

WEIGHTING INTRINSIC CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE OF HISTORIC PARKS IN EGYPT A MULTI-CRITERIA APPROACH

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Abstract

Historical parks are an essential and inalienable asset conjoining history and memories of communities; they are a part of the city's cultural heritage that connects past, present and future generations. The pragmatic question addressed in this paper is how can a wide range of heritage values in historic parks be identified and prioritized in a way that informs policies and planning decisions? To answer this question, a Multi-Criteria Analysis was adopted. Delphi method was used to determine significance criteria and their weights. The study depended on the feedback from practitioners and academics in the field of cultural heritage preservation to examine the intrinsic significance of historic parks in Egypt (aesthetic, historical, scientific, social and spiritual values). Collected data were analyzed using AHP (Analytic Hierarchy Process) and Cumulative Voting methods integrally, and Ranking method in parallel. Results from both methods and different experts are compared. Based upon the analysis, artistic and historical values (0.31) are the priorities; the second level accommodated intangible historical values (0.22-0.24), finally the use and the condition of the park (0.11-0.12). Weights of sub-variables disclosed minor discrepancies in ranking "emotional attachment, exposure to disfiguration, and preserving original features" variables. Moreover, experts' opinions fluctuated based on their backgrounds.

Keywords: Historical Parks, Significance Weighting, Cultural Heritage, Parks in Egypt

INTRODUCTION

Cultural heritage is a broad term, which combines cultural and natural heritage as defined by UNESCO in 1972 (UNESCO, 1972), it composes tangible and intangible elements, fluctuating from cultural, social and economical products representing people's different values. Places with cultural values are places that are important to a cultural group, comprising political, religious, spiritual and moral beliefs in place – in the fabric, setting, use, meanings, records, related places and related artifacts (Australia ICOMOS 1999.; Forbes, 2014). Additionally, cultural heritage is an expression of evolving knowledge, beliefs, traditions and views generally deified by 'heritage experts,' e.g., museum professionals, archaeologists, historians and architects (English Heritage, 2008). First adopted in 1979, the Burra Charter is periodically updated to reflect developing understanding of the theory and practice of cultural heritage management in the world. Numerous organizations and scholars addressed the importance of understanding the heritage significance. Heritage significance is what accentuates places; it could be utilized to determine the most appropriate level of interventions and statutory protection for future generations

(Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment, 2011). Since it is apprehensible that no society would exert an effort to conserve what it does not value, therefore, value and significance would be reason underlying heritage conservation. Although defining significance is easy, it is less obvious how it should be interpreted in the context of cultural heritage. *Burra Charter*,⁷ Australia's premier policy document on cultural heritage, stated significance vary for different stakeholders. The cultural heritage significance is not immutable as it may change as the history of the place evolves and new information is revealed (South Kesteven District Council, 2017; Szmelter, 2013). Procedurally, assessment of heritage values is fraught with difficulties as a result of the diversity of values overlapping or even competing, plus the diversity of methodologies and tools used to evaluate the values, and lastly the different stakeholders' opinions (Mason, 2002). Another obstacle is the time boundary, where for example a site can possess high historical values; however, the site in the current time, is not visible, which will affect the possibility for understanding the past through it, hence its significance (Manders et al., 2012).

The term 'Heritage Assets' includes listed buildings, conservation areas, scheduled monuments, statues, gardens, and battlefields, or historical parks (Josefsson and Aronsson, 2016). "Historical Parks" refer to urban green spaces of dissimilar scales, management protocol, ownership, forms, functions and historical significance that are usually accessible to the public (Saratsi et al., 2016). Historical urban public parks often accumulate a range of values, including social and intangible values to local or broader communities. Their characters radiate aesthetic values; horticultural and ecological importance; in addition to civic value as venues for social and political events ((ICOMOS 2017). In Egypt, historical parks are gaining more and more attention as a valuable and vulnerable asset of the Egyptian cultural heritage that deserves protection. Unfortunately, such precious parks had undergone changes detrimental to their historical qualities, design, vegetation, character, and uses. In addition to the limited fund designated to conserve that type of heritage, therefore there is a need to prioritize to guide decision-makers, and the conservation plans to ensure safeguarding their value, meanings, and functions for the community and future generation.

