's losses from the halted British and Russian flights are an estimated EGP 6.6 bn over three months. He also anticipated the tourism income would drop to \$ 6bn from last year's \$7.3 bn. ([www.dailynewsegypt.com](http://www.dailynewsegypt.com)) (December 25, 2015)

The Egyptian government shaken by the blow to its most important resort, responded with a sweeping technological upgrade of Sharm el Sheikh's security that has won widespread praise from other governments. Diplomats were invited to inspect the security infrastructure, described a vast system of video surveillance, with special equipment for detecting explosive material.

According to Colliers International Report, which covers the period from November 2015 to January 2016, tourism demand is expected to drop by about 59% in Sharm El Sheikh. European tourism starts to completely withdraw from Egypt, forcing Egypt's tourist destinations to rely on domestic tourism on the short-term and anticipating a recovery in the medium-term for hotels and resorts.

The dumping effect on the tourism sector as a main source of foreign currency and a part of the motor drive of the economic development was responded by authorities with a full determination to irradiate these acts by fighting terrorism mainly concentrated in north Sinai fearing its spread to the south especially after the flight explosion.

The domestic and local tourism was encouraged at large for all social classes to substitute and compensate the huge losses in revenues through complementary packages that were offered to get out of the crisis. The Egyptian ministry of tourism in coordination with the ministry of civil aviation and the South Sinai Investors' Association motivated the demand in the market offering packages ranging from EGP 300 to EGP 3500 per program, according to hotel categories. This is a clear evidence of an act of flexible integration on the strategic level.

**Table 1: Sharm El Sheikh Quota from foreign tourists (year 2005-2015)**

Year	South Sinai Occ. rate	Europeans X 10 <sup>3</sup>	U.S citizens X 10 <sup>3</sup>	Others X 10 <sup>3</sup>
2005	67	6120	298	487
2006	61	6269	340	561
2007	73	7939	430	762
2008	74	9622	486	772
2009	70	8416	489	1752
2010	71	11177	563	899
2011	51	7211	287	545
2012	52	8416	285	561
2013	40	6976	340	387
2014	35	7578	244	431

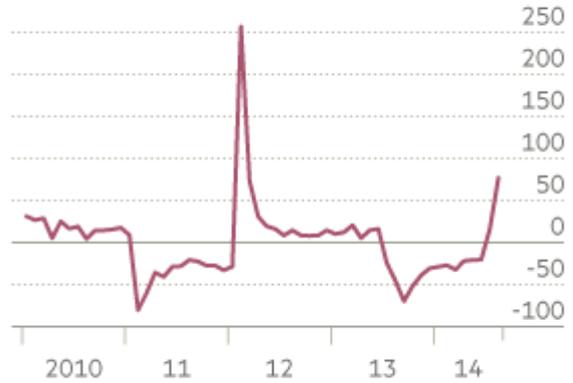
Source: (CAPMAS; September 2015, Ref No 71-01111-2015)

Tourism can be set as a national priority either it is motivated by a private sector, public sector or foreign sector (foreign investments). It includes and involves all areas of public policy as illustrated before, the integration of the security and mass media in connection with the re-branding image of the tourist site or destination. It is urgent and imperative to focus on this industry to improve its image internationally. Experiencing a transitional harsh period should motivate to resist and discover the weaknesses in the system. Sooner or later there will be a flow back of tourist from different nationalities confronting a new branding under stronger security and protection system along their short or long lasting vacation trips.

Tourists' arrivals have shot up by nearly 70 per cent in the third quarter of 2014 compared with the same period the year before. Arrivals in September 2014 increased 193 per cent compared with the same month in 2013, with 884,000 arrivals compared with 301,000. Hotel occupancy rates in the capital jumped from between 10 and 20 per cent in 2013 to nearly 50 per cent in 2014 ([www.ft.com/world/middleeast](http://www.ft.com/world/middleeast)). The overall sector has seen a remarkable recovery in the second half of 2014, especially during holiday seasons in the beach resorts, as well as going back to the old numbers in guided tours before the revolution. The forecasts for 2015 were promising as well (financial times, 2014). ([www.ft.com/world/middleeast](http://www.ft.com/world/middleeast)) (Accessed: November 2015).

