

# Assessing the Impact of Celebrity-Driven Film Tourism on Destination Awareness and Travel Intention: A Moderated Analysis of Tourist Motivation

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## Abstract

*This study investigates the impact of celebrity involvement on film tourism by examining its influence on film destination awareness and film tourist behavioral intention, with tourist motivation serving as both a mediator and moderator. Grounded in the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S-O-R) theory, the research explores how celebrity presence in films (stimulus) shapes tourists' cognitive awareness and motivational states (organism), which subsequently influence their behavioral intentions (response). Data were collected from 678 Indian tourists who had visited Kashmir and were partially or fully motivated by films shot in the region. The proposed model was tested using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The findings reveal that celebrity involvement significantly enhances film destination awareness. However, celebrity involvement and film destination awareness do not directly influence film tourist behavioral intention. Mediation analysis indicates that film destination awareness significantly mediates the relationship between celebrity involvement and behavioral intention. Furthermore, tourist motivation significantly moderates the relationships between celebrity involvement and behavioral intention, as well as between film destination awareness and behavioral intention. The study contributes to film tourism literature by integrating S-O-R theory with tourist motivation theory and highlights the critical role of motivation in translating celebrity-driven awareness into travel intention. Practical implications for destination marketers and policymakers are also discussed.*

**Keywords:** *Celebrity Involvement; Film Destination Awareness; Tourist Motivation; Behavioral Intention.*

## Introduction

Cinema, television dramas, and digital streaming platforms have become the most influential aspects of modern tourism, so film tourism has become one of the most vibrant areas of contemporary tourism. The locations that are represented in movies can attract a significant number of visitors because of increased exposure, emotional appeal, and symbolic significance to the cinematographic narratives (Hudson and Ritchie, 2006; Li et al., 2017; Zhou et al., 2023). According to the recent industry reports, it is estimated that the film tourism market around the world exceeded USD 6673 billion in 2024 and is estimated to exceed USD 125 billion by the beginning of the 2030s (Future Market Insights, 2024; Forbes, 2025). Nearly two out of every three travelers worldwide say that movies and television play a significant role in their travel choices and this indicates that screen media are increasingly shaping the behavioral aspects of destination choice among travelers. In this growing environment, the role of celebrity in the film induced tourism has emerged to be a significant force. Celebrities are symbolic endorsers that develop destination perceptions, build emotional connection and boost destination image (Yen and Croy, 2016; Teng and Chen, 2020; Zhou et al., 2023). Their appearance in movies can make viewers more connected to the places and create the desire to travel. Although it is proved that celebrity involvement improves destination image and place attachment (Chen, 2018; Wong and Lai, 2015), the impact of celebrity involvement directly affecting behavioral intentions of tourists does not have a definitive answer. There are studies that the celebrity attachment has a positive effect on the revisit and recommendation intentions (Yen and Teng, 2015), and studies that the awareness does not necessarily lead to actual traveling decisions (Zhou et al., 2023). This inconsistency is an indication that it is necessary to test mediating and moderating processes that describe how the exposure to cinema translates to behavioral intention.

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The theoretical basis of studying these processes lies in Stimulus- Organism- Response (S-O-R) framework (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974). Within the framework of tourism, the Stimulus of film portrayals and celebrity presence influences the cognitive and emotional state of the tourists (Organism) (including awareness, image formation and motivational arousal) and, consequently, their behavioral outcomes (visit intention and loyalty) are affected (Sun et al., 2021; Teng and Chen, 2020). The focal cognitive process in this is destination awareness. It involves the familiarity, impressions, and beliefs of the tourists towards a destination (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999) and has a crucial role in shaping travel choices and loyalty (Jeong and Kim, 2019; Nguyen and Hsu, 2022). Awareness, however, can be used as a mediating variable instead of being a direct predictor of behavioral intention, particularly in emotionally-oriented tourism like film tourism. The other important but not well studied element in film tourism research is tourist motivation. Tourist motivation can be described as internal psychological factors that trigger a travel behavior (Iso-Ahola, 1982; Mutanga et al., 2017). Motivations can be hedonic (e.g., emotional attachment, satisfaction with a fantasy) or utilitarian (e.g., curiosity, cultural exploration) in film induced situations. Recent research stresses that the motivational variables play a significant role in influencing the process of destination image interpretation and translating the perceptions into the travel intentions by tourists (Moritz et al., 2024; Tang et al., 2025). Although it has a theoretical relevance, there is a paucity of studies that explore tourist motivation as a moderator factor in the relationship between celebrity involvement, destination awareness, and behavioral intention. Filling this gap will help to gain a better understanding of the reasons why certain film viewers become real visitors and others do not.

India is a particularly interesting case study of such relationships because of the internationalization of the Bollywood and regional film industries. Tourism has become a popular phenomenon in places like Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Mumbai, and Kashmir, where filming has boosted tourism development (PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2021; Ministry of Tourism, 2024). Kashmir is among such destinations which occupies a special place. Kashmir has been known due to the scenic landscape, cultural heritage, and historical cinematic location in recent years re-emerged as a prominent filming location. Other movies like Haider, Bajrangi Bhaijaan and Jab Tak Hai Jaan have brought back its tourism value by rebuilding its image to the domestic customers through visual rebuilding. Having empirical evidence suggests a significant increase in the number of tourists who visit the location after a new cinematic release, especially in high-tourist seasons (Bhat et al., 2023; Wani et al., 2025). But there is a paucity of scholarly studies that have systematically explored the psychological processes that drive film tourism in Kashmir.