1. ASSESSING CULTURAL HERITAGE

Assessing heritage significance starts with determining whether the site is considered heritage or not, in other words, is it eligible to be registered in local or international lists. After distinguishing heritage assets, the assessment is utilized to reveal the appropriate conservation management according to the assets' significance and determine how impacts would be mitigated. (Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment, 2011; Manders et al., 2012; South Kesteven District Council, 2017). It is optimistically desirable to sustain all the identified heritage values of a place, both cultural and natural; in spite of the conflict that may occur. Thus, it is crucial to understand the role each value contributes to the overall significance. A balanced view is best arrived through enabling all interested parties to appreciate their differing perspectives and priorities (English Heritage, 2008).

1.1 ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES

When it comes to assisting cultural heritage there is no single approach to be implemented. There are numerous studies and researches conducted to pinpoint the philosophy and the methods used to assess the significance; results show that two major approaches dominate the assessment philosophy. The first approach is the "intrinsic value", where the value of cultural, social, economic, educative, community, scientific/academic and personal use is evaluated. Generally, the intrinsic value concentrates on importance, sensitivity, and potential. "Importance" measures the scale of the significance, ranging from local up to international; "sensitivity" targets the site vulnerability towards physical alteration; while "potential" seeks to discover new values to assist the heritage place (Manders et al., 2012).

On the other hand, the second approach is "managing change" that concentrates on understanding how changes arise and its potential impact on the intrinsic value. Managing change studies the type of alterations from different angles as dynamics, process, outcomes and significance of change." Dynamics" measures whether the impact is beneficial or has adverse complications, and the extent to which it can be reversed. The "process of change" tackles the source of change either natural or human-made and the severity of the impact. As for the alteration of the intrinsic value is explored by the "outcomes of change". The last study of change determines the magnitude of change; risk and opportunity prediction; uncertainty and predictability; significance of effects; sustainability of change; limits of acceptable change, all under the category of the "significance of change"(Manders et al., 2012).

1.2 INTRINSIC SIGNIFICANCE VARIABLES OF HISTORICAL PARKS

Under the definitions published in the Schedule to the Queensland Heritage Act 1992:" *Cultural heritage significance, of a place, means its aesthetic, architectural, historical, scientific, social or other significance to the present generation or past or future generations*" (South Kesteven District Council, 2017).

When assessing a heritage place, it is essential to begin with an explicit, effective neutral, agreed-upon variables by the wide variety of stakeholders in the conservation field (Mason, 2002). Afterward, variables ought to be taken in a structured and consistent manner and weighed against each other. The assessment of cultural significance can be summarized in two steps. The first is determining what makes a place significant and, (types of importance it manifests). The second step is to specify the degree of significance that this heritage place has for society. The value can be economic, aesthetic, historical (places and stories associated with its ancestral past), age (old planting), architectural, scientific, technical, or spiritual. Value also refers to uniqueness, relevance, representativeness, and condition (Manders et al., 2012; Saratsi et al., 2016). After reviewing related literature [Table 1] demonstrate the most common variables used to assess cultural heritage significance.

Table 1. The heritage value typologies devised by various scholars and organizations

	Queensland Heritage Act 1992	English Heritage 1997	Burra Charter 1998	Historic Cultural Heritage Act 1995	Manders et al.,2012	HERCON) ¹ 1998	Lipe 1984	Reigl11903
Cultural/political	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		
Educational and informational	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Economic/use		✓			✓		✓	✓
Social/ recreational	✓	✓			✓			
Aesthetic/ architectural	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	
Age					✓			✓
historical	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Symbolic/commemorative	✓				✓		✓	✓
Spiritual			✓	✓	✓	✓		
Technical achievement	✓			✓	✓	✓		
Association with an event or an important person	✓			✓	✓	✓		
Condition and Others ²					✓			

Source: Researcher after: Department of Environment and Heritage Protection,2017, English Heritage 1997; Australia ICOMOS,1999; Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment, 2011; Lipe, 1984; Reigl1,1903; Manders et al.,2012.

