

## Back to Reality: A Study of Reality Television Tourism

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Movies and television provide an outlet of entertainment for nearly every American household (Wilson, Robinson, & Callister, 2012 1998). Over the past decade, the U.S. television market has realized an astounding increase in the production of reality television (Riley, Baker, & Doren, 1998; Wilson et al., 2012).

## **REALITY TELEVISION TOURISM**

Reality programming has been one of the biggest phenomena of recent television seasons (Andrejevic, 2003). From 2010 to present day, there are a recorded 71 specific reality television shows that have either aired or are currently in production between the four major television networks (TV.com, 2014). However, there is a gap in available academic literature pertaining to reality television tourism. Extant literature on the topic has focused heavily on crime dramas such as *COPS* and *America's Most Wanted* (Cavender & Bond- Maupin, 1993; Eschholz, Blackwell, Gertz, & Chiricos, 2002; Oliver, 1994; Oliver & Armstrong, 1995; Pfau, Moy, & Szabo, 2001). However, reality programs have now expanded well beyond the crime drama format and into docuseries and improvement (e.g. home, care, personal, etc.) segments. Viewers are now able to select from a range of programs that are able to cater to a wider selection of audiences and offer different gratifications contributing to different outcomes than what had been the focus of most previous research (Rose and Wood, 2005). The wide variety of formats in reality programming have been adapted in an effort to capture a wide range of viewership (Kilborn, 1994). Reality television has become the primary type of programming offered on networks such as Bravo, E!, Entertainment, and TLC (Collins; Kavka, 2005).

The expansion in the range of reality programs also means that the shows included within this category can be very different from each other. This diversity is suggested by the way that industry observers describe the programs. The Reality Television listing of the TVGuide.com segregates programs into categories such as talent shows and law enforcement programs. Recent research also offers evidence of variation across shows in audience perceptions of the programming category. In a study completed by Nabi (2003), respondents sorted a list of television programs into categories and then calculated the dimensions on which the programs were classified. It was found that although reality programs clustered together on a real versus fictional dimension, they varied widely on the second dimension that seemed to represent appropriateness for prime time.

The potential importance of reality programs is not based solely on their popularity. The shows also claim researcher's attention because of their potential to offer unique insights about the way audiences make sense of media behavior. One of the most unusual features of the programs is the nature of their realism. Few would claim that reality programs present an unmediated documentation of reality. However, the status of these programs in terms of realism is particularly ambiguous. Most of the shows ostensibly portray people that really exist and events that actually occurred. However, the action plays out in a context where the people know they are being filmed and the events of many of the most successful shows (e.g., *The Real Housewives* franchise, *Top Chef*, *Big Brother*, etc.) are set up by the producers for the explicit purpose of creating a show. These elements of artificiality are not considered to be a lost characteristic on viewers (Hall, 2003; Nabi et al., 2003). In addition, the typicality of many elements of the program's action can vary radically across shows and across elements within a show. A better understanding of how audiences make sense of the realism of these shows would

contribute to the investigation of how these programs may affect audience members beliefs and attitudes (Beeton, 2006).

Another issue that researchers have been seeking to address deals with the type of gratification that audiences receive from the programs, which is central to predicting who will watch the programs and to what effect. Although there are a variety of well-known economic and organizational reasons why networks favor reality programs, the nature of the appeal the shows hold for audiences is less clear (Hall, 2006). Recent empirical investigations of the appeal of reality programs as a programming category include the work by Nabi et al. (2003), which investigated the extent that a variety of viewing motivations were endorsed by reality program viewers (Hall, 2006). The most prominent elements of the appeal of the programs were their perceived novelty and entertainment value. However, as the researchers point out, the finding that the reason viewers claim to watch these programs is because they are entertaining, is of limited use in that it explains little about why the programs entertain (Hall, 2006). Another way in which one can advance the study of reality programs is to explore the attributes of the programs that contribute to audience enthusiasm.

Reality television unintentionally introduces possible tourism destinations through the characters portrayed and the locations that they visit (Cohen, 1986; Hudson & Ritchie, 2006). Extensive research has been conducted on destination tourism to locations portrayed in films and television series (Busby & Klug, 2001; Jewell & McKinnon, 2008; Torchin). However, despite the increase in reality television, there has been no investigation to date regarding travel motivations to destinations presented on reality television shows. This research project is proposed in an effort to bridge this gap in the literature.

Previous studies have identified a distinct segment of tourism referred to as “film-induced” (Macionis, 2004). Research shows the film-induced tourist is looking for a highly personalized experience in which consumer perceptions of the location are often preconceived prior to arrival to the destination (Macionis, 2004). In a 1998 study completed by Riley, Baker and Van Doren, it was determined the film-induced tourist often romanticizes what the experience of visiting the anticipated location will deliver in relation to the feelings or emotions initially realized when introduced to the location through the movie screen.

The role of tourism destinations that appear in movies or television has translated from fictional destinations that enhance a storyline into a viable marketing and promotion medium utilized by destination marketers (Hudson & Ritchie, 2006). Early studies of film-induced tourism predominantly concentrated on trivial motivations that tourists exhibit when visiting film locations. However, recent studies have begun to focus on the cognitive and psychosocial reasons behind this tourism segment (Beeton, 2010). In a 2005 study completed by Beeton, it is suggested that tourist motivations to visit a location portrayed on film or television were more complex as the destination choice was selected in an attempt to duplicate an experience or an emotion that was elicited from the film or television show.

