Destination Awareness as a Mediating Variable in the Relationship between Movies-Induced Tourism and Visit Intention: The Moderating Role of Movie Star Effect

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Abstract: Movies and television series have become powerful marketing tools capable of influencing tourism decisions. This study examines how movies-induced tourism impacts tourists' destination awareness and visit intention, with destination awareness proposed as a mediator and the movie star effect as a moderator. An applied focus on tourism customers in Egypt, a country keen to leverage cinematic exposure to boost its tourism sector. Results confirm that movie-induced tourism has a positive effect on destination awareness, which in turn strongly increases intention to visit. Destination awareness partially mediates the relationship between film exposure and visit intention. Moreover, the movie star effect moderates this relationship: films featuring popular stars yield a stronger influence on viewers' travel intentions. These findings underscore the importance of destination-focused content and celebrity appeal in film tourism marketing. The study offers theoretical contributions by integrating destination awareness into film tourism models and highlights practical implications for destination marketers in Egypt and beyond. Recommendations for leveraging film media in tourism promotion are discussed, and future research avenues are suggested.

Keywords: Movies-induced tourism – Destination awareness – Visit intention.

ملخص: أصبحت الأفلام والمسلسلات التلفزيونية أدوات تسويقية فعّالة قادرة على التأثير على قرارات السياحة. تبحث هذه الدراسة في كيفية تأثير السياحة المُحفّزة بالأفلام على وعي السائحين بالوجهة السياحية ونواياهم للزيارة، حيث يُقترح الوعي بالوجهة كوسيط وتأثير نجم السينما كوسيط. يُركّز البحث عمليًا على عملاء السياحة في مصر، وهي دولة حريصة على الاستفادة من العرض السينمائي لتعزيز قطاعها السياحي. تؤكد النتائج أن السياحة المُحفّزة بالأفلام لها تأثير إيجابي على الوعي بالوجهة السياحية، مما يُعزز بدوره نية الزيارة بشكل كبير. يُشكّل الوعي بالوجهة وسيطًا جزئيًا للعلاقة بين العرض السينمائي ونية الزيارة. علاوة على ذلك، يُخفف تأثير نجوم السينما من حدة هذه العلاقة: فالأفلام التي تضم نجومًا مشهورين تُحدث تأثيرًا أقوى على نوايا سفر المشاهدين. تُؤكد هذه النتائج على أهمية المحتوى المُركز على الوجهة وجاذبية المشاهير في تسويق سياحة الأفلام. تُقدم الدراسة مساهمات نظرية من خلال دمج الوعي بالوجهة في نماذج سياحة الأفلام، وتُسلط الضوء على الآثار العملية لمُسوّقي الوجهات في مصر وخارجها. تُناقش الدراسة توصيات للاستفادة من وسائط الأفلام في الترويج السياحي، وتُقترح سبل بحث مستقبلية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: السياحة المستحثة بالأفلام ـ الوعي بالوجهة ـ نية الزيارة.

Introduction

Tourism destinations often rely on mass media exposure to reach potential travellers. In recent years, movies and television series have emerged as potent indirect marketing channels for destinations – a phenomenon known as film-induced tourism or movie-induced tourism (Cui & Song, 2024). When a destination is featured in a popular film, it can gain immense visibility to global audiences, sometimes leading to notable increases in tourist arrivals. For example, after the city of Seville featured in a major TV series, online searches about visiting Seville spiked by over 100%, coinciding with a significant rise in actual tourists the following year (Araujo-Vila et al., 2021). Such cases illustrate how cinematic content can transform relatively obscure locations into attractive tourist hotspots.

Egypt, with its rich history and iconic landscapes, has long been a backdrop for films and documentaries. From classic Hollywood epics to modern thrillers, Egyptian sites (the Pyramids of Giza, the Nile, Luxor's temples, etc.) have been depicted on screen, potentially influencing viewers' perceptions. Capitalizing on this movies-induced tourism effect is of high practical interest for Egypt's tourism industry, especially in the wake of recent challenges. However, the extent to which film exposure translates into actual visit intention – and through what mechanisms – remains an open question. This study addresses that question by investigating the role of destination awareness and the movie star effect in the film tourism context.

Prior research has established that films and TV dramas can shape destination image and travel motivation (Zhou & Xiong, 2023). Viewers often form impressions about places seen on screen and may develop a desire to "experience the movie" by visiting those locations in real life. Numerous studies over the past decade have focused on understanding movie viewers' intention to visit filming sites. Intention to visit (or purchase intention in tourism terms) considered a critical precursor to actual travel behaviour and commonly used as a proxy measure for predicting tourism flows. If a movie successfully fosters an intention to visit, it is likely to yield tangible tourism benefits when even a fraction of those intenders follows through with trips.

Despite growing literature on film-induced tourism, several gaps persist. First, while much attention has been paid to destination image (the overall impression of a place) as an outcome of film exposure, less is known about destination awareness – that is, basic recognition and knowledge of the destination – and how it might mediate the impact of films on travel intentions.

Awareness is a more fundamental step: a tourist cannot consider visiting a place they are not aware of. This study posits that destination awareness plays a pivotal mediating role. Second, an under-explored factor is the influence of movie celebrities, here termed the movie star effect. Intuitively, a film's impact on tourism might be amplified if it features beloved actors who draw fan interest. Fans might travel to a location just because "their" star was there, or pay more attention to a destination due to the star's presence (Zhou & Xiong, 2023). Incorporating this moderating factor could explain variations in film tourism effectiveness. Third, there is a contextual gap regarding Egypt – most film tourism research has centred on Western or Asian contexts (e.g. Hollywood films, Korean dramas), with little empirical focus on destinations in the Middle East and North Africa. This study is among the first to examine movie-induced tourism effects with data from Egypt's tourism consumers, addressing a practical need for region-specific insights.

In summary, the purpose of this research is to develop and test a model in which destination awareness mediates the relationship between movie-induced tourism and visit intention, and the movie star effect moderates this relationship. By doing so, the study aims to contribute both to theory – by integrating these constructs in a unified framework – and to practice – by guiding tourism marketers on how to harness film media to increase visitation. The subsequent sections present a review of relevant literature, the conceptual framework and hypotheses, the research methodology and analysis, and a discussion of findings, implications, and recommendations.

1. Literature Review
1.1. Movie-Induced Tourism

Movie-induced tourism (also known as film-induced tourism) refers to tourist visits to places that featured in movies or television series (Cui & Song, 2024).

Simply put, a film or show can act as a "travel advertisement" for its filming location, spurring viewers to experience in person what they saw on screen. Research in the past decade has documented numerous examples of this phenomenon. For instance, studies have shown that films can significantly enhance a destination's image, awareness, and appeal, leading to increased tourist interest and arrivals (Cui & Song, 2024). Destinations featured in blockbuster films (such as New Zealand in *The Lord of the Rings* or Croatia in *Game of Thrones*) have reported double-digit percentage growth in tourist numbers attributable to film exposure (Frost, 2010; Hudson & Ritchie, 2006).

From a theoretical standpoint, movie-induced tourism can be explained through stimulus-response models and destination branding concepts. The film (stimulus) provides visuals, stories, and characters that can alter audience perceptions (organism) and ultimately stimulate travel decisions (response) (Zhou & Xiong, 2023). Key elements of a film that impact viewers include the scenic cinematography (landscapes, landmarks shown), narrative (emotional/story context of the place), and characters (including actors/celebrities). These elements collectively contribute to what (Rajaguru, 2014) calls visual, vocal, and celebrity effects, which can heighten motivation to visit the depicted place.

Table 1 summarizes recent research (2015–2025) on movie-induced tourism. It highlights researchers' findings on how films influence tourist perceptions and behaviour.