2-METHODS

The main aim of the survey is to establish significance criteria and their weights for evaluating the cultural value of historical parks as an aspect in prioritizing and aiding in decision-making policies. Although determining the significance of a site can be highly subjective, developing standards and using widely accepted methods can transform

¹ National Heritage Convention of Chairs of State Heritage Council and directors of heritage

² Others refer to: Provenance/ Representativeness/ Rarity/Uniqueness

the process to be objective as possible or at least comparable (Manders et al., 2012). Therefore a Multi-Criteria Analysis is adopted in this paper to enhance the dependency of results. A list of 10 specialists are selected to weigh the value variables, the list consists of experts in preserving and managing historic sites and parks at NOUH³ (n=4), staff members of The Faculty of Regional & Urban Planning (n=6) interested and worked in the field on cultural heritage and finally and a member of the Center for Documentation of Cultural and Natural Heritage (n=1). The study adopted interdisciplinary research methods, as the researcher integrated the Delphi Method, AHP (Analytic Hierarchy Process), Cumulative Voting Method (CM) and Ranking Method to calculate the various weights of the significant indicators of historical parks using Excel software. The Delphi method is applied to refine and weight the value criteria thought the selected experts.

Although AHP only requires the decision maker to express how two criteria compare to each other, the researcher had to depend on another method to evaluate the sub-criteria due to the large number (exceeded 9 variables which is the maximum number when using AHP) as they would generate 105 pairs, resulting in increasing the load of the evaluation unreasonably. The CM, and Ranking methods are more practical in larger numbers of criteria.

$$(n^2 - n)/2 \quad n \text{ is the number of criteria}$$

In the first round, the panel members (experts) revised then refined the main evaluation criteria extracted from existing literature. In the second round, the panel members are asked to weight the refined criteria (pairwise comparison) based on the relative importance of each criterion compared to the others [Table 2], then AHP analysis⁴ is applied to analysis results.

Table 2 . Fundamental ratio scale in pairwise comparison

Intensity of importance	Definition
1	d k are equally important
3	j is slightly more important than k
5	j is more important than k
7	j is strongly more important than k
9	j is absolutely more important than k

Source: Saaty, 1988

$$A = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 3 & 5 \\ 1/3 & 1 & 3 \\ 1/5 & 1/3 & 1 \end{bmatrix}$$

³ NOUH: National Organization of Urban Harmony is a governmental institution concerted with preserving cultural heritage, unique historical buildings, urban spaces development and beatification all over Egypt.

⁴ The AHP method reduces complex decisions into a series of simple comparisons, called Pairwise Comparisons, between elements of the decision hierarchy. By synthesising the results of these comparisons

Once the matrix A is built, it is possible to derive from A the normalized pairwise comparison matrix Anorm by making equal to 1 the sum of the entries on each column, i.e. each entry a_{jk} of the matrix Anorm is computed as (Saaty, 1988).

$$\bar{a}_{jk} = \frac{a_{jk}}{\sum_{l=1}^m a_{lk}}$$

Finally, the criteria weight vector w (that is an m-dimensional column vector) is built by averaging the entries in each row of Anorm, i.e. (University Of Siena, 2019)

$$w_j = \frac{\sum_{l=1}^m \bar{a}_{jl}}{m}$$

Having a comparison matrix, now we would like to compute the priority vector, which is the normalized Eigen vector of the matrix. When many pairwise comparisons are performed, some inconsistencies may typically arise. A perfectly consistent decision maker should always obtain $CI=0$, but small values of inconsistency may be tolerated.