This research will, therefore, explore how the role of celebrity presence influences the destination awareness of film tourists and also behavioral intention of film tourists besides the mediating effect of destination awareness and moderating effect of tourist motivation. The combination of the S-O-R framework and the tourist motivation theory results in the present study making contributions to the expanding literature on the subject of film-induced tourism in three substantial ways. First, it explains the mediated ways of how the involvement of celebrities impacts on behavioral intention. Second, it places tourist motivation as a conditional factor that reinforces or undermines these relations. Third, it offers empirical results of the Indian setting, that is, Kashmir, and thus it adds to the film tourism literature in the emerging destinations.

Finally, the insight on how exposure to the cinema translates to travel intention is important to both destination marketing organizations and policymakers who want to use film tourism to help develop the region sustainably. Through determining the psychological forces which transform awareness into action, this study would provide both theoretical and practical perspectives of enhancing film tourism strategies in Kashmir and other destinations.

## **Literature Review**

### **S-O-R theory**

The S-O-R (Stimulus-Organism-Response) theory (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974) provides a perspective against which the external conditions affect the internal conditions, which in turn result in the behavioral reactions. This paper uses the framework to investigate the relationship between the variables of celebrity involvement, film destination awareness and tourist motivation in influencing behavioral intentions of film tourists. The stimulus (S) is external factors, such as the attractiveness, appearance, and persuasion of celebrities in movies, the representation of destinations in movies, advertisements, and social media material that brings into consciousness and promotes the desire to visit the site (Sun et al., 2021). The organism (O) is the internal conditions of tourists, which include their feelings, motivations and cognitive reactions including beliefs, attitudes and perceptions that determine how the tourists perceive stimuli (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999). Tourist motivation, whether utilitarian or hedonic, is an essential factor in determining the perceptions of tourists and has a tendency of creating interest in tourists to visit film-related destinations. Emotional attachment with the use of celebrities or captivating movie plots enhances tourist interest with the destinations (Teng and Chen, 2020; Yen and Croy, 2016). The response (R) is the behavioral, cognitive, and emotional reactions of tourists, including their readiness to visit film destinations, suggest them to other people, or engage in film-related experiences (Zhou et al., 2023). This study can contribute to the understanding of the psychological factors of film tourism by combining the S-O-R theory with the place attachment theory, which studies the emotional attachment of tourists to certain locations (Sun et al., 2021). It highlights the interaction between external factors and internal processes to create positive behavioral responses and promote film tourism destinations.

### **Film Tourism, Film Tourists and Tourist Behavioral Intention**

A film vacation is a vacation to a film related attraction, which could be a filming place, film studio, or film theme park (Macionis, 2004). The role of films as a marketing instrument is considerable since it raises awareness of locations in which films are shot and develops curiosity in potential tourists (Zhou et al., 2023). It is approximated that 80 percent of the vacation destination ideas of travelers are affected by films (Hudson & Ritchie, 2006). As a result, the image of a destination is the one represented in movies that influences perceptions. Film tourists fall into three categories, including serendipitous tourists, general film tourists and specific film tourists (Macionis, 2004, p. 87). The intended audience of this research will be tourists that are either entirely or partially affected by films and who show behavior intentions related to film tourism. Recent studies have also investigated the effects of films on destinations, especially the role of films in encouraging film tourism (Gómez-Morales et al., 2022; Pham and Hwang, 2022). It is possible that the films do not only boost the perceptions of a destination held by tourists but also provoke them to engage in activities linked with the film (Hudson and Ritchie, 2006; Pham and Hwang, 2022). Films encourage positive behavioural intentions by creating awareness of the filming location and attracting visitors (Teng & Chen, 2020). Although film tourists are critical in destination identity, there is little research on the significance of destination personality in film tourism. According to the theory of planned behavior (TPB), behavioral intentions are the major predictors of behavior (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). Measuring behavioral intention offers a reasonable way to predict behavior (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Batool et al., 2024). Tourism intentions are measured subjectively and can be determined on the basis of the preferences held by people, and their motivation level is a measure of their willingness to participate in the travel-related activities (Lee et al., 2019; Ran et al., 2021; Qureshi et al., 2023; Manzoor et al., 2023). It has been demonstrated that subjective norms, attitudes, and perceived behavioral control, which are individual differences, have a significant effect on behavioral intentions (Nguyen and Hsu, 2022; Tsai, 2012; Bhat et al., 2024). Furthermore, objective elements, such as the distinctiveness and appeal of destinations,

marketing, and advertising campaigns also contribute to tourism behavioral intentions (Alexandris, 2016; Chen, 2018; Lu et al., 2020).