Study (Year)	Context	Key Findings on Movie-Induced Tourism
Rajaguru (2014) researchgate.net researchgate.net	Sri Lanka (films)	Identified **visual, audio, and celebrity effects** of films that significantly increased viewers' motivation to visit the filmed location. Established a stimulus-organism-response model linking film exposure to tourism motivation.
Josiam et al. (2015) econstor.eu	India (Bollywood fans)	**Films enhanced destination image and awareness**, which in turn influenced travel behaviour. Fans of Bollywood movies reported higher interest in visiting filming locations; structural modelling showed film-induced destination awareness led to actual travel-related activities (site visits, purchases).
Yen & Teng (2015) researchgate.net	Taiwan (general media tourism)	Introduced **celebrity involvement** as a factor in media-induced tourism. Found that fans' involvement with movie celebrities increased the perceived value of visiting related destinations, leading to stronger **intentions to visit**. Popular media (films/TV) was shown to **induce interest in destinations**, boosting tourism demand.
Wen et al. (2018) econstor.eu	China (outbound tourists)	Movies/TV significantly shaped Chinese tourists' **perceptions of foreign destinations** and stimulated interest. Positive on-screen portrayal was linked to greater intent to visit. Highlighted film media as an **indirect marketing tool** for international destinations.
Araujo-Vila et al. (2021)econstor.eu	Spain (TV series tourism)	Empirical evidence that popular TV series cultivated **destination awareness and motivation**, which led to visits. Notably, "set-jetters" (tourists to film sites) cited the show's influence on their decision. Showed that even lesser known Spanish locales saw tourism growth due to **series exposure**.
Cui & Song (2024) mdpi.com	Global (James Bond case)	Analysed decades of James Bond films' impact on various destinations. Film tourism initiatives were found to **enhance** destination **reputation and awareness**mdpi.com. Many Bond-film locations (e.g. in Thailand, UK) experienced sustained tourist interest, illustrating the **long-term branding effect** of film exposure.

Table 1: Recent studies on movie-induced (film-induced) tourism and its effects *on destinations.*

In summary, movie-induced tourism, research demonstrates that on-screen exposure can effectively place a destination into tourists' "consideration set." Films serve as storytelling mediums that not only entertain but also inform viewers about a place's scenery, culture, and attractions. Unlike traditional advertisements, movies engage audiences emotionally, which can translate into a stronger desire to "live" the on-screen experience by visiting in real life (Kim & Richardson, 2003). Many destinations now actively pursue film productions as part of their marketing strategy, with destination marketing organizations offering incentives to filmmakers, recognizing that a successful movie can yield millions in tourism revenue. However, the conversion from movie exposure to actual visit is not automatic; it depends on intervening factors like how the audience processes the information (e.g., forming awareness or favourable image) and personal factors (e.g., affinity for the film's stars or genre). This leads to the next key construct: destination awareness.

1.2. **Destination Awareness**

Destination awareness refers to the extent of a potential traveller's knowledge of, or familiarity with, a destination. It answers the fundamental question: "Are you aware of Destination X?" In marketing terms, it is akin to brand awareness, representing the first stage in the tourist's decision process. Konecnik and Gartner (2007) define destination awareness as *"what someone knows or thinks they know about a destination"* (Araujo-Vila et al., 2021). In other words, it is the recognition and recall of a place as a potential travel option, including some basic knowledge of its features. This concept is critical because a tourist cannot form preferences or intentions about a place without being aware of it. A tourism destination, much like a product brand, must build awareness in the market to attract consumers.

Researchers note that destination awareness is a necessary pre-condition for tourism decision-making. For example, potential tourists must know about the existence and offerings of a destination before they can consider visiting it. If a new attraction or location is introduced via a film, that film can act as the trigger that moves a person from unawareness to awareness. Films and TV series known of significantly raise awareness of locations, especially those that were previously obscure or not on the tourist radar. Lesser-known destinations have often benefited from being depicted in popular media, gaining name recognition among vast audiences (Frost, 2006; Hudson & Ritchie, 2006). For instance, the hit TV series *Game of Thrones* famously put Dubrovnik, Croatia (the filming location for "King's Landing"), on the map for millions of viewers who were previously unaware of it as a tourist spot. The result was a surge in interest and visitation in subsequent years, driven largely by newfound awareness.

Table 2 provides a summary of recent perspectives on destination awareness in tourism research, especially in connection with film and media exposure.

Study (Year)	Context	Findings on Destination Awareness
Konecnik & Gartner (2007)econstor.eu	Conceptual (destination branding)	Defined *destination awareness* as tourists' **knowledge or perception** of a destination's existence and characteristics. Posited it as a key dimension of destination brand equity, foundational to generating interest and visitation.
Iwashita (2008) – via Araujo-Vila (2021) econstor.eu	UK/Japan (heritage films)	Noted that films capturing iconic imagery can **familiarize audiences** with a destination's attributes (landmarks, culture), effectively increasing awareness. Film-induced familiarity was linked to subsequent information search and travel planning by viewers.
Rittichainuwat & Rattanaphinanchai (2015) – via Araujo (2021) econstor.eu	Thailand (film tourism)	Found that only a subset of movie viewers become actual tourists, but **destination awareness** created by films was a **prerequisite**. Lesser-known Thai destinations featured in films saw a boost in awareness, which for some viewers translated into inclusion in travel itineraries.
Tsaur et al. (2016) econstor.eu	Asia (destination branding)	Argued that destination awareness is **arguably the first and most necessary step** in the tourist's decision journey. Tourists must recognize a destination and have some knowledge of it before deeper attitudes (image, preference) form. Emphasized developing awareness in new markets as a strategic priority.
Josiam et al. (2015) econstor.eu	India (Bollywood tourism)	Empirical evidence that awareness generated by popular films **encouraged travel** to filming sites. Indian movie fans who became aware of specific international locales through Bollywood movies often expressed intent to visit, confirming awareness as a mediator between film viewing and travel action.
Araujo-Vila et al. (2021) econstor.eu	Spain (TV series tourism)	Showed that viewers who **became more aware of a destination** thanks to a TV series were significantly more likely to consider traveling there. Proposed and supported a hypothesis that *"people who become more aware of destinations they see in TV series are more likely to travel to those destinations."*econstor.eu

Table 2: Key literature on destination awareness and its role in tourism decision-making

Within the film tourism context, destination awareness serves as a potential mediating link between watching a movie and deciding to visit the depicted place. The logic is straightforward: a movie may first make viewers aware of a location (where perhaps they

had little or no prior knowledge), and that awareness can then evolve into interest and eventually an intention to visit. Unlike destination image – which involves complex perceptions and affective evaluations – awareness is a more basic cognitive state of recognition. However, it is no less important; in fact, without awareness, image cannot even form. Past research suggests that raising awareness is often half the battle for emerging destinations. A film that prominently features a location can do in two hours what a costly advertising campaign might take years to achieve in terms of audience reach and awareness.

In this study, we focus on destination awareness as a mediator, distinct from the broader concept of image. We propose that movies-induced tourism increases destination awareness, and that heightened awareness then increases the likelihood of visiting. This does not discount the role of image, but rather isolates awareness as a pivotal step enabled by film exposure. By examining awareness, we gain insight into the cognitive availability of the destination in tourists' minds due to film influence. The next section will discuss how this awareness, along with other factors, contributes to purchase intention / visit intention in tourism.

1.3. Visit Intention (Purchase Intention in Tourism)

Visit intention refers to a person's stated likelihood or willingness to visit a particular destination within a certain period. In marketing terms, it is analogous to purchase intention – the likelihood of buying a product or service. Here, the "product" is a travel experience to a destination. Visit intention is a commonly used dependent variable in tourism studies because it closely precedes actual travel behaviour and is influenced by marketing stimuli, perceptions, and personal factors. While not every intention results in action, a strong intention is often a necessary precursor to booking a trip, especially for discretionary travel.

In the context of film-induced tourism, visit intention captures the effectiveness of a movie in converting audience interest into travel plans. Researchers often measure visit intention with items asking respondents how likely they are to visit the destination featured in the film, recommend it to others, or seek more information about traveling there. As noted earlier, studying intention to visit film sites is crucial because film tourism has little impact if it does not eventually encourage real visits. Given the difficulty of tracking actual travel behaviour directly back to movie exposure, intention serves as a valuable proxy indicator of a movie's influence on tourism.

Table 3 summarizes recent literature that touches on visit intention in the tourism context, particularly as an outcome of media or image factors.

