

The Residents' Perception of the Obstacles and Prospects Facing Alexandria's Maritime and Coastal Tourism

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ABSTRACT

This research aimed to study the residents' perception of the obstacles and prospects facing Alexandria's maritime and coastal tourism. Several of the following sub-objectives can help achieve this goal: 1- Studying some of the respondents' personal, Socio- economic characteristics. 2- A study of residents' perception regarding an Egyptian marine and coastal tourism strategy. 3- A study of the residents' perception of competitiveness—boosting the competitiveness of coastal and marine travel. 4- A study of the residents' perception of sustainability—the expansion of sustainable tourism in coastal and maritime areas. 5- A study of the perception and character of Alexandria's coastline and maritime areas were enhanced by the respondents' thoughts. Research data were collected from 745 respondents using a personal interview questionnaire. The results show that the respondents have an excellent understanding of coastal and maritime tourism. Non-beach tourism activities were among the most relevant tourism initiatives aimed at developing the marine and coastal economies in Alexandria, which leads to a competitive and sustainable economy at the same time. The most important obstacles to the competitiveness of the coastal and marine tourism sub-sector were those related to seasonality, sustainability, and innovation. The necessity of having a plan that protects the natural and physical environments was also given a high priority by the respondents. Finally, the research presented several recommendations, including establishing monitoring programs and indicators, enhancing communication between different disciplines, enhancing tourism information, encourage flexibility and pro-active handling of emergencies, and disseminating knowledge.

Keywords: Perception, Obstacles, Prospects, Coastal tourism, Sustainable tourism.

INTRODUCTION

Egypt has an enormous tourism water wealth; its beaches extend over 3,000 km along the Mediterranean Sea and 1,850 km along the Red Sea. Egypt's coasts provide unmatched topographical diversity, a wealth of marine tradition and heritage, and natural refuges. Its waters are renowned for both their breathtaking natural beauty and remarkable biological richness. It should come as no surprise that one of the most significant segments of Egypt's tourism economy is coastal and marine travel (Possibilities and opportunities of transition to the blue economy in Egypt, 2022).

Egypt's tourist industry is one of its primary revenue streams. Because of the yearly dollar income it generates and the foreign exchange returns, it was able to considerably contribute to the GDP and fight unemployment by recruiting a sizable portion of Egypt's labour force (Derbali, 2020).

Egypt's tourism industry is a substantial one, accounting for 34% of its service exports and 11.7 percent of the nation's foreign exchange inflows in 2015. This year, the tourism sector generated nearly \$12.5 billion in revenue, employed 12.6% of the direct and indirect labour force, generated 5.5% of all service sector investments, and served roughly 14.7 million tourists annually. It also contributed 11.5% of Egypt's GDP (both directly and indirectly). Along with yacht tourism, diving, and fishing, Egypt is unique in beach tourism. Over 90% of tourists from outside Egypt come for beach vacations. In 2019, the non-commodity export sector expanded at an annual rate of 16.5%, contributing 19.3% of the total foreign exchange earnings (Ragab, 2014; Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, 2015; Possibilities and opportunities of transition to the blue economy in Egypt, 2022).

Jobs that are informal, seasonal, and a professional nature have been established in Egypt thanks to tourism. Compared to the country's whole industrial sector, the tourist industry has 1.5 times the capacity to create jobs per unit of output because it is a high-demand employment sector (Swinscoe and Tohamy, 2000).

Though the prospects for coastal and maritime tourism are looking better in the next years, their full potential is still unknown. Ensuring the suitable circumstances for the sustained expansion of maritime and coastal tourism may have a significant effect on Egypt's job market and economic expansion. Furthermore, by promoting increased urban cohesion in Egypt and offering long-term, sustainable solutions to coastal communities, it can aid in the development of the more remote coastal areas in a sustainable manner (Ministry of Planning, Monitoring and Administrative Reform, 2020).

Seeing this potential, Egypt's Ministry of Tourism is currently working on a plan to give Egypt greater resources to promote a more sophisticated, sustainable, and inclusive marine and coastal tourism industry.