### **Celebrity involvement**

The involvement in leisure activities may be regarded as a continuation of the involvement in celebrities (Wong and Lai, 2015). Celebrities have a reputation of being successful and visible in the entertainment industry, sports, or politics (Yen and Teng, 2015). The fans tend to participate in different leisure activities or buy products related to their preferred celebrities (Yen and Croy, 2016). When it comes to film tourism, big actors in movies and TV dramas are major contributors towards tourists. As an example, the film *Haider*, starring Shahid Kapoor, was associated with the rise of interest in Srinagar and Pahalgam. On the same note, the *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* movie by Salman Khan, which was filmed in Pahalgam and Ashmuqam region in Kashmir, made these places attractive to tourists. This paper will discuss three aspects of celebrity engagement, namely, attraction, centrality, and self-expression (Lee et al., 2008, p. 812). These dimensions show the role of celebrities in shaping the interest of tourists in film tourism destinations and encouraging them to visit such destinations (Lee et al., 2008). It has been proposed that the involvement of celebrities may have a positive influence on the awareness of the film destination among the tourists. Nevertheless, an important view of current literature is required. As one example, Chen (2018) discovered that the perceived importance of a destination could be boosted through the identification of tourists with the film narratives. However, this can be restricted to particular genres of movies or audiences. Moreover, although the positive destination awareness can be the determinant of the tourist behavior, the aspects of accessibility and travel expenses can be also considered (Chen, 2018; Wong and Lai, 2015). Irrespective of these, it has been seen that the involvement of celebrities increases film destination awareness. Nonetheless, more studies are needed to understand the mechanisms behind this relationship. Based on this, the following recommendations can be made in future exploration.

*H1: The involvement of celebrities has a positive influence on the film destination awareness.*

Past studies on the topic of tourism participation and intentions to participate should be approached with critical analysis. As an example, Yen and Croy (2016) emphasised that leisure involvement has an effect on behavioural intentions, yet their research might not capture all the factors that have an impact on tourist behaviour. On the same note, Lee et al. (2007) established that activity engagement is a factor that leads to tourism loyalty but this result may not be generalized to all forms of tourism and tourists. The results of Alexandris (2016) showed that self-expression, centrality, and attraction have an influence on travel and word-of-mouth intentions, but the relationship is not completely comprehended. Although tourists might integrate the activities that are related to celebrities as part of their everyday lives, it is not clear how this translates into real travelling behaviour (Lee et al., 2019). In addition, bad publicity or backlash could reduce the efficacy of celebrity endorsements. In spite of these issues, current literature indicates that the presence of the celebrity has a positive impact on tourist behavior. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is offered in this study.

*H2: The involvement of celebrities has a positive impact on the behavioral intention of film tourists.*

### **Film Destination Awareness**

The awareness of tourists towards a destination includes their impressions, beliefs and familiarity with the place (Chon, 1990), as well as their thinking and emotional response to features of the destination (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999). To influence tourists perception and draw visitors, destination awareness is vital to be built (Butler, 1990; Nguyen and Hsu, 2022). Conventional advertising will not be enough to create awareness or attract the attention of tourists without the impact of popular movies or TV shows (Tooke and Baker, 1996). The audio-visual media are very flexible and can boost or strengthen destination awareness and as such they are viable in marketing tourism products (Kim and Richardson, 2003). Tourism promotions often work better when creative

works are created with a true depiction of the distinctiveness of a particular place. Studies indicate that films and television programs have the potential to impact the desire and interest of consumers in visiting the destinations covered in them (Kim et al., 2009; Nguyen and Hsu, 2022). The literature emphasizes the role of destination awareness in determining the travel intentions, destination preferences, post visit judgments, and travel behavior in general. Zhang et al. (2014) state that perceived destination awareness is a major factor in the formation of intentions and decision-making. Moreover, the literature has revealed that the degree of destination awareness is associated with the probability of returning to the place and recommending to friends (Jeong and Kim, 2019; Nguyen and Hsu, 2022). Based on these results, it can be concluded that film destination awareness is influential on visitor behavioral intentions. Nevertheless, more studies are needed to gain a better insight into the underlying processes and possible moderating variables or boundary conditions. Based on this, the hypotheses of the study are as follows.

*H3: Film destination awareness positively affects film tourists' behavioral intention.*

*H4: Film destination awareness mediates the relationship between celebrity involvement and film tourist behavioral intention.*

### **Tourist motivation**

Tourist motivation is an essential element of consumer behavior in the tourism sector that involves both internal and external motivating factors that make a person decide, buy, and take part in tourism-related products (Mutanga et al., 2017; Cohen et al., 2014). Such drives are influenced by a number of factors such as personal ambitions, cultural influences, socialization, and psychological needs. To tourism marketers, it is imperative to learn these motivations in order to properly attract and appeal to the potential travelers. It has been found that personal, psychological, and social factors greatly influence tourist behavior (Tang et al., 2025; Dada et al., 2024). Individual factors like age, sex, income and occupation may affect preference towards a particular tourism experience. Psychological factors, such as perceptions, beliefs, attitudes, and motivations also are important in influencing travel decisions (Hu et al., 2024). The behavior patterns of tourists are also influenced by social factors like the cultural norms and the way they interact with other people. Tourist motivation is a mediating variable in the relationship between different variables and behavioral intentions of the tourist in film tourism. The involvement of the tourist with a celebrity in a movie can motivate them to go to the movie shooting location (Moritz et al., 2024). In addition, the motivations of tourists may affect their perceptions of the image of a film destination and create an emotional attachment to it (Zhang et al., 2024).