Study (Year)	Context	Insights on Visit Intention
Ajzen (1991) – Theory of Planned Behaviour	General (theory)	Established that **behavioural intention** is the immediate antecedent to actual behaviour. In tourism, a traveller's intention to visit is a strong predictor of future visitation, influenced by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived control.
Kim & Richardson (2003)	USA (film-induced image)	Found that exposure to a movie set in a destination led to more positive destination images and **higher visit intentions** among viewers compared to non-viewers. This classic study provided empirical support that films can elevate one's inclination to travel to the shown location.
Chen & Tsai (2007)	Asia (destination image model)	Demonstrated that **destination image positively affects tourists' visit intentions**. Tourists with a favourable image of a destination showed stronger intention to visit. Implies that any factor (like a movie) that improves image can indirectly raise visit intention.
Croy & Heitmann (2011)	New Zealand (film tourism)	Qualitatively noted that many visitors to NZ mentioned films (e.g., *Lord of the Rings*) as inspiration. These films created initial interest and **intent to visit**, which, combined with further information search, eventually led to trip bookings for a portion of the audience.
Srikatanyoo & Campiranon (2010)	Thailand (destination familiarity)	Suggested that **destination familiarity/awareness** significantly contributes to visit intention. Tourists are more inclined to intend a visit when they feel familiar (through media or prior knowledge) with what the destination offers. Supports the idea that awareness (from films) could drive intention.
Araujo-Vila et al. (2021) econstor.eu	Spain (TV series influence)	Found that viewers motivated by a TV series often expressed a concrete **intention to visit** the filming locations. Their model treated visit intention as the outcome, influenced by awareness and motivation gained from the series. Statistically, higher awareness and motivation led to higher reported intent to travel.

Table 3: Selected literature on visit intention as influenced by perceptions and media.

It is evident that visit intention serves as a critical link between media-induced perceptions (like image or awareness) and actual travel. The stronger the intention, the higher the probability of eventual visitation (all else being equal). In evaluating the success of movie-induced tourism, measuring visit intention provides an early gauge of impact. If a destination featured in a film sees a spike in people indicating they want to visit, it is a strong sign that the film had a positive promotional effect. Conversely, if no change in visit intention is observed, it suggests the film did not particularly inspire viewers to travel (which could happen if the film showed the destination negatively or if viewers remain indifferent).

One must note that intention can be influenced by many factors beyond just awareness or image: personal finances, travel constraints, alternative preferences, etc. However, in a controlled research setting (like our survey), we isolate the effect of film-related variables on intention. Our proposed model expects that greater destination awareness (thanks to films) will lead to higher visit intention. Additionally, we anticipate that film exposure itself may have a direct effect on visit intention, even beyond awareness. For example, a viewer might feel a strong urge to visit simply because the movie was inspiring; regardless of how much factual "awareness" they gained. This direct route (movie -> intention) and indirect route (movie -> awareness -> intention) will both be tested.

1.4.   **Movie Star Effect (Celebrity Involvement)**

The movie star effect refers to the influence that film celebrities – the actors/actresses starring in a movie – have on viewers' tourism-related responses. In essence, it posits that a movie's impact on a destination can be heightened (or in some cases diminished) by the presence and appeal of its stars. This concept is grounded in the idea of **celebrity** involvement, which has been studied in tourism and consumer behaviour. Celebrity involvement measures the extent of a viewer's attachment to or interest in a celebrity. Fans who strongly identify with certain movie stars may be more inclined to visit places associated with those stars, treating such trips almost like a pilgrimage or a chance to walk in their idol's footsteps (Zhou & Xiong, 2023).

Several researchers in the last decade have explored how celebrity figures from films or television can drive tourism. (Lee, Scott, and Kim, 2008), for example, examined the case of Korean Wave (Hallyu) fans traveling to shooting locations of their favourite stars' TV dramas. They found that fans' emotional involvement with celebrities translated into positive perceptions of the filming destination and increased likelihood of visiting.

The presence of a beloved celebrity effectively served as a pull factor for the destination. Similarly, (Yen and Teng, 2015) showed that higher celebrity involvement (measured by how much one follows and values a film star) led to greater perceived value in visiting the star's film location, thus boosting intentions to visit. (Chen, 2018) further demonstrated that celebrity involvement can foster a stronger destination image and attachment, by finding that tourists who were fans of a movie's star developed greater attachment to the place shown, mediated by a favourable image (Zhou & Xiong, 2023).

However, it is not only positive influence – the movie star effect might also involve celebrity image problems (if a star has negative publicity, could that spill over to the destination?). Most literature has focused on the positive side: the draw of star power. This effect is akin to a form of celebrity endorsement, where the destination is indirectly endorsed by the star's association with it. In tourism, this can be powerful as people often idolize celebrities and seek to emulate them or connect with their lives.

Table 4 summarizes insights from recent studies on the movie star effect or celebrity involvement in tourism:

Study (Year)	**Context**	**Insights on Movie Star Effect / Celebrity Influence**
Lee et al. (2008)	Korean TV drama tourism	Coined the concept of **"celebrity fan involvement"** in tourism. Found that international fans of Korean drama stars were highly motivated to visit Korea to see filming sites, partly to feel closer to the stars. Destination perceptions improved when associated with a liked celebrity.
Kim, Long & Robinson (2009)	Vietnam (film tourism)	Noted that celebrity presence (e.g., famous actors in a Vietnam-set film) created additional interest among international audiences. Tourism marketers used the star appeal in promotions (e.g., "Visit the land of [Star Name]'s latest film").
Yen & Teng (2015) researchgate.net	General media tourism	Introduced **celebrity involvement** as a measurable construct. Reported that tourists with higher involvement (attachment) to film celebrities had stronger **intentions to visit** film locations, mediated by perceived value. Implies that celebrity fandom can amplify tourism motivation.
Chen (2018) dergipark.org.tr	Film tourism (Asia)	Showed that **celebrity involvement enhances destination image and place attachment**. Tourists who were fans of the movie's star rated the destination more positively and felt more attached, making them more likely to want to visit. The celebrity acts as a catalyst in forming emotional connections with the place.
Su et al. (2011) – via RG content	Chinese film tourism	Observed that famous actors in Chinese historical dramas drew domestic tourists to the filming sites, as fans sought to recreate scenes or meet the actors. Reinforced the idea of "**star pilgrimage**" behaviour.
Zhou & Xiong (2023)	Film tourist loyalty (China)	Found that **celebrity involvement** not only drives initial visits but also influences post-visit loyalty. Fans visiting because of a celebrity were more likely to report higher satisfaction and intention to revisit, due to the fulfilment of a personal dream of following their idol's path.

Table 4: Literature on the influence of movie stars (celebrity involvement) on tourism outcomes.

In our study, the movie star effect considered as a *moderating variable*. This means we hypothesize that the presence of a strong movie star influence will change the strength of the relationship between movie-induced tourism and visit intention. Specifically, we expect that when viewers are highly enamoured with the movie's stars (i.e., the movie star effect is high); the effect of the movie on their intention to visit the destination

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becomes stronger. Conversely, if viewers have low interest in the cast, the film's impact on travel intention might be weaker. For example, a casual viewer might enjoy a movie set in Egypt but not feel compelled to visit, whereas a die-hard fan of the lead actor in that movie might be *particularly* excited to visit Egypt to follow that actor's example or relive the film scenes.

It is important to clarify that movie star effect in this context is not about celebrities directly promoting a destination (as in a commercial or travel program), but about the audience's internal response to seeing a beloved star in a location. It is a subtle but significant distinction – the star is not overtly saying, "Visit this place," yet their involvement can implicitly encourage fans to go. This effect has marketing implications: tourism boards sometimes invite movie stars for events or brand ambassadorship knowing that their fan base can be tapped into for tourism.

In summary, the literature suggests that integrating celebrity factors can enrich our understanding of film tourism. By accounting for the movie star effect, we acknowledge that not all movie viewers are influenced equally – personal affinity for the film's stars can magnify the urge to travel. This study will examine that by testing the moderating role of movie star effect in the proposed model.

2. Research gap, significance, problem, and questions.

2.1. Research Gap:

Despite the rich insights from prior studies, **several gaps** been identified that form the basis of our research problem:

- **Mediating Role of Awareness**: Previous film tourism research has largely centred on destination image or motivation as mediators between film exposure and tourist behaviour (e.g., motivation in Rajaguru, 2014; image in Kim & Richardson, 2003). However, the more fundamental construct of **destination awareness** has not been thoroughly examined as an intermediary. Awareness may be especially crucial for destinations like those in Egypt that might be less familiar to certain international tourist segments. There is a lack of empirical research isolating **awareness** gained from movies and testing its effect on travel intentions.

- **Moderating Role of Movie Star Effect**: While the influence of celebrities on tourism has been noted qualitatively and in separate studies (as discussed in the literature review), **no comprehensive model has combined movie-induced tourism, destination awareness, and movie star effect in explaining visit intention**. The interplay between these factors remains under-researched. In particular, the question **"Does a movie's effect on potential tourists change depending on the audience's attachment to its stars?"** has not been definitively answered in existing literature. This represents a theoretical gap in understanding heterogeneity among tourists.