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Participation from all interested parties in the plan's definition is crucial (Ministry of Planning, Monitoring and Administrative Reform, 2020).

When on vacation, a large number of travellers from over the globe come to Egypt and spend their time beach hopping. The most visited tourist destinations are Red Sea Governorate, Ain Sukhna City, Hurghada, Safaga, Marsa Alam, South Sinai Governorate, Dahab, Nuweiba, Taba, and Sharm El-Sheikh. Divers and snorkelers are common in these locations, and the area's colourful coral reefs and unique species are well-known features. Additionally, campers and beach camps have been established between the shore and the mountains, or year-round tourist resorts have dispersed camping and mountain adventures. With its numerous coastal tourist resorts, the north shore city of Alamein, which overlooks the Mediterranean Sea, too appears to be a potential tourist attraction. The Nile attracts an incredible number of tourists and piques their interest in terms of tourism. Travellers are primarily drawn to Nile cruises and spending nights on tourist ships down the Nile River. Numerous Nile cruises and floating hotels offer private berths in each city so guests can independently see the major sites as they traverse the length of the Nile from Cairo to Luxor and Aswan and back (El Gohary, 2012; Avraham, 2016; Haiying, 2020).

Alexandria, known as "The Pearl of the Mediterranean" is a multicultural port city with a true Mediterranean feel. It is also cosmopolitan and rich in history. Its diverse mosaic of inhabitants, who came from all over the Mediterranean and beyond, representing countless ethnic and religious backgrounds and coexisting in a welcoming and multiethnic community, created one of the twentieth century's most cosmopolitan cities. Alexandria, with its distinct position above the Mediterranean, its pleasant beaches, and its moderate climate, has long been a must-see destination for travellers to Egypt (Ministry of State for Administrative Development, 2019).

Alexandria is a well-liked tourist destination and year-round seaside resort today because of its historical attractions for those looking to visit ancient monuments, catch a glimpse of Alexandria's glorious past, or just spend a sun-savvy vacation enjoying the golden sandy beaches, the shining sun, the invigorating sea breeze, and exciting entertainment venues (Ministry of State for Administrative Development, 2019).

Consequently, the primary goal of the research was to the residents' perception of the obstacles and prospects facing Alexandria's maritime and coastal tourism. Several the following sub-objectives can help achieve this goal:

1. Studying some the residents' personal, Socio-economic characteristics.
2. A study of residents' perception regarding marine and coastal tourism strategy for Alexandria.
3. A study of the residents' perception to boosting of the competitiveness for coastal and marine travel.
4. A study of the residents' perception to the expansion of sustainable tourism in coastal and maritime areas.
5. Proposing a vision for developing the coastal and marine line of Alexandria according to its nature, through the ideas of the respondents.

STUDY AREA

Alexandria's coordinates are 29° 40' to 32° 35' east and 30° 50' to 31° 40' north. The city's waterfront extends over 60 km, with many harbors and beaches, from Abu-Qir Ba in the east to Sidi Krir in the west. It is located in north-central Egypt, around 20 miles (32 kilometres) along the Mediterranean shore (Mohamed and Beltagy, 2009).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Operational definition:

The residents' perception of the obstacles and prospects facing Alexandria's maritime and coastal tourism: It is meant in this research is what the respondents aspire to get from tourism and their expects to achieve for them in light of the current circumstances. It was measured through a number of criteria, were: Understanding of coastal and maritime tourism, a marine and coastal tourist strategy for Alexandria, the respondents' perspectives on the risks to sustainability and seasonality, increasing the competitiveness of maritime and coastal tourism, sustainability-growth of sustainable tourism in coastal and maritime areas. Each of them was measured with a number of statements answered by the respondent, and scores were given for each of them, and the sum of the statements' scores represented the total score.