Following these understandings, the following hypotheses are put forward:

*H5: Tourist motivation mediates the relationship between the involvement of celebrities and film tourist behavior intention.*

*H6: Tourist motivation moderates the relationship between film destination awareness and film tourist behavioral intention.*

### **Methodology**

#### **Destination Site: Kashmir as a Film Destination**

The study destination of Kashmir has been chosen in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir because of its unique blend of natural resource endowment, film legacy, and shifting tourism pattern. The area is blessed with an outstanding scenic capital such as Himalayan snowy peaks, alpine meadows, river valleys, and fresh water lakes, all of which contribute to its visual and experience impact. These are the main reasons why such environmental aesthetics are of great importance in destination attractiveness and on the development of both cognitive and affective destination images among potential visitors (Gartner, 1993). When applied to the film tourism industry, the visually attractive landscapes do not act as the passive backgrounds, but rather as the dynamic factors in the determination of the motivations to travel and the intent to visit (Beeton,

2016). Traditionally, Kashmir has been a major location in Indian cinema, especially in the 1960s-1980s, when several mainstream hindi movies were filmed in the area. Films like Kashmir Ki Kali, Bobby and Betaab were central to creating a sense of Kashmir in the romantic imagination of the Indian viewers. These cinematic images developed a picture of the destination that was ideal and emotionally appealing, which strengthened its brand image as the Paradise on Earth. The spatial heritage of the film is also manifested in the naming of the Betaab Valley, which proves that film productions can have tangible impressions on geographic spaces. According to the literature on film-induced tourism, destination recall, emotional attachment and symbolic capital can be enhanced with repeated media exposure and, as a result, can impact long-term tourism flows (Connell, 2012; Hudson and Ritchie, 2006).

Kashmir is also theoretically justified in its selection due to its applicability to the destination image reconstruction and post-conflict tourism development. Political instability over a number of decades had led to a perception of the region as being risk oriented and this had a negative impact on the tourist inflows. Nevertheless, the current media representations and the new film production activities have aided in the gradual re-configuration of its destination image. The mediated narratives are important in redefining perceptions and reducing perceived risk of travelling (Echtner and Ritchie, 1991; Gartner, 1993). Kashmir, in this respect, presents an interesting example to consider how the elements of cinematic exposure and strategic branding programs can be used to facilitate the process of destination recovery and resilience. Moreover, recent governmental actions such as Jammu and Kashmir Film Policy (2021) are indicators of the government acknowledging the potential of cinema as an instrument of tourism promotion and economic diversification. The policy incentives, simplified shooting permits and infrastructural support are meant to attract the filmmakers and restore the area as a shooting destination of choice. The fact that film policy is integrated with tourism development can be aligned to the greater argument that favourable governance structures lead to a better sustainability and multiplier impacts of film tourism (Hudson and Ritchie, 2006). Tourism is an essential sector of Jammu and Kashmir in economic terms, where the industry plays an important role in creating employment, developing the service sector, and entrepreneurship in the region (Bhat et al., 2023). The increased tourist visits in the recent times also highlight the renewed tourism potential of the region. The niche but high-impact segment like film tourism has the potential to trigger other ancillary industries, including hospitality, handicrafts, transportation, and cultural enterprises. Hence, Kashmir offers a contextually as well as theoretically strong case in the study of the interaction between the representation of cinema, the formation of destination images, and tourism-based development of the region.

## **Measurement**

The items of measurement were tested in the study to give reliability and validity. A pilot test was done on a limited sample of the potential target participants to determine whether the measurement items were understandable and relevant and clear. The findings affirmed that the items were reliable and valid. In this study, the measurement scales utilized were based on the prior studies which had already determined reliability and validity. The participation of celebrities was measured through the 12 items, which were based on the previous research (Yen and Croy, 2016; Zhou et al., 2023). In order to test the awareness of film destinations, 14 questions were based upon previous studies (Chen, 2018; Zhou et al., 2023) and adjusted to the peculiarities of the Kashmir Province, India. Utilitarian functions of tourist motivation were measured on five items based on Fodness (1994). A three-item scale based on earlier research was used to measure film tourist behavioral intention (Kim et al., 2018; Zhou et al., 2023). A five-point Likert scale was used in measurement of all constructs (Figure 1). Also, the survey incorporated some socio-demographic questions such as gender, age, income, education, occupation, and marital status to understand the target audience better.

