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The Image of Ajloun City in Light of Digital Media and Kevin Lynch's Model: An Interdisciplinary Theoretical-Analytical Reading^(*)

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Abstract

This study aims to provide a theoretical and analytical reading of the image of Ajloun City in light of Kevin Lynch's model, while viewing digital media as a communicative dimension through which the city's elements can be re-represented and circulated in digital space.

The study adopts a descriptive-analytical approach with a theoretical orientation, through a review of relevant literature on city image, Lynch's model, digital media, and tourism studies related to Ajloun City, followed by an analytical application of the model's five elements to the city as a case study. The analysis distinguishes between Lynch's components of environmental image—identity, structure, and meaning—and the five spatial elements: paths, edges, districts, nodes, and landmarks (Lynch, 1960). This approach is particularly significant in the contemporary digital environment, as studies have demonstrated the potential of social media data to identify certain elements of city image, although their capacity to represent different elements varies (Huang et al., 2021). Recent studies have also revisited the meaning component through the analysis of digital place reviews, thereby opening new possibilities for understanding city image in the digital age (Zhu et al., 2026).

The theoretical reading indicates that Lynch's five elements can be identified within Ajloun's spatial and tourism structure with varying degrees of clarity. Tourism routes and movement corridors can be viewed as paths; certain natural landforms and boundaries as potential edges; historical and natural settings as perceptual districts; and some gathering and movement points as potential nodes, while Ajloun Castle emerges as a clearly identifiable spatial landmark. These identifications are theoretical and analytical rather than field-based findings. The study also indicates that digital media should not be viewed merely as a promotional tool, but rather as a space for re-representing places, selecting and highlighting certain characteristics, which may influence the anticipated image of the city prior to direct experience.

^(*)The Paper was received on August 23, 2026, and accepted for publication on September 30, 2026.

The study concludes that the analytical value of Lynch's model in the case of Ajloun lies not merely in identifying its five elements separately, but in understanding the relationships among them and examining how these elements move from the spatial domain into the digital communicative domain. Accordingly, the study proposes an interdisciplinary analytical framework linking the spatial environment, Lynch's elements, spatial perception, city image, and its digital re-representation, while emphasizing that the proposed relationships require subsequent field-based or computational testing.

Keywords: City Image, Ajloun City, Digital Media, Kevin Lynch's Model, Interdisciplinary Studies, Imageability.