Comprehensiveness & Sample:

The population of Alexandria Governorate is 5,529,665, and the governorate is divided administratively into ten residential districts: (First Montazah District, Second Montazah District, East District, Central District, West District, Al-Jumrok District, Al-Ameriya District, Second Al-Ameriya District, Al-Ajami District, Burj Al Arab District and City) Due to the difficulty of collecting from the entire governorate due to the large size of the comprehensive and its dispersion, three district were chosen randomly: (East District, Central District, and Al-Jumruk District) and their total number is 1,677,177 (Ministry of Planning, Monitoring and Administrative Reform, 2023), and voluntary (by chance) response sampling of 745 residents' of Alexandria was taken. A 9-week

personal interview was thus initiated from April 10 to June 4, 2023, in order to get direct feedback from interested parties on suggestions and actions that can be enabled and pushed at the Alexandria level.

Data collection and analysis method:

A questionnaire was designed to collecting of the data by personal interviews. After completing the questionnaire forms, they were examined to ensure that they had answered all of the questions. After that, they were sorted into pre-made tables and tabulated in tables for discussion using a variety of statistical techniques expressed as percentages in order to use the SPSS statistical analysis programme to describe and analyze the study's findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

First: The personal, Socio- economic characteristics of the respondents:

When the respondents were questioned about their ages at the time the study was being conducted, the results showed that the largest percentage of respondents, or 62% of them, were under the age of thirty-one. Nineteen was the youngest respondent's age, and fifty-six was the oldest. The young group's contribution to social and economic growth is apparent, whether through tourism resources or other development sectors, as they are the ones who consistently observe social changes in society and the producing group. Youth tourism can enhance a country's sense of national identity, protect its legacy, improve psychological well-being, encourage personal growth, expose young people to new places and lifestyles, and fortify relationships with others when it grows domestic travel and raises the tourism culture level in the country (Hassan and Soliman, 2023).

The study's findings revealed that 74.6% of the respondents were male when asked about their gender (Table 1).

Given that education plays a significant part in measuring and developing cultures, the results indicate that 83.2% of respondents had a collegiate, 4.6% had intermediate education, and just 12.2% had a high qualification (Table 1).

When asked about their marital status, we discover that the percent of singles is larger than that of married in the sample —45.4%—representing. About 54.6% from the sample was married, while the percentage of divorced individuals in the sample is 0% (Table 1).

The average monthly income of 2900–4400 pounds, according to the statistics, represents 24.4% of the lowest per capita income of 2900 pounds per month—the lowest monthly rate—while representing 52.2% of the income of the majority in the middle income category, as shown Table (1).

745 responses in total were received for the in-person interview. National and regional governments contributed significantly (20.2%) as did private businesses (9.6%). Universities (20.4%) and research institutes (15.9%) also contributed, similarly did the media (2.3%), and international organizations (0.5%). Furthermore, a substantial portion of contributions (31.1%) were obtained under the broad heading "other" with the bulk being from trans regional tourism partners and networks in Alexandria, as shown Table (1).

Second: Understanding of coastal and maritime tourism:

When asked about their knowledge with coastal and maritime tourism, the majority of participants in the in-person interview—65.9%—declared to have very good understanding of the subject, which encourages the development of sustainable tourism practices, which reduce the impact of tourism on marine ecosystems (Table 2).

Three: A marine and coastal tourist strategy for Alexandria:

When we asked the respondent what they thought about a marine and coastal tourist strategy for Alexandria, the findings indicated that, as per the majority of respondents in the personal interview, (90.3%) non-beach related tourism activities (such as heritage-based tourism, cultural tourism, and gastronomic events) and (70.3%) yachting, boating, and cruising were the most pertinent tourism-related activities for creating a competitive and sustainable marine and coastal strategy for Alexandria. Ecotourism (76.8%), beach-based recreational tourism (86.9%), and nautical sports (66.4%) ranked next on the list of favored activities that could improve the sector's competitiveness (Table 3).

One of the most important means of entertainment is embarking on a sea trip, deep into the sea, and viewing the tourist and archaeological landmarks of the city from deep within the sea, in addition to enjoying spending an entertaining day or practicing the hobby of fishing from tourist boats.