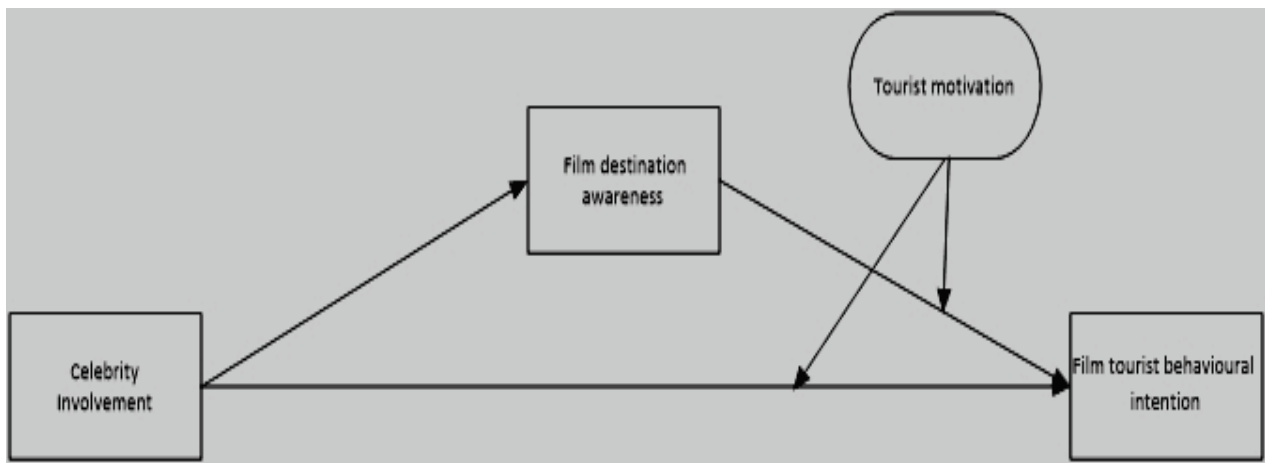


Figure 1: Conceptual Model

Source: Author's own Work using click chart

## Data Collection

The study's data collection was carried out through an online survey distributed via social media platforms. The questionnaire was initially prepared in English. The survey was administered from July 11 to September 29, 2024, using convenience sampling, a method frequently used in prior studies (Akhtar et al., 2020; Zhou et al., 2023). To ensure that respondents had prior exposure to Kashmir through films or videos, two filter questions were included. The first filter question asked: "Was your visit to Kashmir province motivated either completely or partially by the films shot in the region?" Only participants who answered "yes" were allowed to continue the survey. The second filter question inquired: "How frequently have you visited Kashmir?" Respondents who selected "0" indicating they had never visited Kashmir, were excluded from the survey. Consequently, participants who did not meet these criteria were removed from the analysis. The online survey method was suitable for this research due to its convenience and ability to access a large pool of participants. Despite some limitations of online surveys, steps were taken to ensure the validity and reliability of the collected data. The use of filter questions enhanced the accuracy of the responses. A total of 981 responses from local Indian tourists were collected, but only 678 responses (69.11%) met the eligibility criteria. Respondents below 18 years of age were excluded, as were those who had never visited Kashmir. After applying the necessary filters, 678 valid responses were retained for analysis.

## Results

Partial least-squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) was utilized to test the proposed research model. PLS-SEM is well-suited for exploratory studies and has fewer constraints regarding data normality (Hair et al., 2019). Compared to covariance-based structural equation modeling (CB-SEM), PLS-SEM is better equipped to handle formatively measured constructs (Hair et al., 2021) and is generally preferred in their presence (Hair et al., 2017). While CB-SEM can accommodate formative constructs, it requires specific specification rules that may complicate the analysis and potentially distort the process to achieve model identification (Hair et al., 2017). Moreover, Hair et al. (2021) recommend using PLS-SEM instead of CB-SEM when dealing with highly complex research models. Given that this study involves a research model comprising four first-order constructs, PLS-SEM was deemed more appropriate for effectively managing the model's complexity (Wani et al., 2023; Dada et al., 2022)

## Participants' profiles

The demographic profile of the sample is summarized in Table 1. The majority of respondents were male (53.24%), while females made up 46.74%. Regarding marital status, 57.67% were married, and 42.33% were single. In terms of age distribution, 52.36% of the participants were between 18 and 29 years old, followed by 36.73% in the 30–40 age group. Educational qualifications revealed

that 66.3% of respondents had completed undergraduate studies, while 33.7% held postgraduate degrees. The majority of participants reported a monthly income below 50,000 INR (245, 36.14%). Participants' occupations were categorized into four groups, with business owners and freelancers comprising the largest segment (230, 33.92%). In terms of travel frequency, 44.69% (303) of respondents were first-time visitors to Kashmir, while 55.31% had previously visited the region.

Variables	Items	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	361	53.24
	Female	317	46.76
Marital status	Married	391	57.67
	Single	287	42.33
Age	18–29	355	52.36
	30–40	249	36.73
	41–50	74	10.91
Education	Undergraduate	601	88.64
	Graduate	77	11.36
Monthly income	Under50000/month	245	36.14
	Rs. 50000-100000/month	216	31.86
	More Than Rs. 100000/month	117	17.26
Occupation	Government official	73	10.77
	Private Company Employee	224	33.04
	Own Business/ Freelancer	230	33.92
	Student	151	22.27
Frequency	First Time	303	44.69
	Repeat	375	55.31

*Table 1 :Demographic characteristics of respondents.*

*Source: Author's own Work*

### **Common method bias**

All variance inflation factor (VIF) values were below 5 (Table 2), confirming the absence of collinearity issues in the study (Hair et al., 2019).