$$CI = \frac{\lambda - n}{n - 1}$$

$$CR = \frac{CI}{RI} < 0.1$$

In the case of this study $CI=5.03-5/5-1=0.0075$ $CR=0.0078*1.12=0.0084$

Table 3. Random Consistency Index

Matrix size	Random consistency index (RI)
1	0.00
2	0.00
3	0.58
4	0.90
5	1.12
6	1.24
7	1.32
8	1.41
9	1.45
10	1.49

Source: Saaty, 1988

Thus, the Consistency Index equals 0.0084, this means that these data are very consistent and can be relayed on to perform the significance weight [Table 3]. The cumulative voting method is applied to the sub-variables [Table 4]. The panel

members are asked to distribute a number of points (100-300)⁵ to express the weight of importance of each sub-variable. After analyzing both data, final weight is concluded by multiplying the weight assigned to the main criterion (category) with the weight of the sub-variable. To confirm the results, the panel members are asked to rate the sub-variables by comparing them with each other, then the Raking model⁶ is applied to analyze the data. Finally, the two results are compared by calculating the correlation coefficient to detect the extent to which each method delivered the same weights. The study limitation is the number of interviewees due to the difficulty to expand the study to include more experts.

4-RESULTS

4.1 DELPHI FIRST ROUND RESULTS

The Delphi first round resulted in selecting the criteria formulating the significance of historical parks in Egypt [Table 4]. An important note that the experts excluded the economic significance to prevent it from predominating the other variables. The economic use is generated by visitors' activity that can erode the site's historical values or, it is represented in the park's land value which can be tempting and conflict with preservation policies. Furthermore, age and special technology were excluded as expert saw that they are not relevant enough and especially that both criteria are not mentioned in the Egyptian binding law⁷.

Table. 4. The main criteria of evaluation based on the significant variables (before and after expert refinement)

Significance	Criteria from the literature review	Criteria were chosen by experts (panel members)
Architectural/ Aesthetic Uniqueness/ Historical	Comprise unique historical styles	Comprise unique historical styles
Historical /cultural/ symbolic/ spiritual/Educational	Associated with a historical charter	Associated with a historical charter
	Associated with historical events	Associated with historical events
Social / recreation/ spiritual Condition	Considered a visiting destination	Considered a visiting destination
	Preserved its original features	Preserved its original features
Age	Older than 100 years	
Technology	Use of special technology	
Economic	Monetary income	

Source: Researcher

⁵ Points are based on the number of sub variables in each category, for example the category with 2 variables is assigned 100 point while another category with 3 sub variables is assigned 150 point, to insure fairness in weighting.

⁶ *Ranking* involves assigning each decision element a rank that reflects its perceived degree of importance relative to the decision being made. The decision elements can then be ordered according to their rank (first, second etc.)

⁷ Law 144 issued in 2006 defining the historical assets including historical parks.

4.2 DELPHI SECOND ROUND RESULTS

Results of the second Delphi method declared the weights of the main significant criteria and the sub-criteria explaining the main criterion [Table 5].

Table 5. The main evaluation criteria and their sub-variables

Comprise unique styles <i>Represent a special architectural school</i> <i>Comprise historical or unique buildings</i> <i>Presents a historical era</i> <i>Comprise unique /rare landscape features</i> <i>Express the local identity</i> <i>Comprise aesthete features</i>	Associated with historical events <i>Connected to historical events</i> <i>Hosted an important historic event</i>
	Considered a visiting destination <i>Users are accustomed to visiting</i> <i>Emotional attachment to the place</i> <i>Function as a scientific or cultural venue</i>
Associated with a historical charter <i>Related to an iconic Egyptian figure</i> <i>Related to a foreigner iconic figure</i>	Preserved its original features <i>Preserved the original features and design</i> <i>Exposed to minimum disfiguring invasion</i>

Source: Researcher

4.2.1 WEIGHT OF THE MAIN SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

The AHP analysis [Table 6 / Table 7] revealed that experts believe that when comparing the five significant criteria against each other, comprising a unique historical style is the most import criterion (0.31), this includes historical, architectural, aesthetic and uniqueness values. The association with a historic event or a public figure follows with (0.24 and 0.22) that represent historical, cultural, symbolic, spiritual, educational values. Finally, persevering its original condition and being a visiting destination recorded (0.12and 0.11) covering social, recreation, spiritual and the condition values.