Currently, there is a gap in available literature surrounding motivations related to reality television tourism. Existing literature does not provide academic research specifically pertaining to the motivating factors of tourists that visit locations depicted on reality television programs and the benefit, if any, that this specific segment of film-induced tourism would bring to the host

location. The purpose of this study is to bridge that gap and provide insight to destination marketers, television networks, film producers, and other groups that would benefit from insight as to the motivations of reality television tourists.

As there is little literature or research on reality television tourism, film and television-induced tourism will be used as a parallel representation to explain the phenomena. Film-induced tourism has been defined as the intentional visitation to areas that have been portrayed in movies and on television, as well as tours of production studios and film or popular culture related theme parks (Basáñez & Ingram, 2013; Beeton, 2005). In the aforementioned 1998 study completed by Riley, Baker and Van Doren, it was found that the memory of the film-induced tourist often enhances the effects of what visiting film or television location will fulfill in regard to the dramatized ideals. Often these perceptions are based upon what the tourist has experienced through viewing the location on television. As a segment, film-induced tourism has experienced an increase in popularity within the past decade and the continued growth demands further investigation (Macionis & Sparks, 2009; O'Connor, Flanagan, & Gilbert, 2008 2008). Although this portion of the industry was not properly identified and defined until the 1990s (Riley et al., 1998 1998) the movie, *Casablanca*, released in 1942, is considered to be a pioneer motion picture in what would become film-induced tourism. After the early 1950s sale of the movie into syndication, it became a celebrated standard of television programming (Jackson & Nachbar, 2000). In 2004, an American woman working at the US Consulate in Morocco took full advantage of the continued exposure by creating the fictitious Rick's Cafe location as portrayed in the film (Kriger, 2012). A visitors center, dedicated to showcasing local establishments that recreated scenes from the film, was also built to accommodate overwhelming tourist appetite for related experiences and paraphernalia (Kriger, 2012). While Morocco experienced heightened international tourist arrivals and visitors were able to live out their film-induced fantasies, these repercussions were the result of fiction, as the movie was filmed entirely at the Warner Brothers Studios in Burbank, California (Basáñez & Ingram, 2013). Nevertheless, this was the first recorded example of film-induced tourism.

## **DESTINATION PLACEMENT**

Although no research studies have focused on the intentional placement of destinations in films, there is a growing body of research related to film tourism (Beeton). This can be classified into four broad categories (Whetten-Goldstein, Sloan, Stout, & Liang): The influence of film on the decision to travel (Urry 1990; Cohen 1986; Riley and van Doren 1992; Riley, Baker, and van Doren 1998; Tooke and Baker 1996; Sharp 2000; Busby and Klug 2001), (IMDB.com); film tourists themselves (Macionis; Singh & Best); the impacts of film tourism on visitation numbers and on residents (Busby, Brunt, and Lund 2003; Schofield 1996; Gundle 2002; Kim and Richardson 2003; Croy and Walker 2003; Beeton 2001a, 2001b, 2004a, 2004b; Cousins and Anderek 1993); and destination marketing activities related to film tourism (Cohen 1986, Woodward 2000, Grihault 2003, Frost 2004). It is beyond the scope of this research to review all of this literature; therefore, the focus of this study will be on the latter category related to destination marketing.

## **MOTIVATIONS TO VISIT A DESTINATION**

Just as product placement can influence a viewer attitudes toward a brand, film and

television also have an impact on the image of a destination when the portrayed location has a significant role in the production (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991). Since destination image can influence tourist behavior and selection, the specific destination must be positively distinguished from competitors and solicit a positive position within the consumer psyche (Echtner & Ritchie; Joppe, Martin, & Waalen, 2001; Pike & Ryan). Filmed in New Zealand, *The Lord of the Rings* (LOTR) trilogy created a massive tourism industry within the country (Tzanelli, 2004). The New Zealand tourism board calculated that the exposure constituted from the LOTR films would have cost upward of US\$41 million if purchased through traditional promotional mediums (New Zealand Institute of Economic Research 2002; Tzanelli, 2004). In Schofield's (1996) publication he suggests contemporary tourist perceptions of specific places are shaped through the vicarious consumption of film and television without the intended bias produced from promotional material. The image disseminated through American films and television shows has provided tourism industries with a sustainable medium that produces significant return on investment (Heitmann, 2010; Schofield, 1996). Further empirical proof of how films can impact destination image came from Kim and Richardson (2003) who employed an experimental study to assess the extent to which viewing a specific film altered cognitive and affective images of the place it depicted. They found the 1995 movie, *Before Sunrise*, significantly affected some of the destination image components and interest in visiting Vienna in Austria. However, as Croy and Walker (2003) have indicated, more research is needed to assess the evaluative components of image and measure the effect films have on image.

The tourism industry has experienced substantial growth over the past two decades (Spears, Josiam, Kinley, and Pookulangara, 2013). This expansion of the tourism industry has resulted in increases in the strategic development of resources available within tourism destinations, the changing activities of destination marketing initiatives, the growing income among emerging economies worldwide, and the availability of information available to travelers. Results have provided online resources, social media, and streamlined travel booking processes, which are credited with prompting the expansion of the tourism industry (Paraskeves, Baron, and Frew, 2004). This evolution has created a desire for more travel to new and different destinations.