### **Reliability and validity**

The reliability analysis conducted using Smart-PLS 4.0 indicated that the Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR) values for all variables exceeded 0.7, demonstrating good internal consistency (Hair et al., 2014) (Table 2). Several items were excluded due to factor loadings below 0.7 (Hair et al., 2019) (Table 2). Additionally, average variance extracted (AVE) values for all variables were above 0.5, confirming convergent validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981) (Table 2).

Construct	Indicator	VIF	Factor Loading	AVE	CR	Cronbach's Alpha
Celebrity Involvement (CIV)	CIV1	2.614	0.842	0.678	0.919	0.884
	CIV2	2.189	0.816			
	CIV3	2.241	0.823			
	CIV4	2.276	0.828			
	CIV5	2.154	0.809			
Film Destination Awareness (FDT)	FDT1	1.934	0.775	0.616	0.921	0.898
	FDT2	2.214	0.781			
	FDT3	2.517	0.841			
	FDT4	2.301	0.806			
	FDT5	1.682	0.732			
	FDT6	2.205	0.783			
	FDT7	1.955	0.772			
Tourist Motivation (TM)	TM1	1.892	0.751	0.661	0.910	0.886
	TM2	2.623	0.812			
	TM3	2.642	0.818			
	TM4	2.241	0.816			
	TM5	1.803	0.865			
Film Tourist Behavioral Intention (FTB)	FTB1	2.854	0.924	0.776	0.912	0.857
	FTB2	2.438	0.889			
	FTB3	1.902	0.819			

Table 2: Reliability Statistics  
Source: Author's own Work

Discriminant validity was established as inter-construct correlations were lower than the square root of the AVE values (represented by the diagonal values in Table 3), and all heterotrait-monotrait ratios remained below the threshold of 0.85 (Table 3) (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

	Fornell-Larcker Criterion				Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT)			
	CIV	TM	FDT	FTB	CIV	TM	FDT	FTB
CIV	0.824	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
TM	0.436	0.816	-	-	0.492	-	-	-
FDT	0.458	0.721	0.787	-	0.503	0.839	-	-
FTB	0.219	0.214	0.196	0.889	0.244	0.218	0.221	-

Table 3: Discriminant Validity  
Source: Author's own Work

### Predictive capability

The predictive accuracy and relevance of the model were assessed to evaluate its predictive capability. The first assessment involved examining the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ), which measures the variance explained for each endogenous latent variable (Hair et al., 2014). The analysis revealed that the model constructs explained 19.2% of the variance in film destination awareness and 2.2% in film tourist behavioral intention. Although these  $R^2$  values are relatively low, this is expected, as human behavior is influenced by numerous complex factors that are challenging to capture within a regression model (Frost, 2020). Secondly, the predictive relevance of the endogenous variables in the extended model was evaluated using the  $Q^2$  values derived through blindfolding procedure in Smart-PLS 4.0. The criterion applied was  $Q^2 > 0$  (Chin, 2010). All  $Q^2$  values in this study were positive, indicating the model's predictive relevance (Table 5).

Construct	R square	Q square predict
Film Destination Awareness (FDT)	0.192	0.14
Film tourist behavioral intention (FTB)	0.022	0.02

Table 4: Table 5 Predictive Capability

Source: Author's own Work

### Hypothesis analysis

The results indicated that all hypotheses were supported except for Hypotheses 2 and 3 (see Table 4). Hypothesis 1 demonstrated that celebrity involvement significantly influences film destination awareness (H1:  $\beta = 0.438$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). However, no significant relationship was found between celebrity involvement and film tourist behavioral intention (H2:  $\beta = 0.047$ ,  $p = 0.325$ ). Similarly, film destination awareness did not show a significant relationship with film tourist behavioral intention (H3:  $\beta = -0.015$ ,  $p = 0.809$ ). The mediating effects were examined using bootstrapping in SmartPLS 4.0. The findings revealed that film destination awareness significantly mediated the relationship between celebrity involvement and film tourist behavioral intention (H7:  $\beta = 0.112$ ,  $p = 0.018$ ). Additionally, tourist motivation partially mediated the relationship between film destination awareness and film tourist behavioral intention (H8:  $\beta = 0.091$ ,  $p = 0.031$ ). Therefore, both H7 and H8 were supported. The moderating role of tourist motivation was also assessed within the proposed theoretical framework. The analysis indicated that tourist motivation significantly moderates the relationship between celebrity involvement and film tourist behavioral intention (H4:  $\beta = 0.081$ ,  $p = 0.046$ ), supporting Hypothesis 4. Furthermore, tourist motivation was found to moderate the relationship between film destination awareness and film tourist behavioral intention (H5:  $\beta = 0.113$ ,  $p = 0.008$ ), supporting Hypothesis 5.