Table 1. Respondents' distribution according to their social, economic, and personal characteristics

Category	Number	%
Age:		
Lower category (less than 31)	462	62.0
Middle category (33 - 44)	156	21.0
Higher category (more than 44)	127	17.0
Total	745	100.0
Sex:		
Male	556	74.6
Female	189	25.4
Total	745	100.0
Education level:		
Elementary school stage	0	0.0
Middle school	0	0.0
Pre-university (secondary)	34	4.6
Collegiate	620	83.2
High qualifications	91	12.2
Total	745	100.0
Marital status:		
Single	407	54.6
Married	338	45.4
Divorced	0	0.0
Widower	0	0.0
Total	745	100.0
Average monthly income:		
Lower category (less than 2900)	182	24.4
Middle category (2900 - 4400)	389	52.2
Higher category (more than 4400)	174	23.4
Total	745	100.0
Employment:		
National and Regional governments	150	20.2
Private businesses	72	9.6
Universities	152	20.4
Research institutes	118	15.9
International organizations	4	0.5
Media	17	2.3
Other	232	31.1
Total	745	100.0

Source: Computed from sample data

Table 2. Respondents were divided according to how knowledgeable they were in coastal and maritime tourism

The response	Number	%
Know	491	65.9
I don't know	254	34.1
Total	745	100.0

Source: Computed from sample data

Table 3. Distribution of the respondents based on their preferred activities with potential to foster the competitiveness of the sector

Activities	Frequency	%
Beach- based recreational tourism	647	86.9
Non- beach related tourism (e.g. cultural tourism)	673	90.3
Yachting, boating and cruising	524	70.3
Nautical sports	495	66.4
Eco- tourism	572	76.8

Source: Computed from sample data

When we asked the respondent what they thought about a marine and coastal tourist strategy for Alexandria, Each of these activities was requested to be rated by respondents on a ranking from 1 (not significant) to 3 (very significant). The results showed

that 50.4% of the respondents rated non-beach related tourism as "very important," with yachting, boating, and cruising at 46.7%, eco-tourism at 40.2%, beach-based recreational tourism at 37.6%, and nautical sports at 31.9% following (Table 4).

Table 4. Respondents were arranged according to the significance of the actions that could increase the sector's competitiveness

The response	Number	%
Non-beach related tourism		
Not significant	97	13.0
Significant	273	36.6
Very significant	375	50.4
Total	745	100.0
Yachting, boating and cruising		
Not significant	180	24.2
Significant	217	29.1
Very significant	348	46.7
Total	745	100.0
Eco-tourism		
Not significant	197	26.4
Significant	249	33.4
Very significant	299	40.2
Total	745	100.0
Beach- based recreational tourism		
Not significant	161	21.6
Significant	304	40.8
Very significant	280	37.6
Total	745	100.0
Nautical sports		
Not significant	159	21.4
Significant	348	46.7
Very significant	238	31.9
Total	745	100.0

Source: Computed from sample data

Four: The respondents' perspectives on the risks to sustainability and seasonality:

The results showed that the biggest obstacles facing marine and coastal tourism in Alexandria were found to be seasonality and sustainability threats (such as an increasing carbon footprint, a lack of water, and pressure on natural resources and habitats; the percentage of individuals who deemed these difficulties as "very important" was 42.7% and 55.6%, respectively. The respondents ranked the following issues in decreasing order of significance: lack of product diversification and innovation strategies (36.4%), insufficiently coordinated transnational and trans regional strategies (31.7%), climate change (29.2%), growing number of completion from destinations other than Alexandria (27.3%), growing demand for customized experiences (24.8%), Remote coastal areas' underdevelopment (17.6%) and the industry's shortage of skilled employees (15.4%) , as shown Table (5).

Five: Increasing the competitiveness of maritime and coastal tourism:

The results showed that Alexandria's competitiveness is hampered by innovation obstacles within the subsector of maritime and coastal tourism, according to 94.5% of participants in the in-person interview. Regarding potential ways to boost competitiveness, participants preferred Alexandria's backing of programs that promote the growth of alliances between tour operators and neighborhood businesses in order to expand the perception of it as "very important".