Table 6. The AHP Analysis of the significance criteria

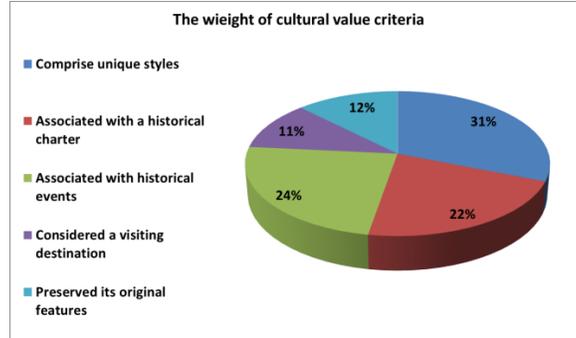
Main criteria	Comprise unique styles	Associated with a historical charter	Associated with historical events	Considered a visiting destination	Preserved its original features
Comprise unique styles	1.00	1.75	1.36	2.46	2.25
Associated with a historical charter	0.57	1.00	1.00	1.90	2.00
Associated with historical events	0.74	1.00	1.00	2.20	2.20
Considered a visiting destination	0.41	0.53	0.45	1.00	0.76
Preserved its original features	0.44	0.50	0.45	1.32	1.00
total	3.16	4.78	4.27	8.88	8.21

Source: Researcher

Table 7. The priority vector and final weights of the significance criteria Source: Researcher

Main criteria	Comprise unique styles	Associated with a historical charter	Associated with historical events	Considered a visiting destination	Preserved its original features	final weight
Comprise unique styles	0.32	0.37	0.32	0.28	0.27	0.31
Associated with a historical charter	0.18	0.21	0.23	0.21	0.24	0.22
Associated with historical events	0.23	0.21	0.23	0.25	0.27	0.24
Considered a visiting destination	0.13	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.09	0.11
Preserved its original features	0.14	0.10	0.11	0.15	0.12	0.12
total	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00

Figure 1. The weight of the main criteria



Source: Researcher

4.2.2 WEIGHT OF THE SUB SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

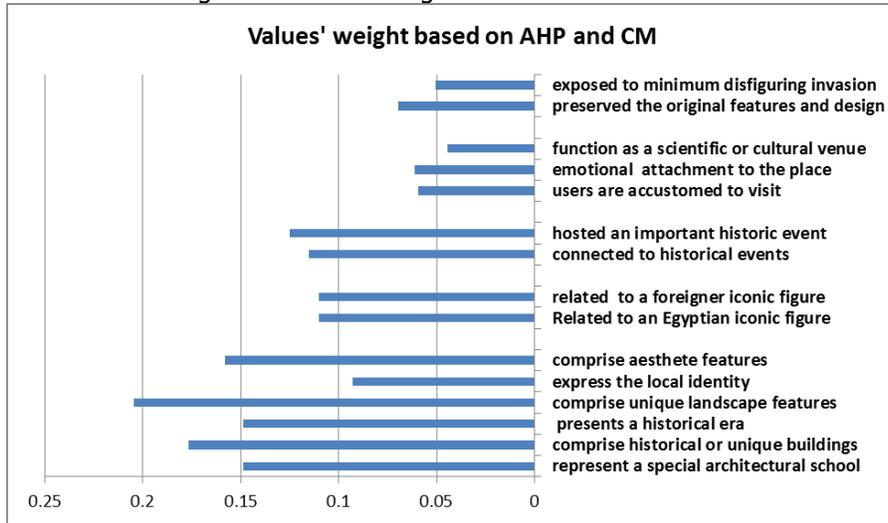
To weight sub-significance criteria two methods are combined The Cumulative Voting method and AHP. [Table 8] shows the average column representing the weight of each sub-variables in one criterion (separated), while the weight column shows the final weight. The most crucial sub-variable is "comprising unique landscape features" (0.20) then unique buildings (0.17). The rest of the weights of the sub-variables are fairly close; scores range from (0.11-0.15), this means they are close in value. The least sub-variable is "function as a scientific or a cultural venue" (0.044) and "to be exposed to minimum disfiguration" (0.05). Other sub-variables in the lowest value category are variables related to "condition" and "the current park functions" [Figure 2].