Hypotheses/Paths	Beta ( $\beta$ )	T Value	P Value	Result
<b>H1:</b> Celebrity Involvement $\rightarrow$ Film Destination Awareness	<b>0.438</b>	<b>11.762</b>	<b>0.000</b>	Accepted
<b>H2:</b> Celebrity Involvement $\rightarrow$ Film Tourist Behavioral Intention	<b>0.047</b>	<b>0.984</b>	<b>0.325</b>	Not Accepted
<b>H3:</b> Film Destination Awareness $\rightarrow$ Film Tourist Behavioral Intention	<b>-0.015</b>	<b>0.241</b>	<b>0.809</b>	Not Accepted
<b>H4:</b> Celebrity Involvement $\times$ Tourist Motivation $\rightarrow$ Film Tourist Behavioral Intention	<b>0.081</b>	<b>1.998</b>	<b>0.046</b>	Accepted
<b>H5:</b> Film Destination Awareness $\times$ Tourist Motivation $\rightarrow$ Film Tourist Behavioral Intention	<b>0.113</b>	<b>2.641</b>	<b>0.008</b>	Accepted

Table 5: Structural model statistics and hypotheses.

Source: Author's own Work

### Discussion and Conclusion

This paper has investigated how emotional attachment of film tourists to celebrities or influencers is associated with their favorable attitudes toward film tourism destinations. It also discussed the effects of tourist motivation on the relationship of celebrity involvement, destination awareness, and intentions of tourists to participate in the film activities. Kashmir, a popular Indian site, which was used in various films, was used as a case study to accomplish these goals. The results indicated a significant relationship between the involvement of celebrities and the film destination awareness, as well as, as earlier studies (Chen, 2018; Teng and Chen, 2020; Zhou et al., 2023). The research undertaken in particular examined the role of celebrity involvement on behavioral intentions of tourists. In contrast to the past research (Chen, 2018; Teng and Chen, 2020; Wong and Lai, 2015), which did not address this correlation, this study did not reveal any significant relationships between celebrity engagement and behavioral changes. The first reason is that it is possible that the particular group of moviegoers that was surveyed was not affected by the participation of the

celebrities to a significant extent. Also, the film genre and the fame of the celebrity could influence the extent to which they can influence the behavioral intentions of viewers. Past studies indicate that movies with popular actors are more likely to influence the behavior of viewers compared to independent movies with unpopular actors (Chen, 2018; Hudson et al., 2016). Future studies ought to focus on the effects of the various categories of celebrities on the viewers and explore how the factors of tourist satisfaction, authenticity perceptions, and repeat patronage are correlated to the use of the celebrities. Previous researchers (Jeong and Kim, 2019; Lee et al., 2019; Nguyen and Hsu, 2022) have found a positive correlation between preconceived notions of tourists towards a destination and their travel intentions to be strong. Surprisingly, this study did not find any significant correlation between these variables. This discrepancy can be explained by the differences in preferences of the participants or their perception of destination films in comparison with the participants of the past studies. The respondents in this research seemed to be more fascinated in visiting the locations where the films were shot rather than being manipulated by the way the destination was portrayed in the movies. Moreover, the availability and accessibility of the hotel, as well as the local culture, might have played an important role in influencing their behavioral intentions. Further research ought to investigate sample differences and other externalities that have the power to affect the relationship between film destination image and behavioral intention. The issue of tourism motivation became essential in the film tourism. As an illustration, social media or film celebrities who promote destinations can create powerful emotional or aspirational stimulations on the potential tourist. In addition, the depiction of special experiences in the movies can encourage tourists to tour destinations mentioned in the movies. These motivating elements play a key role in determining the choice of travel and tourists will want more information on how they will be transported, where they are going to stay and where they are going to visit which highlights the role of motivations in decision making. The practical implication of the study on tourist motivation was also identified and the moderating factor between the involvement of the celebrity, destination awareness and behavioral intentions was studied. The results are consistent with the existing literature (Chawdhary and Dall'Olmo Riley, 2015; Jibril and Adzovie, 2022; Trope and Liberman, 2010), which means that tourist motivation is a critical factor in the decision-making process of visitors. The study is a contribution to the existing body of knowledge in that it provides useful information to tourism practitioners and marketers. The study offers recommendations on ways of promoting film tourism by analyzing the pertinent cases and discussing empirical implications. Nevertheless, as much as correlation analysis provides valuable information, future studies need to be expanded on the mechanisms underlying the study and possible causation studies to enhance knowledge in this area.

### **Theoretical implications**

The behavioral intentions of tourists concerning film tourism have gained increased attention, which is reflected by recent studies indicating its significance (Nguyen and Hsu, 2022; Stumpf et al., 2020; Zhou et al., 2023). The study also adds to the combination of two theories that play critical role in studying tourism: the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) theory (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974) and Tourist Motivation Theory (Iso-Ahola, 1982). It investigates the interactions between the involvement of the celebrity, film destination recognition and film tourist behavioral intentions, where the tourist motivation is considered as a mediator. The results offer useful information in the way in which film tourism destinations attract and retain tourists. The research article explored the impact of the involvement of the film celebrities and their familiarity with film destinations on the behavioral intentions of the tourists. Through the analysis of the effects of celebrity engagement on film destination awareness, the study contributes to the existing knowledge on the factors that influence tourist behavior and presents new pathways in the new study. The implications of the findings to the literature on film tourism and tourist motivation are as follows: the motivation plays an important role in mediating the relationship between celebrity involvement and film destination awareness as well as their influence on behavioral intentions. Although past researchers have mostly studied the direct impact of these constructs (Jeong and Kim, 2019; Lee et

al., 2019; Shaykh-Baygloo, 2020; Yen and Croy, 2016), little has investigated the moderating role of tourist motivation. This study fills that gap by showing the relationship between motivation and the strength and nature of these relationships. The paper also identifies various aspects in which future research can be conducted outside the field of film tourism. To start with, it highlights the role of tourist motivation in determining the behavioral intentions in different tourism situations, including cultural, adventure, and nature-based tourism. Secondly, the results highlight the extended implications of motivation in travel decision-making such as its applicability to consumer behavior, destination branding and social media marketing strategies. Lastly, the study highlights the need to comprehend motivational drivers that determine the preference and behaviors of tourists and makes a valuable contribution to the research in film tourism and the general marketing, branding, and tourism research field.