Part of the rise of new destinations is due to traveler desire and need to escape from the daily routine (Hamilton, Maddison & Tol, 2005). In a 2007 study completed on motivations and perceptions of tourists, it was concluded that the reasons and motivations compelling individuals to travel to specific destinations is endless (Correia, Moco, and Oom do Valle, 2007). Additionally, the ultimate reasons and motivations resulting in the selection of a specific destination assist in decreasing the tension surrounding the tourism process (Correia, Moco, and Oom do Valle, 2007; San Martin and Rodriguez, 2008).

Competitiveness within the global tourism industry directly impacts the sustainability and economy of the chosen tourist destination. Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) and Destination Marketing Companies (DMCs) are repeatedly trying to further comprehend reasons as to why tourists are motivated to travel to one destination over another, what activities they look for in the chosen destination, and most importantly, the main factors that influence the final destination choice (San Martin and Rodriguez, 2008; Lebe and Milfelner, 2006). Thus, it is reasonable to conclude that DMOs are making necessary strides to understand the factors motivating tourists to travel to specific locations in order to promote and enhance the uniqueness

of the selected destination. As economic benefits are often the most significant component of tourism in many locations, identifying the relationship between film and television productions and tourism destinations would help to further understand tourist behaviors (Magas and Basan, 2007; Libe and Milfelner, 2006).

The impact of films and television on everyday life is evident through fashion choices, social interactions, and the marketing and advertising of various products (Eber & O'Brien, 1982; Buchmann, Moore, and Fisher, 2010). The motion picture has been a part of American culture in some form for the past century. However, the potential use of the cinema as a marketing medium has only been utilized within the last thirty years (Li, 2013; Corrigan and White, 2012; Hung, 2012). The evolution and popularity of film and television has made accessible a new marketing channel for consumer goods and services and more recently, tourist destinations. The absence of preconceived images or ideations of a destination has allowed movie producers and destination marketers to communicate and introduce a destination, whether through a positive or negative light, to potential consumers and tourists (Connell, 2012).

Research suggests film and television maintain a strong influence over consumers, more so than any other medium available today (Cohen, 1986; Joo, 2012). Movies and television allow the advertiser to reach the consumer on a subconscious level and infiltrate the imagination easily (Kırdar, 2012; Messaris, 2013). Through this advertising medium, producers of film and television and destination marketers can engage the viewer through various depictions and facilitate the initial formation of a tourism destination prior to the actual visit (Horrigan, 2009; Wang, 2012; Neuvonen, Pouta, and Sievanen, 2010).

## INFORMATION SOURCES

Previously, the primary sources of information on tourism destinations were print sources such as newspapers, magazines, and books (Jewell & McKinnon, 2008). Baloglu and McCleary (1999) describe that the destination image shaped by induced, autonomous, and organic methods can be defined as secondary image and the primary image of a destination is formed only after a subsequent visit to the chosen destination. Tourism destination choice can loosely be described as overt induced I (relating to traditional forms of advertising), overt induced II (information from tour operators), covert induced I (second-party endorsement of products through traditional forms of advertising), covert induced II (second-party endorsement through unbiased reports such as newspaper articles), autonomous (news and popular culture – including film), unsolicited organic (unsolicited information from friends and relatives), solicited organic (solicited information from friends and relatives), and the organic (actual first-hand visitation) (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999; Gartner, 1993; Gallarza, Saura & Garcia, 2002; Bolan & Williams, 2008).

During what is referred to as the Golden Age of Hollywood, film and television productions were generally filmed in large production studios in Los Angeles, CA (Christopherson and Storper, 1986; Thompson, 1997). This confined location limited the exposure to specific and authentic elements of a featured destination, creating a staged, fictitious, and often, inaccurate image for the viewer. It was during this timeframe that the use of secondary image was most prevalent. For example, the television series, *I Love Lucy*, took place in New York City, but rarely utilized any authentic location or realistic representation of the city. Instead verbal references to well-known landmarks were utilized to overtly identify the location

being portrayed (MacCannell, 1999). The end of World War II ushered in a new philosophy towards entertainment, one that championed the use of primary images in film and television, rather than contrived or constructed locations (Beeton, 2004). This quest for authenticity resulted in more films taking place on location, in the destinations actually being portrayed (Beeton, 2004). After the 1950s, movies/TV had now become an integral part of society and were easily available to most people. As a result, primary image destination began gaining momentum (Young & Young, 2008). Tourism marketers realized viewers were using film and television as an information source to learn about the locations portrayed on screen (Cohen, 1986; Young & Young, 2008). Several researchers have argued movies are able to influence the viewer and their choices for travel destinations (Gammack, 2005; Jewell & McKinnon, 2008; Shani, Wang, Hudson, & Gil, 2008; Shyer, 2006).