Table 8. AHP And voting method analysis for sub-variable

sub variables	average	weight
represent a special architectural school	0.480	0.1488
comprise historical or unique buildings	0.570	0.1767
presents a historical era	0.480	0.1488
comprise unique landscape features	0.660	0.2046
express the local identity	0.300	0.093
comprise aesthete features	0.510	0.1581
Related to an Egyptian iconic figure	0.500	0.11
related to a foreigner iconic figure	0.500	0.11
connected to historical events	0.480	0.1152
hosted an important historic event	0.520	0.1248
users are accustomed to visit	0.540	0.0594
emotional attachment to the place	0.555	0.06105
function as a scientific or cultural venue	0.405	0.04455
preserved the original features and design	0.580	0.0696
exposed to minimum disfiguring invasion	0.420	0.0504

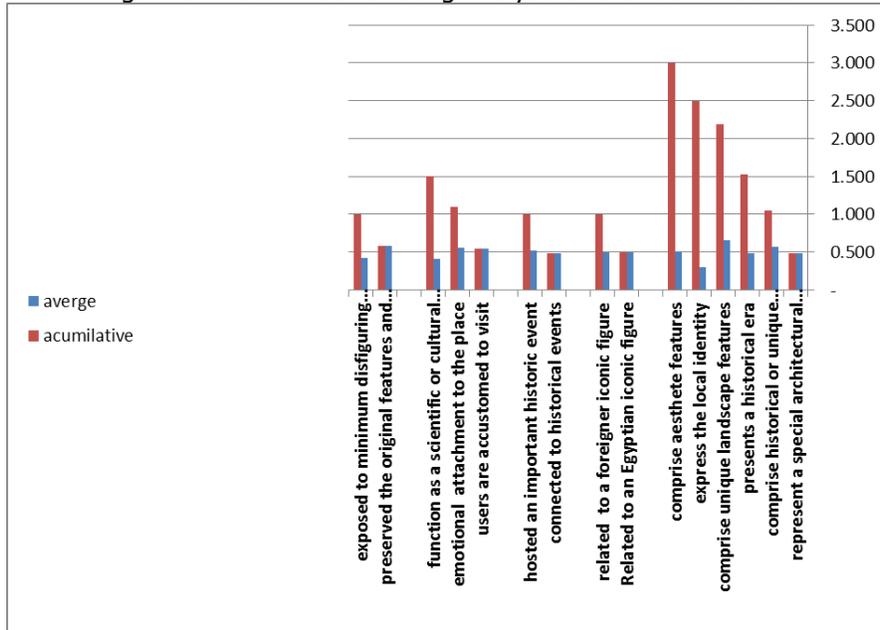
Source: Researcher

Figure 2. Values' weight based on AHP and CM



Source: Researcher

Figure 3. Accumulative voting Analysis of the sub variables



Source: Researcher

The Cumulative voting chart [Figure 3] shows that the distribution of sub-variables in each main category are very close, this means that inside the main category, the distribution is homogenous, there are no dominating sub-variables. Additionally, this indicates that the sub-variables are a fit representation of the main category.