All other suggested measures, however, received widespread acceptance as crucial steps in boosting Alexandria's competitiveness in coastal and marine tourism. The following support was received overall for these efforts, 92.2% of respondents are in favor of the development of stakeholder networks and clusters to improve sectorial organization, including at the transnational and trans regional levels, promotion of information and communication technology use among public and private stakeholders (94.5%), and support for the promotion of product and service diversification (92.2%).

Specialized courses for mobility training have been established for teachers and students at tourism and maritime schools (90%), the development of norms and practices for cruises and other recreational boats in port destinations (87.9%), and, lastly, the promotion of Alexandria as a destination for sports and the marine industry (85.3%), the 91.7% sector-specific collection of information at the Alexandria level, and support for training initiatives and programs meant to raise citizens

of Alexandria's educational attainment and skill levels (91.7%), as shown Table (6).

Six: Sustainability-growth of sustainable tourism in coastal and maritime areas:

The results showed that respondents in the study overwhelmingly prioritized ensuring the sector's sustainability, about 98.9% of respondents ranked the necessity of a strategy that shields coastal regions' physical and natural environments by promoting sustainable economic and social measures while mitigating negative effects. Another issue that garnered a lot of support was making sure that local populations are respected and profit from coastal and maritime tourism (96.8%). Similarly, a significant majority of respondents (94.8%) agreed that ethical tourism practices should be promoted by both travel companies and travelers.

The importance of strategic and integrated coastal zone management within maritime and coastal regions is emphasized by 95.4% of survey respondents, who believe that this is necessary to balance the interests of all maritime economic actors, such as fisheries, the energy industry, or maritime transport.

Regarding environmental sustainability, 94.3% of the respondents said that creating encouragement for greener choices and more environmentally amiable technologies in the cruise sector — Priorities like energy efficiency, trash reduction and treatment, and pollution control were crucial.

Lastly, a substantial portion of respondents (90.6%) advocated for increased regulation as a means of encouraging maritime stakeholders to engage in sustainable business practices, as shown Table (7).

Seven: Enhancing the perception and recognition of Alexandria's coastal and maritime areas:

The results showed that according to the findings of the personal interview, everyone agreed that Alexandria's marine and coastal tourism needed to be better marketed and profiled. The initiative that brought roader support back together (91.8%) was the development of campaigns by sea basins along with targeted communication strategies.

International marketing campaigns and tasks among stakeholders on coastal locations ought to also be heavily incentivized, according to poll participants (87.7%). The notion of creating cruise stops with the designation "excellence destination" that would reward high-quality standard port cities (84.2%) and the necessity of keeping monitor on sector-specific issues including the growing global competition from foreign maritime destinations (85.6%) were among the other initiatives that the majority of participants endorsed as

important. The notion of highlighting the diversity and richness of Alexandria's maritime and coastal region through events like the yearly Alexandria celebrations

of Maritime Day was also highly encouraged (15.2%), as shown Table (8).

Table 5. Respondents were distributed according to how they perceived about seasonality and sustainability risks

Challenges	Frequency	%
Seasonality	414	55.6
Sustainability threats	318	42.7
Innovation	271	36.4
Trans- national approaches	236	31.7
Climate change	218	29.2
External competition	203	27.3
Customized experiences	185	24.8
Remote coastal areas	131	17.6
Skilled employees	115	15.4

Source: Computed from sample data

Table 6. Distribution of the respondents according to their perspectives of increasing the competitiveness of maritime and coastal tourism

Competitiveness	Frequency	%
Innovation	704	94.5
Clusters and Networks	696	93.4
Communication technologies	687	92.2
products Diversity	687	92.2
Partnerships	729	97.8
Training programs and initiatives	683	91.7
Courses for mobility training.	671	90
Promotion of Alexandria as a destination for sports and the marine industry	635	85.3
Development of norms and practices for cruises and other recreational boats in port destinations	655	87.9
Collection of information	683	91.7