**Egypt tourist arrivals**

Annual % change



Source: Haver Analytics

**Egyptian hotel occupancy rate**

Per cent



Source: Bloomberg

**Figure 2: Egypt tourist arrivals (2010-14)**  
**Figure 3: Egypt Hotel occupancy (2010-14)**

**3. Research Methodology**

**3.1 Data collection and sample**

An online survey containing a fictional scenario of an international tourist destination that was subject to a terror attack was used to collect the data required. Prior to implementation, a two-stage pilot test was conducted. First, qualitative feedback on the survey design, the logical flow and conceptual coherence was gathered from six marketing academics and 12 postgraduate students. The estimation of content and face validity by experts is commonly recommended in survey design (Burns et al., 2008) and has shown satisfactory results in

marketing and electronic commerce research (John, 1984; Liu & Arnett, 2000). Using Qualtrics survey, the researcher was enabled to ask respondents about the record of their visit to Sharm el sheik to indicate whether if first time or have previously visited the destination, and/or they would be likely to fly again, and suggest to others or wish to visit it (potential tourists) in the future, after which their responses would automatically be inserted into the scenario. Second, a pilot test covering 41 online respondents was performed in order to identify further technical and linguistic deficiencies. This led to the addition of key definitions at the start of the survey and the elimination of technical jargon. The online survey generated a total of 1,332 responses, of which 84 were removed since they did not indicate meaningful answers or they were excluded because they indicated ‘never’ to travel by plane to the question related to the means of travel. Of the remaining 1,248 surveyed travelers, 56% were from UK and 71% were between 22 and 44 years old with an almost equal gender split (53% male and 47% female) (see Table 2 for details).

**Table2: Sample Characteristics**

<i>Descriptive statistical variable</i>	<i>Frequency F</i>	<i>Percentage %</i>
<i>For a Sample Size n = 1248</i>		
<b>GENDER</b>		
MALE	648	52
FEMALE	600	48
<b>AGE</b>		
22-34	811	65
35-44	45	3.6
45-54	178	14.26
55-64	125	10.01
65 and over	89	7.211
<b>Country of origin</b>		
Great Britain	699	56.00
France	127	10.2
Germany	91	7.3
Russia	155	12.4
Others	176	14.1
<b>Air Travel frequency</b>		
Less than once a year	371	29.70
Once a year	334	26.80
2-3 times per year	237	19.00
More than three times a year	306	24.50

### 3.2 Survey design and measurements

Survey respondents were first presented with a number of questions relating to their air travelling pattern, followed by a sequence of piped text questions on Sharm el Sheikh as their destination of preference and motives of choice. A statement at the beginning informed respondents that the purpose of the study was to investigate international tourists’

reactions towards visiting Sharm el Sheikh after attack. Furthermore, respondents’ strong inclination to attribute the security responsibility for terror attacks in and near the destination area (Mean = 4.1, SD = 0.88 on a 5-point scale; 1= strongly disagree, 5= strongly agree). In addition, the attack was largely perceived to be of tourist oriented nature (Mean= 3.9, SD = 0.93 on a 5 –point scale; 1= strongly disagree, 5= strongly agree) which verifies the terror aspect of the destination incident. Afterwards, respondents were asked to report on their emotional reaction and how they perceived the city after attack and future travel decisions to Sharm el Sheikh. All questionnaire items were based on previously verified measures and anchored by five-point Likert scales (1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree). Crisis or attack severity was measured using a one-item scale developed by Van de Calseyde, Keren, and Zeelenberg (2013), crisis responsibility (one item) and destination image (three items) were adopted from Kim and Cameron (2011). Afterwards, the respondents were asked to report on their emotional reaction and how they perceived the destination after attack. Four reactions were measured: destination avoidance after attack’s occurrence, based on Folkman and Lazarus’ (1988), negative WOM was adopted from Gregoire and Fisher (2006), and the impact of mass media (three items). Finally, tourists’ future reaction (i.e destination brand) is for re-visiting intentions (two items).

### 4. Results

The study focused on three core questions after the crisis occurrence.

H1: Security in Sharm destination is not consistent and convenient.

H2: Mass media reaction towards Sharm El Sheikh crisis and its impact on tourists’ flow.

H3: Rebranding Sharm as a tourist destination.

The frustration and anger level grouping tourists’ passion and emotions according to their cognition level (dependent variable). All variables either dependent or independent all are ranked according to scale matrix of perception ranging from 1 to 5, as described before.

The latent variable is inserted automatically by AMOS 24. It offers flexibility through a variety of test and calculation of residuals or latent variables. In order to assert assumptions, mainly on both security issue and attack impact on shaping tourists’ perception relative to destination brand. Multiple correlation matrix was computed to asset that the cumulative effect was risky.