### **Practical implications**

The research has practical implications to destination marketing agencies and tourism managers who wish to popularize film tourism sites by appreciating the role of celebrities in destination attraction. The implications are not limited to Kashmir Province and could be applied to other destinations that want to use film tourism to promote economic development and tourism growth. The given recommendations can be used by local travel agencies and governments interested in utilizing the potential of film tourism. The results of the study can inform the development of personalized experiences to satisfy the target audiences with their unique tastes and increase their attachment to the destination to reduce the gap between the research findings and putting them into practice. As an illustration, when the target market is made of those who are fond of romantic comedy, managers can set up events where celebrity couples celebrate and give a chance to the tourists to meet with the popular personalities. Furthermore, managers might take advantage of filming and television shooting locations to develop unique experiences that can result in emotional attachment including guided tours of the filming location sites or interactive experiences that can enable visitors to replicate the memorable scenes. These would create a closer relationship between the tourists and the destination and thus attachment and promote destination awareness and marketing. According to the results of the study, celebrity engagement and film destination awareness do not have a direct effect on the behavioral intentions of film tourists, however, the relationships are mediated by tourist motivation. This implies that tourists might prioritize more of the practical information regarding the online reviews and suggestions in planning their trips, compared to being dependent on the attractions or the image of the film. The views and suggestions offer crucial information regarding the practical bit like transportation, accommodation and local facilities which are vital factors in influencing travel decisions. In addition, destination marketers may employ specific campaigns to exploit both utilitarian and hedonic motives to increase the appeal and reputation of a destination. Local tourism agencies may initiate programs which focus on the practical side such as access, accommodation and local facilities and at the same time advertise special attractions associated with film tourism. By tackling the reasons why tourists travel, marketers can offer strong incentives to travel by either selling immersive film-related experiences or actually selling travel solutions. The tourism practitioners can help make informed travel decisions by visitors by emphasizing both the sensory and functional aspects of the destination. The display of online reviews and recommendations that resonate with the motivations of the tourists can also make the destination stronger. Finally, the results indicate that film tourism can create a substantial number of economic advantages to the local enterprises and communities. The destination marketing bodies and tourism administrators can ensure the potential offered by film tourism is fully utilized by strategically utilizing the understanding of the study and focusing on the tourist motivations which will eventually lead to the development of the local economies.

### **Limitation and future research**

Although the research is very helpful in both theoretical and managerial terms, a number of limitations must be noted. First, the research concentrated on film tourism in Kashmir Province of

India, which is more local than global. Further research may seek to study other forms of destinations or make comparative research to achieve a more detailed picture of film tourism in various settings. Second, the paper has investigated the effects of film destination awareness and participation of celebrities on the intentions of film tourists. Nevertheless, other variables, including tourist activities, perceived risk, film destination motivation, and destination image, can also play a major role in the relationships between the variables and can be explored further. Finally, in as much as this study focuses more on the functional elements of tourist motivation, it is important to take into account other dimensions. The role of push factors, including the need to have adventure or learn more about cultural aspects, and pull factors, including the attraction sites and film tourism experiences, might have a different and important impact on the relationships between the discussed variables. In the future, these aspects should be included in the research to create a more detailed picture of the dynamics of film tourism.

## Conclusion

This paper analyzed the impact of the involvement of celebrities in influencing the film tourism performance in the setting of Kashmir as a film destination. With the use of the Stimulus-Organism-Response hypothesis, the study presents empirical data that celebrity involvement has a profound effect on the film destination awareness but no direct effect on behavioral intentions of tourists. On the same note, film destination awareness does not directly translate to behavioral intention. The results highlight the role of psychological processes, especially tourist motivation, in converting awareness to action. Film destination awareness is a strong mediator between the celebrity involvement and the behavioral intention and tourist motivation moderates the important relationships in the model. These findings suggest that tourists cannot be merely driven by the presence of celebrities or the images in the cinema, but rather, it is their internal factors that dictate whether the awareness will translate into real travels. The explanatory power of behavioral intention was relatively low, but this fact is in line with the multifaceted and complex nature of human decision-making when it comes to tourism. The significant values of predictive relevance also support the practical usefulness of the model. Overall, this research expands the theoretical knowledge about film tourism by incorporating the part of the celebrity in it and tourist motivation in the S-O-R paradigm. In practical terms, it implies that destination marketers are not to limit themselves to making use of celebrity presence but should also consider matching the promotional strategies with the motivational drivers of tourists. Film tourism destinations can better transform cinematic exposure into longer-term tourist contact and economic growth by appealing to emotional as well as functional motivations.

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