Source: Computed from sample data

Table 7. Distribution of the participants according to their perspectives of sustainability-growth of sustainable tourism in coastal and maritime areas

Sustainability	Frequency	%
Protect environment	737	98.9
ICZM	711	95.4
Responsible practice	706	94.8
Better regulation	675	90.6
Greener cruise sector	703	94.3
Respect local populations	721	96.8

Source: Computed from sample data

Table 8. Distribution of the respondents based on their perspectives of enhancing the perception and recognition of Alexandria's coastal and maritime areas

Image & profile	Frequency	%
Monitor on sector-specific issues	638	85.6
Events and awards	657	15.2
International marketing	653	87.7
Websites and campaigns	684	91.8
Cruises "Excellence destination" label	627	84.2

Source: Computed from sample data

Conclusion And Recommendations

- **Creating monitoring programs and indicators.** It has been shown that indicators are useful instruments for characterizing maritime and coastal tourism.
 - **Enhancement of tourism information.** For tourism that is activity-specific, there is a significant gap.
 - **Enhancement of communication between disciplines.** The contributions of several disciplines could be very beneficial to the field of coastal and maritime tourism.
 - **Provide comments.** Plans for coastal and maritime tourism must incorporate this kind of business response to ensure that ecological and carrying capacity restrictions are not exceeded. Certain tourism areas and activities may benefit from this.
 - **Encourage flexibility and pro-active handling of emergencies.** Extreme weather and natural disasters are major contributors to crises in many places.
- Spread knowledge.** One crucial and frequently overlooked goal of research should be to improve public communication about tourism.

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المخلص العربي

إدراك المبحوثين للمعوقات والآفاق التي تواجه السياحة البحرية والساحلية بالإسكندرية

نورا حسن سعد حسن

المتعلقة بالشاطئ كانت من المبادرات السياحية الأكثر صلة والتي تهدف إلى تطوير الاقتصاد البحري والساحلي في الإسكندرية والتي تؤدي إلى اقتصاد تنافسي ومستدام في نفس الوقت. وكانت من أهم العقبات التي تعترض القدرة التنافسية للقطاع الفرعي للسياحة الساحلية والبحرية هي تلك المتعلقة بالموسمية والاستدامة والابتكار. كما أعطيت ضرورة وجود خطة تحمي البيئات الطبيعية والمادية أولوية قصوى من قبل المبحوثين. وأخيراً، قدم البحث عدة توصيات، منها إنشاء برامج ومؤشرات رصدية، وتعزيز التواصل بين التخصصات المختلفة، وتعزيز المعلومات السياحية، وتشجيع المرونة والمعالجة الاستباقية لحالات الطوارئ، ونشر المعرفة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الإدراك، المعوقات، الآفاق، السياحة الساحلية، السياحة المستدامة.

استهدف هذا البحث دراسة إدراك المبحوثين للمعوقات والآفاق التي تواجه السياحة البحرية والساحلية بالإسكندرية. ويمكن أن يساعد في تحقيق هذا الهدف عدد من الأهداف الفرعية التالية: دراسة عدد من المتغيرات الإجتماعية والشخصية والاقتصادية للمبحوثين، ودراسة مدى إدراك المبحوثين لاستراتيجية السياحة البحرية والساحلية المصرية، ودراسة مدى تحقيق المبحوثين لتعزيز القدرة التنافسية للسفر الساحلي والبحري، ودراسة مدى إدراك المبحوثين للتوسع في السياحة المستدامة في المناطق الساحلية والبحرية، وقد تم اقتراح تصور لتعزيز تنمية الشريط الساحلي والمناطق البحرية بالإسكندرية من خلال أفكار المبحوثين. تم تجميع بيانات البحث من 745 مبحوث باستخدام الاستبيان بالمقابلة الشخصية. تظهر النتائج أن المبحوثين لديهم فهم ممتاز نحو السياحة الساحلية والبحرية. وأن الأنشطة السياحية غير