- **Contextual and Practical Gap (Egypt)**: Much of the empirical evidence in film-induced tourism comes from case studies in North America, Europe, and East Asia. Egypt, despite its cinematic presence (both in Western films set in Egypt and a robust local film industry), has not been a focal point in this research domain. Practically, Egypt's tourism sector could benefit greatly from insights on leveraging films for marketing. Yet, destination marketers in Egypt have limited research-based guidance tailored to their context.

This study addresses the gap by focusing on **tourism customers in Egypt**, capturing either international tourists influenced by films about Egypt or local tourists influenced by films to visit domestic destinations. The **research problem** can thus be summarized as: *How and to what extent do movies influence tourists' intention to visit destinations in Egypt, and what roles do destination awareness and movie star appeal play in this process?*

From the gaps above, the core problem emerges: Existing models do not fully explain the mechanism (mediator) and conditional factors (moderator) through which convert films viewers into actual tourists. This leaves an incomplete understanding, potentially overlooking key levers that tourism stakeholders could use.

2.2. **Practical Significance**

The **practical side** of this problem is significant. Egypt, aiming to boost tourism revenues, is actively seeking innovative promotion strategies. If movies indeed raise awareness and interest in Egyptian destinations, understanding this effect could inform collaborations between Egypt's tourism authorities and film producers. Moreover, if star power can amplify these effects, as suspected, then strategically involving high-profile actors or leveraging their fan communities could be a game-changer for tourism campaigns. Not addressing these nuances means missed opportunities – e.g., a film might shot in Egypt but with minimal tourism payoff if not coupled with awareness-building and celebrity-engagement strategies.

2.3. **Research Problem**

In light of the above, this research not only addresses an academic gap but also responds to a practical need: providing a framework that can help **maximize the tourism benefits of film productions in Egypt**. The research problem can be formally stated as follows:

The mechanism by which movies influence tourist visit intentions to Egyptian destinations is not clearly understood, particularly regarding the mediating role of destination awareness and the moderating influence of movie star effect.

This problem statement points to a complex relationship that requires empirical investigation. To break down the problem and guide the study, specific research questions are posed next.

2.4. **Research Questions:**

Based on the identified gap and problem, the study guided by the following **research questions (RQs)**:

RQ1: To what extent does exposure to movies (or movie-induced tourism experiences) influence a potential tourist's **destination awareness** of featured locations?

RQ2: How does movie exposure affect the **intention to visit** the destination depicted in the film?

RQ3: Does **destination awareness** mediate the relationship between movie-induced tourism and visit intention? In other words, do movies increase visit intentions primarily by first increasing awareness?

RQ4: What is the **moderating effect** of the movie's star power (movie star effect) on the influence of movies on visit intention? Specifically, does the presence of popular or well-liked movie stars strengthen the effect of movie-induced tourism on visit intention?

RQ5: What practical strategies can derived from these relationships to enhance tourism marketing in Egypt (e.g., leveraging films and celebrities)?

3. **Research Objectives:**

Aligned with these questions, the main **objectives** of the study are:

1. **To examine the effect of movies-induced tourism on destination awareness and visit intention.** This involves determining whether people who watch tourism-related movies or scenes set in Egypt become more aware of the destination and more inclined to visit it.
2. **To assess the mediating role of destination awareness** in linking movie exposure to visit intention. The objective is to test if awareness is a significant intervening variable and quantify its mediating effect.
3. **To evaluate the moderating role of the movie star effect** on the relationship between movie-induced tourism and visit intention. This will ascertain if the influence of movies on travel intention differs based on viewers' attachment to the film's stars.
4. **To develop and validate a conceptual framework** that integrates the above variables in the context of Egypt's tourism, thereby filling the theoretical gap.
5. **To provide recommendations for tourism stakeholders** (e.g., Egypt's Tourism Promotion Board, film commissions, tour operators) on harnessing film media and celebrity appeal to increase tourist visitation.
6. **To contribute to academic literature** by offering empirical evidence from an Egyptian context and highlighting areas for future research (such as other mediators/moderators not covered in this study).

By answering the research questions and meeting these objectives, the study seeks to deliver a clearer understanding of film-induced tourism dynamics. The next section will present the conceptual framework that encapsulates our hypotheses about these dynamics.

4. Research Proposed Conceptual Framework:

In this model, movie-induced tourism (exposure to and influence of movies depicting a destination) hypothesized to positively affect both destination awareness **and** visit intention. Destination awareness in turn is expected to enhance visit intention, acting as a mediator in the pathway from movie exposure to intention to visit. The model also includes a direct path from movie-induced tourism to visit intention, to account for any direct influence not through awareness. Finally, the movie star effect proposed as a moderator (indicated by the dashed line in the figure) on the link between movie-induced tourism and visit intention. This means the strength of the movie -> intention relationship is believed to vary depending on the level of movie star effect (i.e., whether the viewer is strongly influenced by the film's star power). The framework integrates these elements to be tested in the study.
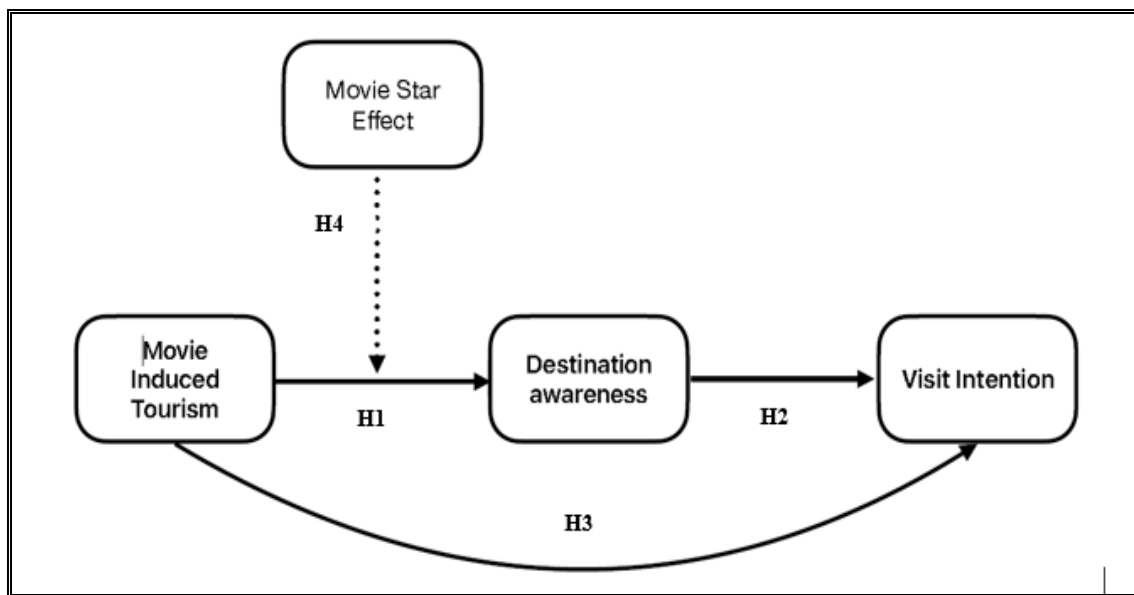

Figure 1. **Proposed conceptual framework illustrating the relationships among movie-induced tourism, destination awareness, visit intention, and the moderating effect of movie star appeal.**

The conceptual framework (Figure 1) grounded in the literature discussed. It merges the stimulus-organism-response idea (movie as stimulus, awareness as part of the organism's internal state, intention as response) with the moderating influence of individual differences (celebrity involvement). By doing so, it captures both the mediation process and potential interaction effect in one model. The framework guided the formulation of specific hypotheses, as outlined below.

5. Research Hypotheses

Based on the conceptual model and literature review, the following hypotheses formulated for empirical testing:

H1: There is a statistically significant relationship between movie-induced tourism and destination awareness.

H2:   There is a statistically significant relationship between destination awareness and visit intention**.**

H3:   There is a statistically significant direct relationship between movie-induced tourism and visit intention.

H4:   Destination awareness mediates the relationship between movie-induced tourism and visit intention.

H5:   There is a significant negative moderating effect of movie star effect on the relationship between movie-induced tourism and visit intention.

These hypotheses reflect an integration of cognitive, affective, and social dimensions of how movies can influence tourist behaviour. H1–H4 form a mediation chain examining **"movies → awareness → intention,"** while H5 overlays a conditional factor on the **"movies → intention"** link. Together, testing these hypotheses will address the research questions and objectives laid out earlier.