Baloglu and McCleary (1999) suggested the preconceived ideas of location help in understanding the process of destination selection by tourists. The authors further emphasized that the number and type of information sources are key stimulus factors that prompt viewers to visit a destination. Information sources could range from promotional print sources and online recommendations, to friend and family recommendations. Kim and O'Connor (2011) found that television has a powerful impact on destination choice and increases in tourism to the featured location where filmed. They also identified that the firsthand experience of movie/TV locations stimulate revisit intentions. The impact of movies/TV is more powerful than any other source of information (Cohen, 1986). Therefore, movies/TV can be utilized as an effective promotional tool to market destinations because it has the ability to engage the viewer.

According to Cohen (1986), the location/setting of a movie/TV affects the viewer's perception of a potential tourist destination. The impact of a movie location on viewers depends upon several factors. These include: The importance of locations in the storyline, time duration, the point in the movie at which the location is featured, and how unambiguously that location is presented. Most of the time, while watching a movie, viewers tend to believe that the fictional story is reality (Mestre, Del Ray, & Stanishevski, 2008). Mestre et al. (2008) further stated that shaping an image that more or less fits reality is attractive and picturesque enough to become tourist subject matter that will further translate into a tourist destination (Bordwell, 2005; Mestre et al., 2008).

## **DESTINATION IMAGE AND HOLLYWOOD MOVIES/TV**

Several promotional tools and merchandise/souvenirs (toys, clothes, games etc.) have been used in various platforms to take advantage of the market created by movies/TV productions (Olson, 1999). Toys resembling the main characters of movies such as *Batman*, *Superman*, *Spiderman*, and *Toy Story* have been sold successfully worldwide. Olson (1999) emphasized that media-related products and environments involve viewers in the world of fantasy. Similarly, Croy (2011) isolated the characteristics of a movie that could potentially attract tourists to a specific destination. The characteristics of a movie such as the genre, the extent to which a movie engages the audience, and how realistically the actors portray characters are a segment that can potentially be used to attract tourism and tourists to a specific destination. Additionally, international distribution, channel of distribution, word of mouth, its discussion in the media, viewer involvement, and the credibility of the story are also characteristics that could be leveraged to attract tourists (Croy, 2011; Cohen, 1986).

All these factors combine to create a destination image in the viewer's mind prior to the visit and could make a sustained economic contribution to the destination (Croy, 2011). Thus, movie/TV involvement can influence movie related tourism. Based on the previously published literature regarding media and tourism, it can be inferred that Hollywood productions play an essential role in the image formation of a destination. Hudson and Ritchie (2006) mentioned three benefits of utilizing movies to attract tourists: Stronger destination image or effective destination branding, positive economic impacts, and higher tourist visitation. A negatively projected image may discourage visitation to the destination, whereas a positive image can prove to be extremely beneficial in increasing tourism arrivals. Cohen (1986) suggested movies are not only a source of entertainment but also have an impact is so powerful that it affects the viewer's behavior and perceptions about the world. The author also stated that different methods of communication convey either a captivating or a detrimental image of a specific destination. Movies and television are channels of communication that carry images of different destinations to potential tourists (Cohen, 1986). To utilize movies/TV as a tool for destination branding, it is very important to target filmmakers at the preproduction stage and offer them informative, yet attractive, scouting destination tours (Hudson & Ritchie, 2006). Additionally, in the preproduction stage, DMOs should collaborate with media productions in order to make the destination's role more active or central in the movie/TV, almost as if the location is a character in the film or TV program. The mention of a destination, hotel, restaurant, or other outlet in a movie has shown to influence the destination image and positively attract tourists. Hudson and Ritchie (2006) also emphasize the exposure of a country, city, or province through movies or television can be construed as an advertisement that is potentially viewed by millions of people who may not be as easily accessible through traditional tourism promotions.

### **COGNITIVE IMAGE OF A DESTINATION (DESTINATION IMAGE)**

Recently, tourism has been credited as having the largest contribution to the economic growth of developing countries (Kandampully, 2000). In this sense, it should be emphasized that destinations mainly compete based on their perceived images relative to competitors in the marketplace (Baloglu & Mangalolu, 2001). Consequently, it is necessary to develop a positive image of the tourist destination in target markets to achieve a real competitive advantage (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999b; Gartner, 1993).

Recognizing the images tourists have of a destination is necessary to maximize its strengths and downplay its weaknesses (Chen & Uysal, 2002). This strategy is necessary in order to effectively promote the destination (Leisen, 2001) and guarantee its success (Telisman-Kosuta, 1994). Given its relevance, destination image is one of the most explored fields in tourism research (Tapachai & Waryszak, 2000). Nevertheless, further research is necessary to explore the multi-dimensional nature and formation of destination image. While past studies have examined the cognitive structure of destination image, more recent research has focused on the cognitive-affective nature of the destination image. This concept is integrated not only by individual's cognitive evaluations but also by their affective estimates of a tourist destination (Kim & Richardson, 2003; Pike & Ryan, 2004). With regard to the development of cognitive and affective evaluations, the need for additional research is vital to understanding the true impact these have on the industry (Gallarza, Gil, & Calderón, 2002). Baloglu and McCleary (1999a) developed a destination image formation model that included stimulus factors (information sources and previous experience) and personal factors (social and psychological variables). This



model was a variation of previous research findings that explored the role of stimulus factors and social factors in the image formation process (Baloglu, 2001; Hui & Wan, 2003; Rittichainuwat, Qu, & Brown, 2001).