The main variables are computed for each data set including, the frequency, the mean, the variances,

covariance, and the coefficient of correlation. The main dependent variable linked with three independent variables after an elapse of a future period of political and security stabilization, helped to re-evaluate the tourist perception relative to security procedures; media influence and destination branding.

**Table 3: The measurement and psychometric test to three decimal points the single effect and co-effect between the independent variables S= security; M=media & B –destination branding and the dependent variable F –**

The perceptions and reflexion on the assumptions	Pearson correlation coefficient	Variance	Covariance	R <sup>2</sup>	AVE of absolute deviation from the mean
Perception versus security -S	0.999	4653374.50	5202655.20	0.994	1537.76
Perception versus Media -M-	0.983	3790307.211	3892817.30	0.986	1162.24
Perception versus destination branding B-	0.689	3180336.011	1910183.90	0.475	1004.64
Security & Branding	0.702	2676042.48	1748652.60	0.493	1252.56
Media versus branding	0.621	1771101.51	1164820.40	0.982	1095.92
Security versus media	0.991	3282144.88	3488572.20	0.386	1350.00
The impact of the three independent variables on the dependent variable (multicollinearity)	0.850	3063320.976	5820309.855	0.886	1347.420

There is a significant strong correlation between the frustration level in respect with the security hypothesis and the media perception however the correlation is weaker in respect with brand. There is a gradual impact of the three independent variables; the security comes in the first rank, than the media and finally the destination branding. The data implies that multiple correlation relieve the situation as the impact becomes lower since for instance the higher positive values of the brand impact substitute for the lower negative values of the security and media perception. Accordingly, it is believed that the key controllable variable that could be a remedial tool is the rebranding of the destination and thus it could obtain a normally distributed curve of all the variables by increasing the sample. Simply if the satisfaction increases, it will damp the effect of both

security and media and a proportional impact could be reached on all the variables.

**Table 4: The standard deviation symmetrical matrix & the scale matrix**

$$\begin{matrix} F \\ S \\ M \\ B \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} F & S & M & B \\ 2407.05 & 2157.16 & 1946.87 & 1783.34 \\ 2157.18 & 2161.93 & 1811.66 & 1635.86 \\ 1946.87 & 1811.66 & 1627.90 & 1330.82 \\ 1783.34 & 1635.86 & 1330.82 & 1151.15 \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} 5 \\ 4 \\ 3 \\ 2 \\ 1 \end{matrix} = \begin{matrix} 1450.57 \\ 924.06 \\ 147.74 \\ 37.07 \\ 12.89 \end{matrix}$$

The multi- impact on frustration of the three variables aggregated (the cumulative SD. effect is 1750.23) .The SD matrix values of the standard deviation are in descending orders. The matrix Exhibits lowers values near the rank - scale 3, 2 than near 5 and 4. The emphasis is on the strength impact of the first two independent and exogenous variables (Security and Media) on the frustration level and their impact on the independent endogenous variable (The destination branding), however it worth to add that the greater the population will be and the greater sample, the result will be distributed normally along all the variables.

The  $\chi^2$  (chi-square statistics) reflected a zero value at  $df = 12$  according to the formula  $(r-1)(c-1)$  where  $r = 5$  refers to the number of row of the scale matrix and  $c = 4$  refers to the number of dependent and independent variables.

**Table 5: The t-test value and coefficient measure specified below under constraint**

Such that  $\alpha + \beta + \gamma = 1$

Hypothesis	t- value	Alpha & beta & gamma	Result
H-1	0.485	0.49	Supported
H-2	0.392	0.45	Supported
H-3	0.422	0.08	Supported

o The T test confirmed assumptions.

At the prevailing scale of 5 and 4 .The inferences about the impact of security were found to be significant and severely hostile against the tourism destination branding. The Media impact was slightly less than the security impact. Branding was impacted due to their dual effect of both H1-and H2. On H-3 the T test supported as well that the double impact of security and media together is greater on the branding rather than frustration. The influence of the destination was only 0.08 on the frustration level.

According to our expectation in case of isolation of these exogenous two variables considered that are destructive of the third independent variable and thus we would face a simple regression model on which the satisfaction would increase with brand and frustration would approach a negative values facing a strictly direct relation among satisfaction level and brand destination opposite to frustration versus security, media and branding.