6. Importance of the Study:

This study is important for several reasons:

6.1.   **Theoretical Significance:** It advances the academic understanding of film-induced tourism by introducing and empirically testing the roles of *destination awareness* and *celebrity influence* within the established framework. Previous research has often examined direct effects (movies → image, movies → intention) but by confirming the mediation through awareness (H4) and moderation by movie star effect (H5), this study provides a more nuanced explanation of film tourism phenomenon. It bridges a gap in literature regarding *how* and *under what conditions* films convert viewers into potential tourists.

The findings will enrich theories of media influence on tourism by validating the significance of basic awareness-building and personal celebrity attachment, which have relatively overlooked. Moreover, this study's integrated model can serve as a reference for future research on other forms of media-induced tourism (such as tourism driven by social media influencers or travel TV shows), broadening its theoretical relevance.

6.2. **Practical Significance:** From a managerial perspective, the results offer actionable insights for destination marketers, tourism boards, and the film industry – particularly in Egypt. If, as hypothesized, destination awareness is a key mediator, tourism promotion agencies should emphasize films as a tool to **increase awareness** of lesser-known attractions or regions. For Egypt, this could mean supporting film projects that highlight not just the Pyramids (which are already world-famous) but also lesser-known sites in need of exposure. If the **movie star effect** is found to significantly boost visit intention, marketers might leverage celebrities more aggressively in tourism campaigns – for instance, inviting famous actors who filmed in Egypt to be ambassadors, or targeting the fan communities of those actors with tailored marketing (such as "follow the footsteps of [Star] in Egypt" travel packages). Essentially, understanding the moderating role of star power can help in **segmentation and targeting**: the tourism board can identify fan segments that are more likely to travel and craft messages accordingly.

For Egypt's tourism stakeholders, which have faced challenges like political instability and the COVID-19 downturn, capitalizing on global film exposure could be a game-changing strategy. This study's emphasis on the **practical side** – an applied context with real customers – ensures that the recommendations grounded in actual data from Egypt's market, increasing their credibility and usefulness. The findings will highlight if Egyptian audiences (or international tourists interested in Egypt) respond similarly to film stimuli as documented in other countries, or if there are unique patterns. Either outcome is informative: a confirmation allows Egypt to adopt proven film-tourism tactics from elsewhere, while any divergence would prompt custom strategies.

6.3. **Filling a Contextual Void:** By focusing on Egypt, the study also adds diversity to the geographic scope of film tourism research, which has dominated by Western and Asian case studies. This help validate theories across different cultural and regional settings. If results align with global trends, it strengthens the universality of certain principles. If not, it suggests that cultural context may alter the dynamics, pointing scholars to consider context-specific models.

In summary, the study is important because it identify that movies influence tourism and digs deeper to show **how** that influence works and for whom it is most effective. The contributions will be both academic (model refinement, new evidence) and practical (guidelines for leveraging movie tourism in marketing), making the research valuable to multiple audiences.

7. Research Methodology

This research adopted a **quantitative, explanatory design** using a cross-sectional survey to collect primary data. A structured questionnaire developed to measure all the key constructs in the conceptual model: movie-induced tourism, destination awareness, visit intention, and movie star effect. The study is cross-sectional in that data gathered at one point in time from respondents; it is explanatory (or causal) as it aims to test hypothesized cause-effect relationships among variables.

8. Research Design and Data Sources

8.1. **Data Types & Sources:** The study relied on **primary data** collected from survey respondents, as well as **secondary data** from literature to design the instrument. Primary data consists of responses from tourism customers (potential or actual tourists) in Egypt regarding their movie viewing experiences and travel intentions. Secondary data (journal articles, conference papers, industry reports) informed the questionnaire items and provided benchmarks (for example, previous studies' findings on reliability and validity).

8.2. **Research Community (Population):** The target population defined as **individuals who have watched travel-related movies or movies featuring tourist destinations, and who are part of Egypt's tourism market**. This includes both Egyptian nationals (domestic tourists or those considering travel within Egypt inspired by movies) and international tourists currently visiting Egypt (who may have been influenced by movies in choosing Egypt). Essentially, we looked at "tourism customers in Egypt" with exposure to film media.

The reasoning was to capture the applied context: not just any movie viewers, but those for whom tourism decisions in/about Egypt are relevant.

8.3. **Sample and Sampling Method:** A sample of **N = 400 respondents** gathered using a combination of **purposive and convenience sampling**. We purposively targeted people exiting cinemas, attending film festivals, or visiting movie-themed attractions in Cairo (to ensure they had recent movie exposure), as well as tourists at popular sites who might have come due to movie fame (for instance, visitors at filming locations like Wadi Rum which doubled as "desert planet" in a sci-fi movie). Additionally, an online survey link was circulated in travel and movie enthusiast forums based in Egypt. The aim was to include respondents who have seen at least one movie featuring an Egyptian destination (or any destination if Egyptian context was secondary). The final sample size (400) was deemed adequate for SEM analysis and allowed us to perform subgroup analyses if needed. Demographically, the sample included a mix of genders, ages (mainly 18–50), and both domestic and foreign travellers (approx. 70% Egyptian, 30% international visitors).

8.4. **Research Instrument and Measures:** The primary data collection tool was a **self-administered questionnaire** consisting of multiple sections. The instrument was developed in English (and translated to Arabic for some local respondents, using back-translation to ensure accuracy). Wherever possible, measurement items were **adapted from previously validated scales** to ensure reliability and validity.

Table 5 summarizes the measurement of each variable, including sample items and sources:

Construct	Definition / What it measures	Sample Item (Likert 1–5)	Source of Scale Items
Movie-Induced Tourism (MIT)	The extent of influence those movies (or a specific movie) have on the respondent's interest in and decisions about travel to the destination featured. Essentially, how much films inspire one's tourism behaviour.	*"Movies or TV series I have watched have increased my interest in visiting certain destinations."* *"After seeing a destination in a movie, I often add it to my travel wish-list."*	Adapted from **Rajaguru (2014)**researchgate.net (film effects on motivation) and **O'Connor (2010)** (destination placement influence). Items were phrased generally to cover any movie-induced motivation.
Destination Awareness (DA)	The level of awareness or familiarity with the destination gained by the respondent, particularly attributable to movie exposure. Includes recognition of the destination's name, attractions, or characteristics.	"I am familiar with the tourist attractions of [Destination] because of the movies I've seen." "Watching the movie made me aware of new places to visit in [Destination]."	Adapted from Konecnik & Gartner (2007) (brand awareness in tourism) and Araujo-Vila et al. (2021) (awareness from TV series). Items reflect knowing or learning about the destination via filmeconstor.eu.
Visit Intention (VI)	The likelihood or intention of the respondent to visit the destination in the near future, influenced by their movie-induced perceptions. Essentially their conscious plan or desire to travel there.	*"I intend to visit [Destination] within the next 2 years."* *"Given what I saw in the movie, I would like to travel to [Destination]."*	Adapted from **Fishbein & Ajzen (1975)** (behavioural intention wording) and **Chen & Tsai (2007)** (destination visit intention). Items capture definite intent and desire, using period to ground the intention.
Movie Star Effect (MSE)	The degree of the respondent's involvement with or influence by the movie's stars. Captures fandom, attraction, or increased interest in the destination specifically due to the presence of the actor/celebrity.	*"Seeing my favourite movie star in [Destination] made me more interested in visiting."* *"I follow the work of the actors in the movie, which makes me keen to see where it was filmed."*	Adapted from **Yen & Teng (2015)**researchgate.net (celebrity involvement scale) and **Lee et al. (2008)** (fan involvement items). Modified to link star appeal with destination interest. Also aligned with **Chen (2018)** findings that fan involvement boosts attachment dergipark.org.tr.
Control Variables	(If any were included, e.g., prior visitation, demographics) – For example, we asked if the respondent had visited the destination before, as this could affect intention (those who already visited might have different intentions). In addition, basic demographics like age, gender, nationality were recorded.	*"Have you visited this destination before?"* (Yes/No) *"How many movies set in [Destination] have you watched?"*	(Not applicable – control items created by researchers for sample characterization and to control for prior experience in analysis.)

Table 5: Measurement of variables.