Understanding the image formation process may help improve the attractiveness and market competitiveness of tourist destinations (Yoon & Kim, 2000, unpublished). The model from Baloglu and McCleary (1999a) was taken as reference for laying the foundations for the study of destination image formation. It was concluded that several factors play an important role in the image formation process such as stimulus and personal factors. Stimulus factors refer to a physical object or previous experience, while personal factors are represented by the individual's social and psychological characteristics. In relation to stimulus factors, many studies have found that "variety and type of information sources" (Baloglu, 1999; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999a) and "previous experience" (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999b; Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; Hsu, Wolfe, & Kang, 2004; Litvin & Ling, 2001; Vogt & Andereck, 2003) have a significant effect on perceived image of a tourist destination. Likewise, the influence of social characteristics (i.e., sex, age, education) on destination image has also been reported in tourism literature (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999a; Beerli & Martín, 2004; Chen & Kerstetter, 1999; Hui & Wan, 2003; MacKay & Fesenmaier, 1997; Rittichainuwat et al., 2001).

## **THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

A review of tourism literature indicates motivation theories contribute to answering a fundamental question: Why do people travel? Few tourism and leisure studies address the same question by focusing on psychological aspects of tourism (Gnoth, 1997; Goossens, 2000; Iso-Ahola, 1982; Tinsley, Teaff, Colbs, & Kaufman, 1985). Traditionally, basic needs have been considered as a vehicle for the study of human motivation (Oliver, 1997) as individuals constantly strive to achieve a state of stability and normality. This psychological state is disrupted when the individual is made aware of a need. Subsequently, need and the desire to satisfy it help to generate the tourist motivations with respect to a specific action (Goossens, 2000). Therefore, motivation can be defined as an internal force originated from a need which has not been satisfied and further compels impels the individual to be involved in a specific behavior (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2004) or more specifically, to pursue need-fulfilling activities (Oliver, 1997). In this motivational process, it should be emphasized that the behavior of individuals satisfying their needs has been explored through various different approaches. Under a traditional cognitive approach, this behavior would be guided by mental activities that involve information processing such as beliefs and perceptions of a product or service (Decrop, 1999).

Motivation has often been defined as an inner state that directs and motivates human behavior (Kassin, 1998; Moutinho, 2000; Murray, 1964). Motivation has also been described as the desire to satisfy physiological as well as psychological needs (Berkman, Lindquist, & Sirgy, 1997). These basic human needs provide the foundation for understanding travel motivations. Mills and Morrison (2002) explained travel motivation occurs when an individual is made aware of a need deficiency. This explanation can also be related to Maslow's (1954) Hierarchy of Needs Theory. Maslow's Theory predicates the behavior of an individual is determined by conscious or unconscious needs, which create the motivation for behavior. Maslow's Theory is widely accepted in the tourism industry, though selected researchers, including Goebel and

Brown (1981), have pointed out the theory's potential weaknesses, claiming a behavior may be initiated for more than one need at a time, thus negating the order of Maslow's Hierarchy.

## **PUSH / PULL MOTIVATIONS**

It is generally accepted that "push" and "pull" motivations proposed by Dann (1977, 1981) have been the most widely accepted theory in travel motivation literature (Goossens, 2000; Jang & Cai, 2002; Yuan & McDonald, 1990). "Push" factors are considered to be socio-psychological needs that predispose a person to travel while "pull" factors are the aspects that attract the person to a specific destination after push motivation has been initiated. Push factors are internal to the person and establish the desire to travel, whereas pull factors are external to the individual and are aroused because of destination attractions. Crompton (1979) provided empirical evidence for the push-pull factors by reporting nine motives: seven as socio-psychological or push motives and two as cultural or pull motives. The study of the relationships between push and pull factors is also of interest to tourism scholars (Oh, Uysal, & Weaver, 1995).

A review of tourism literature reveals an abundance of studies into motivation. Tourism researchers have examined the motivation to travel to specific destinations in order to better understand and predict travel behavior. Motivation can be the driving force behind human behavior in general: researchers have found tourist motivation may also affect tourist attitude in general along with some salient aspects of behavior such as involvement, perception, and satisfaction (Fodness 1994; Gnoth 1997).

A number of studies have examined the relationship between motivation and involvement (Clements and Josiam 1995; Josiam, Kinley, and Kim 2004; Josiam, Smeaton, and Clements 1999; Kyle et al. 2006). In a study conducted by Josiam, Smeaton, and Clements (1999) the relationship between push/pull motivation and involvement levels was examined by surveying students on their spring break vacation. The results reveal that high levels of involvement are significantly associated with push and pull motivation factors, meaning that motivation is pushed internally by the tourist and externally pulled by the destination. The study concluded that students who are motivated by push and pull factors were more likely to travel (Josiam, Smeaton, and Clements 1999).

Yoon and Uysal (2005) examined the relationships between push and pull motivations, satisfaction, and destination loyalty by using a structural equation modeling (SEM) approach. The research findings indicated significant relationships between pull motivation and satisfaction, satisfaction and destination loyalty, and push motivation and destination loyalty; however, the relationship between intrinsic push motivation and satisfaction was insignificant. Destination-based pull motivation negatively affects satisfaction, while satisfaction with destination experience and push motivation influences destination loyalty positively. Schofield and Thompson (2007) explored the effects of push and pull motivation on satisfaction and behavior intention. The study results show that only some of the pull and push motivation factors significantly affected satisfaction and only one push motivation factor affected intention to return (Schofield and Thompson, 2007).