4.2.3 RANKING METHOD RESULTS

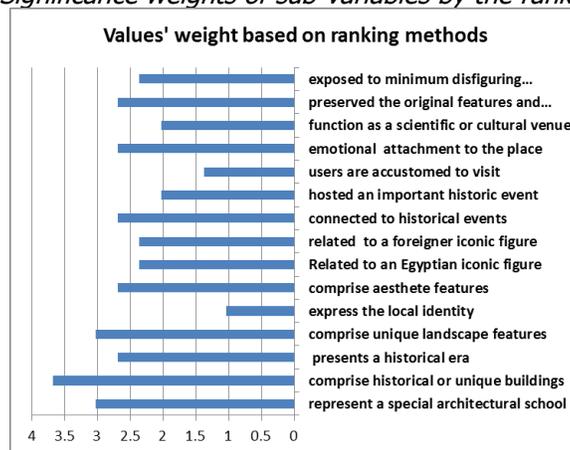
Experts were asked to rank all sub-variables again each other [Table 9], results indicate that the highest rated sub-variable is "comprise historical or unique buildings" (3.69) then "comprise unique landscape features"(3.02) and "represent a special architectural school" (3.02). In the third place come "presents a historical era", "comprise aesthete features", "preserved the original features and design" and "emotional attachment to the place" with the score of (2.69). In the fourth place come "exposed to minimum disfiguring invasion," "hosted an important historical event", "related to a foreigner iconic figure," "related to an iconic Egyptian figure" with a score of (2.36). In the fifth place come "function as a scientific or cultural venue" (2.03). The lowest score was assigned to "express the local identity" and "users are accustomed to visiting" (1.37) [Figure 4].

Table 9. Weights based on the ranking method

sub variables	final weight
represent a special architectural school	3.02
comprise historical or unique buildings	3.68
presents a historical era	2.69
comprise unique landscape features	3.02
express the local identity	1.04
comprise aesthete features	2.69
Related to an Egyptian iconic figure	2.36
related to a foreigner iconic figure	2.36
connected to historical events	2.69
hosted an important historic event	2.03
users are accustomed to visit	1.37
emotional attachment to the place	2.69
function as a scientific or cultural venue	2.03
preserved the original features and design	2.69
exposed to minimum disfiguring invasion	2.36