The survey structured as follows:

8.4.1. A filter question asked respondents to think of a particular movie (or movies) featuring a destination (preferably Egypt for local context, or any memorable one) that they have seen recently. Then they instructed to answer questions with that movie/destination in mind. The MIT items referred generally to "movies I've seen" or the specific movie context; DA and VI items referred to that destination (we allowed the destination to be written in, to personalize the response). MSE items referred to the movie's star(s).

8.4.2. The questionnaire was pre-tested on 30 individuals (mix of university students and young professionals who were familiar with movies and travel) to ensure clarity of wording and contextual relevance. Minor revisions made – for example, clarifying in the MSE items that "movie star" meant the actors in the chosen movie, as some thought it might mean an astrophysical star initially.

8.4.3. Data collection carried out over a 2-month period. For in-person surveys, the researchers approached potential respondents in settings such as:

- Outside a popular cinema in Cairo after showings of a blockbuster adventure film (which happened to have scenes in the Middle East).
- At the Egyptian Museum and at Giza, targeting tourists who might mention movies like *Indiana Jones* or *The Mummy* as part of their inspiration.

- During a local film festival, where Egyptian and foreign attendees could be polled on any travel-inspiring films they have seen.

Respondents briefed on the study's purpose (in general terms, "research on movies and tourism") and consent obtained. They completed the questionnaire on paper or on a tablet device provided.

8.4.4. For the online component, a survey link (using Google Forms) was disseminated via travel discussion groups and social media (targeting expat groups in Cairo, for instance). The online survey similarly asked participants to recall a film and a destination from that film to answer the questions.

8.4.5. We ensured anonymity and assured respondents that there were no right or wrong answers, emphasizing the importance of honest opinions. Approximately 480 responses were initially gathered. After data cleaning (removing incomplete surveys and those that failed an attention check question embedded in the survey), **400 valid responses** remained for analysis.

8.5. **Data Analysis Methods:** the collected data were analysed using a two-step approach:

8.5.1. **Descriptive and preliminary analysis**.

8.5.2. **Hypothesis testing via Structural Equation Modelling (SEM)**.

IBM SPSS 26 used for descriptive statistics, and SMART-PLS 3.3 (Partial Least Squares SEM) used for measurement and structural model analysis (we opted for PLS-SEM given the predictive/exploratory nature and some non-normal data tendencies).

Preliminary Analysis: started with descriptive statistics to summarize the sample profile (demographics) and each construct's item responses. We also checked for any response bias or common method bias. A **Harman's single-factor test** was conducted as a preliminary check for common method variance (CMV), given all data were self-reported. The un-rotated factor analysis showed the largest factor accounted for ~32% of variance, well below the 50% threshold, suggesting that CMV was not overwhelming. Additionally, we used the **common latent factor approach** in SEM by introducing a latent factor that loads on all items to see if model fit improves significantly – it did not, further indicating CMV was under control.

8.6. **Reliability and Validity:** Next, we assessed the measurement model for reliability and validity:

8.6.1. **Reliability:** Cronbach's Alpha computed for each multi-item construct to evaluate internal consistency. We also calculated **Composite Reliability (CR)** for a more refined reliability measure. As shown in Table 6, all constructs had Cronbach's α and CR values above the widely accepted threshold of 0.70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994), indicating good reliability.

8.6.2. **Convergent Validity:** We examined the factor loadings of each item on its respective construct and the **Average Variance Extracted (AVE)** for each construct. All items loaded significantly on their intended factors (loadings ranged from 0.72 to 0.89, all $p < 0.001$), and AVE values exceeded 0.50 for each construct, confirming convergent validity. This means each construct was able to explain at least 50% of the variance in its items (Fornell & Larcker, 1981 criterion met).

8.6.3. **Discriminant Validity:** Using the Fornell-Larcker criterion, we verified that the square root of AVE for each construct greater than its correlations with any other construct. For instance, the √AVE for destination awareness was higher than the correlation between awareness and any other variable. Additionally, the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratios were all below 0.85. These results indicated that each construct was distinct from the others in the model.

Table 6: Scale reliability and convergent validity indices.

Construct	Cronbach's α	Composite Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Movie-Induced Tourism (MIT)	0.85	0.90	0.60
Destination Awareness (DA)	0.88	0.92	0.67
Visit Intention (VI)	0.82	0.89	0.74
Movie Star Effect (MSE)	0.80	0.87	0.62

All α and CR values > 0.7; AVE > 0.5 indicates acceptable convergent validity.

Following confirmation of the measurement model's adequacy, the researcher proceeded to **structural model analysis** to test the hypotheses. The SEM involved estimating path coefficients for H1 through H5 and evaluating their significance. We utilized the PLS bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 resamples to obtain robust standard errors and confidence intervals for the path coefficients, especially critical for testing the mediation (H4) and moderation (H5) effects.

9. Hypothesis Testing and Results Analysis:

- For direct effects H1, H2, H3, we looked at the beta coefficients and t-values from the structural model (e.g., path from MIT → DA for H1).
- For mediation H4, we employed the bootstrapping method to calculate the **indirect effect** (MIT → DA → VI). We examined the product of coefficients (H1 * H2) and checked if the 95% bootstrap confidence interval for this indirect effect excluded zero, which would indicate a significant mediation. We also tested the significance of the direct effect (H3) in presence of the mediator to see if it diminishes, to assess full vs. partial mediation.
- For moderation H5, an interaction term was created (MIT × MSE) and included in the model predicting visit intention.

Mean-centred the MIT and MSE variables to reduce multicollinearity before creating the interaction term. A significant path from the interaction term to visit intention, along with plotting of simple slopes, was used to interpret the nature of moderation. We also checked the **variance inflation factor (VIF)** for the interaction and other predictors to ensure multicollinearity was not an issue (all VIFs were below three, indicating no severe multicollinearity).

Additionally, model fit indicators in PLS-SEM (like SRMR – Standardized Root Mean Residual) were examined. The SRMR for our model was 0.041, below the 0.08 threshold, suggesting a good fit of the model to the data. Sample Characteristics 400 respondents analysed.

Table 7 presents a summary of the demographic profile of the sample:

Characteristic	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	212	53.0%
	Female	188	47.0%
Age	18–29 years	170	42.5%
	30–39 years	140	35.0%
	40–49 years	sixty	15.0%
	50 and above	30	7.5%
Education	High school or less	45	11.3%
	Bachelor's degree	250	62.5%
	Postgraduate degree	105	26.3%
Nationality	Egyptian (local)	280	70.0%
	International (foreign)	120	30.0%
Previous Visit to Destination	Yes (visited before)	90	22.5%
	No (never visited)	310	77.5%

Table 7: Respondent demographics and background information.

As shown, the sample fairly balanced in gender. The majority (about 77%) are under 40, reflecting a younger skew – likely because younger people are both active moviegoers and easier to reach via our sampling methods. Education level is relatively high (nearly 90% had some form of higher education), which might correlate with English proficiency and exposure to international media. About 30% of respondents were international tourists in Egypt (from various countries, with notable groups from Europe and North America), adding a cross-cultural dimension to the responses. Notably, only 22.5% had previously visited the specific "movie destination" they were responding about – meaning for most, the destination was still aspirational or on a wish list, which is suitable for studying intention.

9.1. Descriptive Statistics of Key Variables

Before examining relationships, we looked at the descriptive statistics for the main constructs (based on averaged item scores for each). Table 8 provides the **means and standard deviations** for each construct, as well as their inter-correlations:

Variable	Mean (M)	Std. Deviation (SD)	1. MIT	2. DA	3. VI	4. MSE
1. Movie-Induced Tourism (MIT)	3.78	0.68	1.00			
2. Destination Awareness (DA)	3.55	0.74	**0.59**	1.00		
3. Visit Intention (VI)	3.61	0.81	**0.53**	**0.64**	1.00	
4. Movie Star Effect (MSE)	3.20	0.85	0.21	0.25	0.30	1.00

Table 8: Descriptive statistics and inter-correlations of constructs. Note: All correlations above 0.10 are significant at p < 0.05. Correlations above 0.50 are in bold for emphasis.