Based on intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, the tourist is able to build expected perceptions of the destination (Gartner, 1993; Dann, 1996; Baloglu, 1997). Perceptions can be

different from the actual characteristics of the destination depending on how the individual receives and processes information (Baloglu, 1997). In other words, perceptions focus on the attributes of a destination that affect behavior and not necessarily on the actual attributes of a destination (Dann, 1981; Pearce, 1982). According to Morrison (1989), perceptions are a cognitive measure of tourism destination value. This value represents the opportunity cost of the product that perceptions are formed based on a cost benefit assessment. Research further shows that the perception of a destination may be analyzed from a cognitive or behavioral perspective (Gnoth, 1997). Gnoth (1997) contends that perceptions are comprised of a cognitive component and a personal component. The cognitive component results from the evaluation of the destination attributes while the personal component depends on how the individual intends to perceive that destination. The personal shaping of perception is formed by the weaving of internal and external stimuli into an “awareness set,” which becomes the cognitive structure of destination image (Woodside and Lysonski, 1989; Crompton, 1979; Gnoth, 1997). A general conclusion can be drawn that personal motives (push motives), as well as the view of the characteristics of the tourism destination (pull motives), determine perceptions. These motives interact in a dynamic and evolving context (Correia, 2000).

Push and pull factors have generally been characterized as relating to two separate decisions made at two separate points in time; one focusing on whether to go, the other on where to go. For instance, Dann (1981) noted that “once the trip has been decided upon, where to go, what to see or what to do (relating to the specific destinations) can be tackled.” Thus, analytically, logically, and temporally, “push factors precede pull factors” (Dann 1977). Although the two factors have been viewed as relating to two distinct decisions, several researchers have noted that they should not be viewed as operating entirely independent of each other. For example, it has been suggested that people travel because their own internal forces push them and simultaneously pull by the external forces of the destination and its attributes (Cha, McCleary, and Uysal 1995; Uysal and Jurowski 1994). Comparably, Dann (1981) noted that “pull factors of the resort both respond to and reinforce push factor motivation” and that “tourists in deciding where to go take into consideration various pull factors which correspond . . . to their motivational push.” Lastly, as Crompton (1979) argued, push factors “may be useful not only in explaining the initial arousal, energizing or ‘pushing’ to take a vacation, but may also have directive potential to direct the tourist toward a particular destination.”

The explosion of reality TV, confessional talk formats, docu-soaps and so-called reality-based game shows has significantly enhanced television demand for ordinary people desiring celebrity status (Cohen, 2004). The expansion of both the demand and the supply has occurred in a symbiotic and accelerating relationship. Although the ‘reality’ of reality TV is constructed, what has become significant is the way these formats have subjugated the effect of live television. The foreground portrayal of live television (as in, what we are watching is happening right now) enhances the illusion that what is being watched is real or genuine, thus challenging the competing suspicion that it is only being staged and produced for the camera (Cohen, 2004). Often reality TV is quite exorbitantly live; it is occurring in real time as we watch it through live video-stream via the Internet. Those wishing to interact with it directly can do so by accessing one of the websites or online chat-rooms or by participating in the audience vote. Stripped across the schedule for months at a time in a set daily time slot, as it is in many countries, *Big Brother* is not only received as a live media event but also becomes embedded in the routine structures of the everyday lives of the audience (Turner, 2002).

Reality television celebrities are defined as individuals with no particular talents, no specific career objectives beyond the achievement of media visibility, and an especially short lifecycle as a public figure. Reality celebrities have been described as accessories of cultures organized around mass communications and staged authenticity (Rojek, 2001). Examples of this type of celebrity include “lottery winners, one-hit wonders, stalkers, whistle-blowers, sports arena streakers, have-a-go-heroes, mistresses of public figures and the various other social types who command media attention one day, and are forgotten the next.” (Rojek, 2001).

## **HYPOTHESES AND CONSTRUCT EXPLANATION**

This study will employ components adapted from the push/pull theory introduced by Crompton in 1979. Crompton states that push factors for vacation destination selection are socio-psychological motives whereas pull factors are derived from the traveler himself (J. L. Crompton, 1979). Traditionally, push motives such as relaxation, escape, climate change, and so on, have been used to explain the desire to go on vacation (Crompton, 1979; Beeton, 2004). For the purposes of the study, the push/pull theory has been extended to encompass the more complex push motives suggested by Beeton in 2005. Beeton advised that motivations for film tourism were a more complex activity where tourists were visiting a filming location specifically to re-live an experience or emotion elicited by the film or television show. Three factors have been identified as motivations of tourists to visit filming locations that they had been introduced to through film or television: (a) to have the same experience the person did on the film or show, (b) to relive a fantasy, or (c) to simply to be in the same location that an admired celebrity had once visited (Beeton, 2004; 2005).