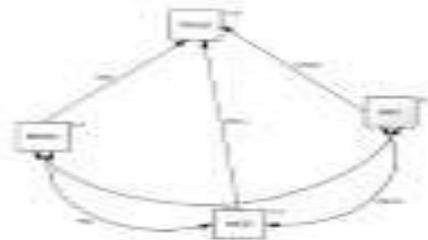
**5. Discussion**

Out of 1248 tourists investigated, analysis revealed a strong correlation approaching 1 (0.99) in conjunction respondents disagree on the security level after repetitive incident of terror in Sharm city. By pear observation the securities checking procedures, they accounted on the absence of consistency and regular applications. Others strongly disagree on the implementation of security within the framework of destination branding, as they consider it as interference in tourists privacy and leading to the creation of unrest atmosphere. Thus, security procedures should be in secret, through disclosed approaches and using new technology. A third party considered it as an international disaster impacting not only Sharm but also any part of the world, could be subject to various attacks. The prevailing judgment was that sadness lead to frustration and hurting memories especially for the families of the victims who stay suffering although compensated by the insurance companies.

The second core question has additionally implied that mass media exert influence on tourists' choice and cognition level. They admit that media deviates from the right path of transmitting the news accurately and punctually .The impact of media is slightly weaker than the impact of a terror incident. But this is psychologically rather than cognitively due to the overall stressed and tensioned atmosphere transmitted by mass media means and their reporters, creating a frightening atmosphere. Discussion revealed that some of the respondents' friends and/or relatives, who were visiting Sharm at attack time, were alerted of flights suspension to their home countries and authorities urge them to leave without completing their planned visit .The influence of mass media in shaping tourists' choice and destination branding is avoidless. The social media itself exerts its influence on daily basis in a time where the rhythm of life is speedy with the smart cell phones which are now all interconnected to the internet and are the easiest main source of world news. Since Sharm is spotted internationally thus it could face competition on a large scale from other competitive destination, branding their destinations through the media especially on the short term .Consequently,

security and media both could act in creating goodwill, so as Sharm could be reputed back. However a rebranding or restructuring is mandatory to reverse the orientation of the international traffic towards the destination.

Concerning the third core question about destination branding, the study revealed coefficient reflecting unexpected indication. Some tourists' opinions were directed to the idea that destination branding appears during crisis and not during normal time. As the majority has disagreed on brand satisfaction and weren't keen to generate the idea of travelling to Sharm. The multi -correlation matrix among different variables suggest that a strategic revision of objectives and policies is mandatory to achieve targets of the tourism sector. This string correlation between the three facets is threatening the tourism activities, which need a reversed positive feedback helping in destination branding.



**Figure 4: AMOS 24 Diagram**

**6. Study Implications**

The Results of this study have several implications for destination stakeholder organizations- including tourism service providers, destination marketing organizations and other public sector bodies in relation to internal pre and post crisis marketing strategies , focusing on destination branding . The study provides an overview of factors which influence tourists' re-visiting intentions after a destination attack. Most importantly, the empirical findings suggest that tourists' initial worry goes towards security measures at the destination. This subsequently shapes their perceptions and reactions, and influences their travel decision making. Consequently, it is recommended that destination stakeholders concentrate their efforts on developing strategies to manage the destination international image and reputation, asking for the design of strategies capable to leave a clear and unique image in the visitors and tourists mind and that they should be consistency in all media choices (Balakrishnan, 2009). Studies have already shown that consumers'

severity perceptions can be influenced by targeted communication efforts such as providing explanations or apologies (Rowland and Jerome, 2004; Sims, 2009). It seems, also a feasible option, to upgrade destination 's communication channels , articulated with an effective strategy, which can fulfill the requirements of the destination stakeholders, allowing more efficient responses, enhancing image, in addition to improving their long-term prosperity and competitiveness.

## 7. Conclusion and Limitations

Destination branding is now an important marketing tool and can have a major role for drawing stakeholders together, providing a core set of values for the destination whilst highlighting the need for market orientation. It is clear, from the case of Sharm el sheikh analyzed, that branding may help change perceptions, focusing marketing responses in times of crises. Destination marketers should unveil new campaign to differentiate Sharm El Sheikh's image from other regional destinations. The campaign should focuses on promoting Sharm as a safe destination, and ensuring tourists are not getting scared from visiting the place. Local decision makers should assess the damage helping in formulating contingency plans and policies to handle and mitigate the impact to the local tourism industry in the wake of the security incidents. And finally, positive media coverage during the next phase is essential to lure tourists to Sharm El Sheikh as a tourists' attraction site. And with no doubt lifting travel warning from official countries' websites will go far in restoring international tourists' traffic to the area. The study was limited to terror attacks influencing tourist destination branding excluding other types of influences as natural disasters although contingency plans could be similar.

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