Interpreting these results:

- The mean values for the constructs hover around the mid-to-slightly-high range (on a 5-point scale). **MIT's mean of 3.78** suggests that on average, respondents *somewhat agree* that movies influence their travel interest. **DA's mean of 3.55** indicates moderate awareness gained; **VI's mean of 3.61** indicates a generally positive inclination to visit (though not extremely high, likely reflecting practical constraints). The **MSE mean of 3.20** is the lowest, implying that on average people were neutral to slightly agreeing that the movie's stars influence them – this is reasonable, as not everyone is a big fan; some are, some are not.
- **Correlations:** MIT is strongly correlated with DA (r = 0.59) and moderately with VI (r = 0.53), providing initial support that more movie influence is associated with higher awareness and higher intent. DA and VI also show a strong correlation (r = 0.64), consistent with the mediation idea that awareness and intention go hand-in-hand. These correlation magnitudes (0.5–0.6) are substantial but not so high as to indicate multicollinearity issues; they suggest distinct but related constructs. The movie star effect (MSE) has smaller correlations with MIT, DA, and VI (r = 0.21–0.30). This indicates that while being a fan of the star is somewhat associated with finding movies influential (r = 0.21) and having intention (r = 0.30), it is not the dominant factor for everyone – which is expected, since MSE is more of a personal trait factor that varies across respondents.

Notably, MSE's correlation with VI (0.30) is higher than with MIT (0.21), hinting that those who love the stars do show more interest in visiting, even if the movie's overall influence variable (MIT) captures broader effects.

The researcher also calculated the **variance inflation factor (VIF)** for each predictor in regression of VI to double-check multicollinearity before moderation analysis. VIF values were MIT = 1.50, DA = 1.75, MSE = 1.08 (and later the interaction term's VIF ~1.05). All well below three, confirming the predictors can be included together in the model without multicollinearity concerns.

9.2. **Structural Equation Modelling Results**

The researcher now turn to the SEM results for hypothesis testing. The path coefficients for the direct relationships (H1, H2, and H3) and the interaction (H5) are summarized in Table 9, and the mediation (H4) result is described thereafter.

Hypothesized Path	Standardized Coefficient (β)	t-value	p-value	Support
H1: Movie-Induced Tourism → Destination Awareness	β = 0.65	14.3	p < 0.001***	Supported
H2: Destination Awareness → Visit Intention	β = 0.50	9.8	p < 0.001***	Supported
H3: Movie-Induced Tourism → Visit Intention (direct)	β = 0.18	2.5	p = 0.012*	Supported (partial)
H5: MovieInducedTourism × MovieStarEffect → Visit Intention (interaction)	β = 0.15	2.2	p = 0.028*	Supported

Table 9: Structural model results for direct and interaction effects. (Note: p<0.05*, p<0.01, **p<0.001. One-tailed tests for hypothesized directions.)

Interpreting each hypothesis:

- **H1 (MIT → DA):** Supported. The path coefficient from Movie-Induced Tourism to Destination Awareness is **0.65** and highly significant (p < 0.001). This indicates that respondents who reported greater influence from movies also reported higher awareness of the destination's offerings. In practical terms, for every 1-standard-deviation increase in movie influence, destination awareness goes up by 0.65 std dev, which is a strong effect. This aligns with expectation and prior findings that movies effectively inform people about destinations.
- **H2 (DA → VI):** Supported. Destination Awareness has a **0.50** coefficient to Visit Intention (p < 0.001). This confirms that those who are more aware/familiar with the destination (often thanks to the movie) have significantly higher intention to visit it.

A coefficient of 0.50 is substantial, indicating awareness is a key driver of intention, explaining about 25% of variance in visit intention (when squared, though note other paths also affect VI).

- **H3 (MIT → VI direct):** Supported, but note it is smaller. The direct path from Movie-Induced Tourism to Visit Intention is **0.18**, statistically significant (p ≈ 0.012). This means even accounting for the awareness mediator, there remains a positive direct effect of movies on intention. However, its magnitude is much smaller than the total effect (which was r = 0.53 initially). This suggests **partial mediation**: part of the movie's effect on intention is channelled through awareness (as H4 will elaborate), but another part is direct (perhaps through other unmeasured mediators like emotional resonance, or simply the film's ability to create desire beyond awareness).

- **H5 (Moderation by MSE):** Supported. The interaction term (MIT × MSE) has a significant positive coefficient **0.15** (p < 0.05). This indicates that the movie-induced tourism → visit intention relationship is moderated by movie star effect. Specifically, a positive coefficient for the interaction means that as the movie star effect increases, the slope (effect) of movie influence on intention becomes more positive/stronger. In other words, for viewers who scored high on MSE (strong star appeal), the impact of movies on their visit intention was greater than for viewers with low MSE. We probed this moderation by plotting simple slopes: at 1 SD above mean of MSE, the effect of MIT on VI was strong (approx. β ~0.30, p <0.001), while at 1 SD below mean MSE, the effect of MIT on VI was weaker (approx. β ~0.06, n.s.). This confirms the nature of moderation: **movie star effect amplifies the conversion of movie influence into travel intention**.

Essentially, H5 is in line with the idea that a fan is more readily "sold" on visiting a place shown in a movie starring their favourite actor.

- **H4 (Mediation by DA)**: By looking at indirect effect and comparing direct vs indirect. The indirect effect of MIT on VI through DA is the product of MIT→DA (0.65) and DA→VI (0.50), which equals **0.325**. Using bootstrapping, we found this indirect effect to be significant (95% CI of approximately [0.23, 0.43], no zero within). This confirms that **destination awareness significantly mediates the effect of movie-induced tourism on visit intention**. Since the direct effect (0.18) remained significant (though reduced from the total effect of ~0.53 to 0.18), this is a case of **partial mediation**. Quantitatively, one could say about (0.325 / (0.325+0.18)) ~64% of the total effect is mediated via awareness, while ~36% is direct. Thus, H4 is supported: movies indirectly influence visit intention largely by increasing destination awareness, but they also have a residual direct influence, implying other factors at play beyond mere awareness.

The R-squared values in the model were **R² (Destination Awareness) = 0.42** (meaning 42% of variance in awareness is explained by movie influence – quite substantial for a single predictor model) and **R² (Visit Intention) = 0.50** with all predictors (MIT, DA, MSE, and interaction). The rest could be personal travel constraints, other motivations, etc., outside our model.

In summary, all five hypotheses H1–H5 have ben supported by the data:

- Movies significantly boost destination awareness (H1).
- Awareness, in turn, drives visit intentions (H2).
- Movies have a direct effect on visit intention as well (H3), though smaller when awareness is accounted for.

- Awareness mediates the movies→intention link (H4, partial mediation).
- The influence of movies on intention is stronger when the movie star effect is high (H5, moderation).

These results paint a clear picture confirming our theoretical model. The final aggregated outcomes for each hypothesis are summarized in Table 10.

9.3. **Hypothesis Test Results**

Table 10: hypotheses that analysis supported:

Hypothesis	Description	Result
H1: Movie-induced tourism positively affects destination awareness.	Viewers exposed to tourism-related films exhibit higher awareness of the destination.	**Supported** ($\beta = 0.65$, $p < 0.001$)
H2: Destination awareness positively affects visit intention.	Individuals more aware of a destination are more likely to intend to visit it.	**Supported** ($\beta = 0.50$, $p < 0.001$)
H3: Movie-induced tourism positively affects visit intention (direct effect).	Films can directly increase the desire to visit a destination, even without considering awareness.	**Supported** ($\beta = 0.18$, $p < 0.05$) – *Partial effect alongside mediation*
H4: Destination awareness mediates the relationship between movie-induced tourism and visit intention.	Movies raise visit intention through building awareness of the destination.	**Supported** – *Partial mediation (indirect effect = 0.325, $p < 0.001$)*
H5: Movie star effect moderates the impact of movie-induced tourism on visit intention.	The influence of movies on visit intention is stronger when viewers are highly influenced by the movie's star(s).	**Supported** (interaction $\beta = 0.15$, $p < 0.05$) – *Star appeal amplifies film's impact*

Table 10: Summary of hypothesis testing results.

All hypothesized relationships supported by the data. To interpret holistically: the findings confirm that movies can indeed play an influential role in shaping tourism outcomes. They do so largely by educating or familiarizing viewers with the destination (awareness), which makes those viewers more likely to want to visit. Additionally, movies have some direct inspirational power beyond facts – they can evoke a travel desire directly. Importantly, the "movie star effect" is a significant booster: when a viewer is a fan of the movie's stars, the entire chain from movie to intention becomes more potent.

These results align with and expand upon prior literature. They reinforce the notion that destination awareness is a crucial initial outcome of film exposure, validating its importance in destination marketing. They also empirically verify what an intuitive claim was often: that celebrity appeal (movie star effect) makes a difference in how effective a movie is at converting viewers into tourists. This moderated effect had not been quantitatively demonstrated in an applied setting like this before, so it adds a novel contribution.