Viewers of film and television develop a preconceived idea of a destination they see and construct the place in their mind based upon what is initially introduced on-screen (Beeton, 2010). Understanding how audiences interpret locations and develop a predetermined idea of a destination is pertinent to understanding expectations of the tourist if and when they choose to book travel (Beeton, 2004; Beeton, 2010). In a 2007 study it was found that tourism resulting from exposure through television shows is likely to act as a positive force in the selection of a specific destination (Beeton, 2010; Kim, Agrusa, Lee, & Chon, 2007). Research has shown that the increased tourism to a filming location has insurmountably changed the focus of the goods and services provided at that location. Beeton (2006) discussed the UK village of Goathland that played host to the long-running series, *Heartbeat*. Prior to airing of the series, the small seaside village experienced about 200,000 tourists per year. After filming of the first season commenced, tourism grew to over 1 million people in one year’s time. The result of the increase in tourism resulted in local services shifting their marketing efforts from the resident to the tourist. In order to market a destination appropriately, the motivating factors that lead to travel decisions must be understood (Gee, Choy, & Makens, 1984). Although motivation is considered a single variable among many contributing factors, it is critical to understanding tourist motivation, as it is a driving force behind tourism behavior (Fodness, 1994). Understanding the motivations and the type of tourist that would visit a reality television destination is vital to developing a stronger insight as to what the tourist is expecting pertaining to promotional activities, service quality, and market positioning (Lundburg, 1990). Fodness stated in his 1994 publication that motivations are related to the personal needs and tourism goals set forth by the tourist. Derived from this literature, the first hypothesis proposed was:

**Hypothesis 1:** *Pre-determined motivations (pull motives) of a destination influence the tourist decision to visit the location portrayed on screen.*

Numerous studies have cited different theoretical models in an effort to explain the motives of individuals to visit tourism destinations (Klenosky, 2002). The push-pull theory has been described as providing simple and intuitive explanations underlying tourism behaviors (J. Crompton, 1977; Klenosky, 2002). Research reports that tourists choose destinations because they feel pushed and pulled to do so by certain factors (J. Crompton, 1977; Uysal & Noe, 2003). Push motivations are described as emotional and affective in nature whereas pull motivations can be predicted based upon the external image and situational or cognitive image, or collectively defined as destination image. (Goossens, 2000; Klenosky, 2002). Additionally, destination images are described as consisting of both cognitive and affective image. Thus, components of each are required to effectively study their impact on the tourist decision-making process (Kim & Richardson, 2003).

In 1993, Gartner stated that the interrelationship of cognitive and affective image components determine the likelihood of selecting a destination (San Martin & Rodríguez del Bosque, 2008). Many researchers feel that tourists are only able to experience a destination through actual visitation. However, it has been suggested, that tourists are now able to experience a destination vicariously through an image presented on screen and by identifying with the characters portrayed in the film or television show (Kim & Richardson, 2003). Destination Image has been proven to be an important indicator of travel reservation. Literature states that destination image is developed through both stimulus factors in addition to characteristics that lie innately with the tourist (Bagalou, 1999). Based on these factors, hypothesis 2 was proposed:

**Hypothesis 2:** *Tourist motivation will have a positive impact on the destination image (push motives) of the location portrayed through reality television.*

The idea that tourists can experience a destination vicariously through on-screen images and celebrity involvement capitalizes upon the emotions that the show or film elicits and assists the tourist in becoming familiar with the destination (Kim & Richardson, 2003). Riley and Van Doren (1992) stated that the exposure of a destination through film and television allows the potential tourists to obtain information and indirect knowledge about a location and results in reduced anxiety levels associated with visiting a previously unknown location. Familiarity (destination image) with a destination has previously been associated strictly with prior visitation (Bagalou, 2001). However, Kim and Richardson (2003) suggest that exposure through film and television and other information dimensions should be incorporated. An examination of the various facets of human experience and the variety of ways tourists develop cognitive and affective identifications of a destination are implicit factors in understanding tourist intention (Bagalou, 2001; Kim & Richardson, 2003). Thus, it is imperative to realize that previous visitation to a location is not the only suitable indicator of exposure to a destination and other factors must be taken into account in order to understand the true motives of final selection. Based upon this literature, hypotheses 3 and 4 were proposed:

**Hypothesis 3:** *Tourist motivation and the involvement with reality television shows (pull motives) influence the likelihood to visit a destination originally introduced on-screen.*

**Hypothesis 4:** *The destination image and involvement with reality television shows positively impact the intention to visit.*

Several researchers have stated that the intention to visit a destination can be impeded by various constraints placed upon the tourist. Constraints have historically been proven to have a negative effect on the final intention to choose a destination, but they can also stimulate the tourists to pursue different possibilities of fulfilling the tourism desire. Interpersonal constraints have been shown to play a significant role in the intention to visit a destination. Examples of interpersonal constraints would be lack of travel companions, disapproval from family members, and social embarrassment (Hubbard & Mannell, 2001; Lee, et. al., 2008). As derived from this finding, hypothesis 5 was proposed.

**Hypothesis 5:** *Outside influences will negatively impact the likelihood of visiting a location portrayed on reality television.*

Identified in the proposed model (Figure 1 below), the dependent variable for this study was intention to visit. Intention to visit was measured by several independent variables such as involvement, destination image, motivation, and barriers to action.