Source: Researcher

Figure 4. Significance weights of sub-variables by the ranking method

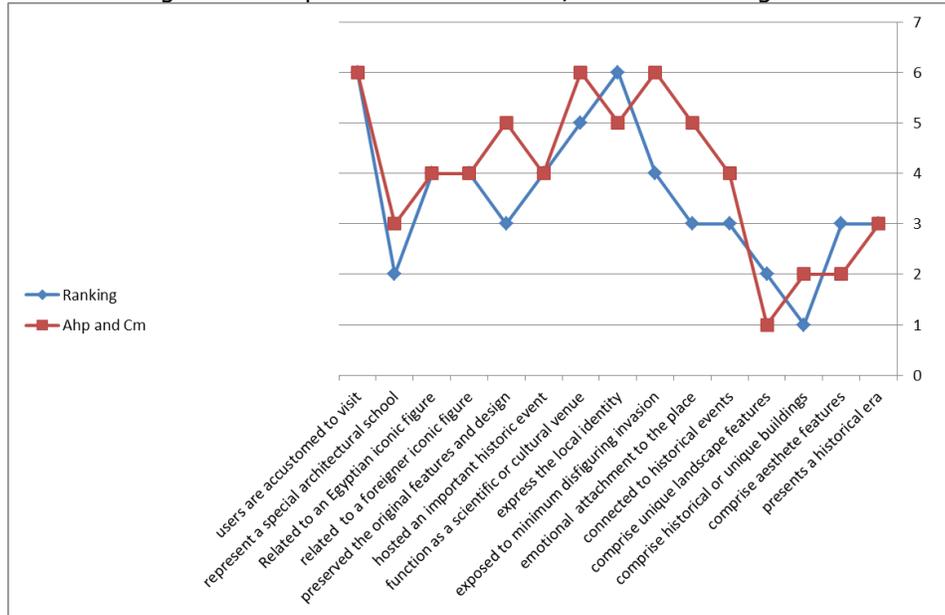


Source: Researcher

4.2.4 COMPARING WEIGHTS FROM AHP / CM AND RANKING METHODS

Results from the two methods are compared, the correlation coefficient is (0.749) indicating a strong positive linear relationship between outcomes. Consensus regarding the highest sub-variable and the lowest ones is found. Both results affirmed historical parks comprising historical buildings or landscape, having esthetic features, representing an architectural school or connection to historical events are more significant. However, historical parks that only are characterized by being a destination, host scientist / cultural events, or express the local identity are considered less in significance. Medium significance is assigned to variables as hosting historical events or being associated with prominence public figures either Egyptian or foreigners. On the other hand, discrepancy appeared in the emotional attachment, exposed to minimum disfiguration, and preserve original features variables [Figure 5].

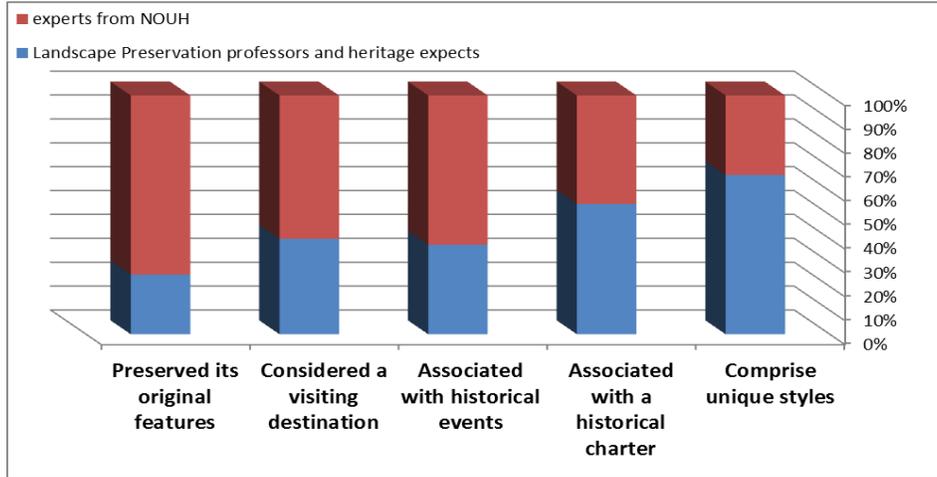
Figure 5. Comparison between AHP / CM and Ranking methods



Source: Researcher

Another comparison was conducted between the experts from NOUH and landscape preservation professors revealed that the NOUH saw the importance of the site condition, use, and historical events more than the professors and heritage experts, while professors and heritage experts ennobled the physical uniqueness and the historical association with renowned historical figures [Figure 6].

Figure 6. Comparison of experts' opinions regarding the significance of the main criteria



Source: Researcher

4-CONCLUSION

Cultural heritage is what bonds the community to its roots, identity, beliefs, traditions and history, it is our window to grasp glams of perished generations. Historical parks are one of the cultural heritage assets that narrate the architecture, technology and social/political norms of the area they embody. Due to the limitation of funds prioritization of the intrinsic significance of the parks is demanded. The research concluded after interviewing academic and specialized experts in the field of cultural heritage preservation, that values related to the historical physical appearance of the parks as unique landscape and historical buildings are the most cherished values. Intangible values as the association with historical events or personnel come later, and finally comes the condition and current use of the park. These results align with the study by with Gang et al., 2014, in their quest to unravel the modern value of architectural heritage value. They established that experts believe that artistic and historical values are the most important first-level indicators, followed by emotional/cultural and environmental values. While real estate value is the least important one. Since the evaluation process is subject, some discrepancies were found between the two approached adopted to extract the significance of sub-variables and between the options of academic and practitioners. Therefore, it preferred to use more that one method to assess the significance of cultural heritage and if possible different stakeholders. More research is needed to apprehend the value meaning from the perspective of users and other involved parties. In the end, there is consensus on the importance of evaluating the historic park significance in order to guide the priority of interventions and the conservation plans, to safeguard a part of the nation memories.

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