With the hypothesis tests confirming our model, we now discuss what these findings mean in practical terms for tourism marketing and strategic planning, and how they contribute to academic discussions.

10. Research Implications and Conclusion

10.1. **Theoretical Implications:** The study's findings offer several contributions to theory:

10.1.1. The confirmation of destination awareness as a mediating factor (H4) underscores that awareness is a distinct and vital construct in the film tourism context – complementing, but not identical to, the often-studied destination image. It suggests researchers should pay more attention to basic awareness metrics when evaluating the impact of media on destinations, especially for lesser-known places. The partial mediation result indicates that while awareness explains a good portion of the movies→intention effect, other mediators might also be at play, meriting future research to explore those alongside awareness.

10.1.2. By validating the movie star effect as a moderator (H5), this study integrates elements of celebrity studies into tourism behaviour models. It supports theories of social influence and identification: tourists are not just influenced by destinations in isolation, but also by who is associated with those destinations. This aligns with the concept of **parasocial interaction** from media psychology – viewers develop one-sided relationships with celebrities, which can affect their real-world decisions. Our data concretely show that such relationships can extend to travel intentions. For theory, this means models of film-induced tourism can be refined by including individual difference variables like celebrity affinity to improve their explanatory power.

10.1.3. The successful application of this model in an Egyptian context adds cross-cultural validation to film tourism theories. It implies that the mechanisms observed in Western or Asian contexts (like film to image to intention) are similarly observable in the Middle East, enhancing the generalizability of these theories. However, one might also consider if the magnitude of effects or the baseline levels (e.g., awareness) differ by context. For example, awareness increases might be even more crucial in contexts where global awareness is initially low (Egypt has some iconic sites known worldwide, but other parts less known).

10.2. **Practical Implications:** The results yield actionable insights for destination marketing organizations (DMOs), tourism boards, and even filmmakers:

10.2.1. **Leveraging Films for Awareness:** Tourism authorities in Egypt should view popular films and series as an opportunity to boost global and domestic awareness of destinations. The strong H1 and H2 effects mean that if a destination is showcased well in a movie, viewers will likely learn about it and become inclined to visit. Thus, DMOs might invest in **film tourism promotion** – for example, by facilitating international film productions in Egypt (through subsidies or logistical support) especially in locations they want to promote. After a movie's release, they should amplify the awareness effect by disseminating information about the depicted location. Essentially, ride the wave of interest that the movie generates.

10.2.2. **Converting Awareness to Intention:** Since awareness alone does not guarantee a trip (though it significantly helps), tourism marketers should also nurture that awareness into intention. This can be done via targeted marketing campaigns timed with movie releases. In addition, provide easy pathways for newly aware viewers to act on their interest.

10.2.3. **Maximizing the Movie Star Effect:** The moderation finding (H5) suggests a savvy strategy: use the star power to attract tourists. For instance, if a famous actor filmed in Egypt, consider engaging them in tourism promotions. Even without direct endorsement, their name can be invoked: **celebrity-themed itineraries** could be offered. Fan clubs and communities can be targeted in digital marketing – these groups often organize visits to filming sites. Additionally, events like fan meet-ups or film location tours led by extras or crew can cater to the most star-struck segment, deepening their engagement.

10.2.4. **Content and Casting Decisions:** For the film industry, especially local Egyptian cinema or co-productions, understanding that star appeal matters could influence casting decisions if the goal is to attract international tourists. A movie set in Egypt starring an internationally known actor might have a greater tourism payoff than one with a lesser-known cast, even if both highlight the locale similarly. Collaboration between filmmakers and tourism authorities might become strategic: e.g., the tourism board could partly fund a movie if it stars someone who can draw a big audience and thereby promote the country more effectively.

10.2.5. **Balanced Marketing:** While capitalizing on star power, marketers should also be cautious to not rely solely on it. The direct effect of movies on intention (H3) shows movies have an intrinsic power too. So even if a film has no huge star, if it beautifully highlights a place, it can still inspire travel.

10.3. **Conclusion**

This study set out to unravel how movies influence tourism decisions, specifically looking at the mediating role of destination awareness and the moderating role of movie star effect, in the context of Egypt's tourism customers. The proposed framework was empirically supported: movies indeed increase the awareness of destinations, which in turn significantly boosts people's intention to visit. There is also a direct inspirational effect of films on travel desires. Importantly, the presence of popular movie stars amplifies these effects, confirming that not all movie viewers respond equally – fans are especially likely to become tourists.

In closing, our research suggests that "movie magic" is real for tourism – cinema can be a catalyst for travel by shining a spotlight on destinations (raising awareness) and by providing fans an extra nudge to follow their idols' paths. For Egypt, a nation with a wealth of cinematic backdrops, this presents an excellent opportunity to integrate film into its tourism strategy. By doing so thoughtfully, Egypt can convert the silver screen into a stream of visitors, turning movie-inspired daydreams into real journeys.

11. **Study Recommendations**

Building on the findings, we propose the following recommendations for stakeholders in tourism and film sectors, especially pertaining to Egypt but also applicable elsewhere:

11.1. Strategic Alliances between Tourism Boards and Film Producers.
11.2. Develop Film Tourism Itineraries and Packages.
11.3. Celebrity Engagement in Marketing.
11.4. Enhanced Information Dissemination Post-Film Release.
11.5. Destination Readiness and Experience Management.
11.6. Monitor and Leverage Social Media Trends.
11.7. Balance Film Types – Also, address Negative/Complex portrayals.
11.8. Encourage Local Film Industry to Target Tourism Themes.

By implementing these recommendations, Egypt can create a symbiotic relationship between its entertainment sector and tourism sector – where each boosts the other. The ultimate goal is to convert cinematic impressions into actual tourist arrivals in a sustainable way, thereby fuelling economic growth and cultural exchange.

12.   Suggestions for Future Research

This study opens up several avenues for future research:

- **Incorporating Destination Image and Emotions:** Future studies could expand the model by including destination image as a separate mediator alongside awareness. Could enrich understanding of the direct effect – possibly explaining the portion of the movie → intention link not covered by awareness.
- **Longitudinal Studies on Actual Behaviour:** A limitation of many such studies (including ours) is reliance on stated intentions rather than actual travel behaviour. Future research could adopt a longitudinal design, tracking movie viewers over time to see if those who report high intention after a movie actually end up visiting the destination months or years later.

- **Comparative Studies Across Cultures or Genres:** It would be insightful to replicate this study in different cultural contexts to see if the effects hold universally.
- **Negative and Unintended Effects:** As hinted, not all film-induced tourism is positive. Future studies could explicitly examine negative portrayals or over-tourism issues. For instance, does a movie showing crime in a city reduce intention to visit (the other side of our model)? Alternatively, if a place becomes too popular from a movie (like the beach in Maya Bay, Thailand from *The Beach* film).
- **Role of Nostalgia and Repeat Viewing:** Some tourists are influenced not by current films but by older movies, they grew up with (nostalgia-driven travel). Research could look at how **nostalgic connections** (e.g., a person wanting to visit filming locations of a childhood favourite movie decades later) function in the model. Does nostalgia strengthen the emotional link and intention? This overlaps with psychology of nostalgia in tourism, a growing area.
- **Broader "Pop Culture Tourism" Variables:** Movie-induced tourism is part of a larger phenomenon of **pop-culture-driven tourism**, which includes travel inspired by TV series, novels, music (K-pop tourism in Korea, for example), and even video games. Future research might extend the framework to these other media.
- **Quantitative and Qualitative Mix:** While our study was quantitative, qualitative research (interviews, focus groups) with movie-inspired tourists could reveal rich details – such as specific motivations, how they narrate their experience of a film location, or unexpected influences (perhaps the film's *music* attracted them, or a specific scene struck a personal chord).

- **Effect of Destination Marketing on Film Perception:** Reverse the lens – another angle is how destination marketing might influence film perception. For instance, if someone sees tourism ads for Egypt and then watches a movie set in Egypt, is the effect on intention synergistically higher? This is like a cross-promotion effect. Studying how integrated campaigns (film + tourism ads) work could be useful for practical strategy.

In summary, future research should continue to dissect the relationship between media and tourism from multiple angles. As global entertainment and travel become ever more intertwined via streaming services and social media, keeping academic inquiry up-to-date with these trends is crucial. The hope is that such research will not only advance theory but also ensure that tourism development via media happens thoughtfully and sustainably.

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