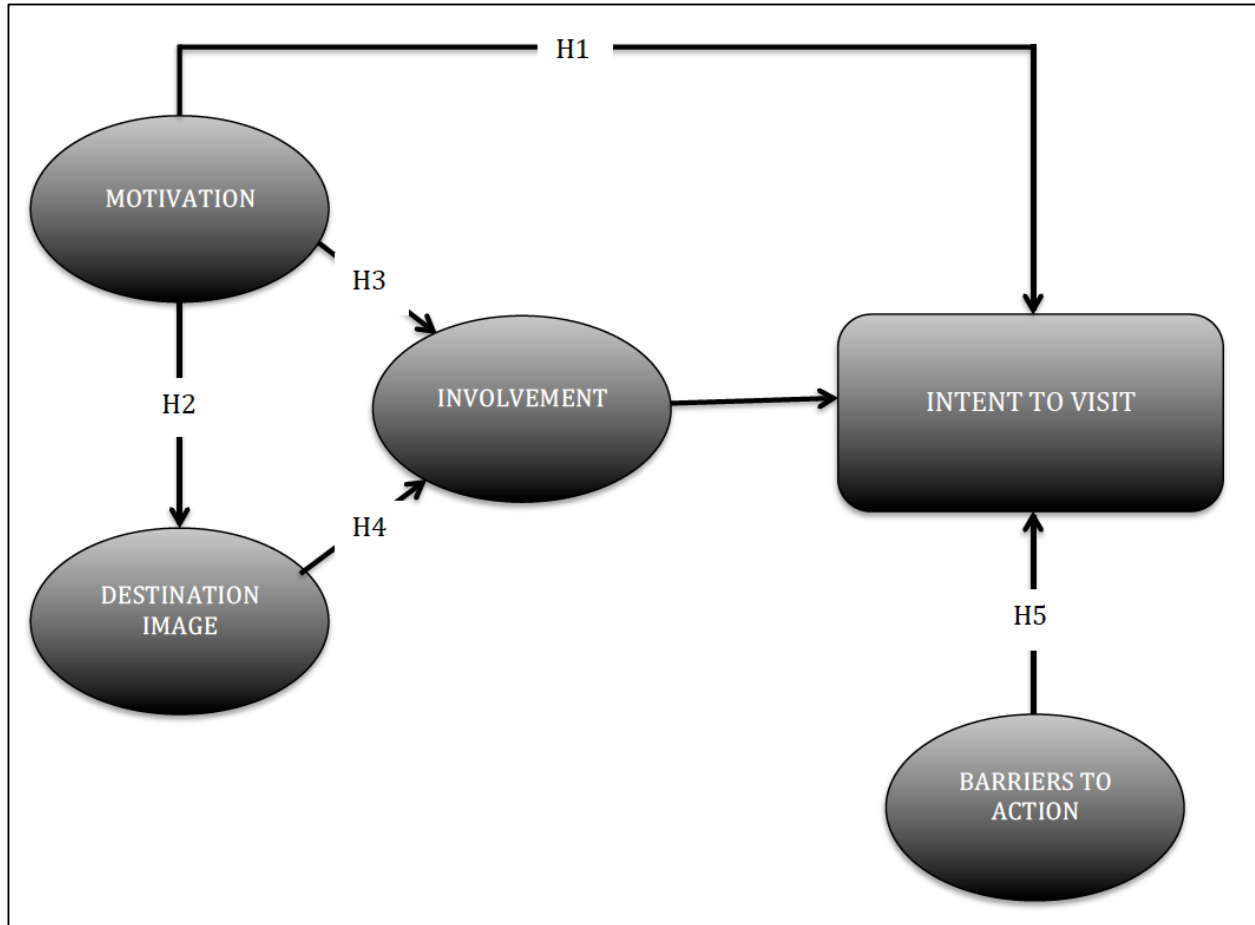


Figure 1: Proposed Model of Reality Television Tourism

### DATA ANALYSIS

Structural equation modeling (SEM) was employed as part of the data analysis. Through SEM, a structural model based upon the integrated theories was developed and tested. The proposed model (Figure 2.1), based upon the push-pull theory and the optimal distinctiveness model, was developed to aid in the understanding of consumer intention to select a destination to visit based upon information obtained from a specific reality show. Data was collected through a self-administered survey completed through Qualtrics, and snowball sampling was used through reality television message boards, blogs, and social media. Data analysis involved multiple statistical measurements including mean variable calculation for demographic variables, t-tests, regression analysis, ANOVA analysis, and post-hoc testing.

### SAMPLE

This study utilized convenience snowball sampling as a method of data collection. Qualtrics was utilized with filter questions in place to ensure that the respondents selected were current consumers of reality television. Additionally, reality based television show internet message boards were utilized, in an effort to collect data from consumers of reality television. Convenience snowball sampling presented as the most appropriate method for data collection, as the researchers were able to target a more specific population. This allowed for better

generalization of the population that currently watches reality television.

## **DEVELOPMENT OF MEASUREMENT AND PROCEDURE**

The measurements in the proposed theoretical model of this research were developed based upon contemporary literature related to the push/pull theory and the affective-cognitive model. Items from a study completed in 2007 by Lee regarding celebrity tourism in the Asian culture were adapted and used with permission for this research project. The measure of *Involvement* included twelve items adapted from the push/pull theory (Dann, 1977, 1981). The items selected were to measure factors that would influence, or push, a tourist to visit a destination due to the personal importance of reality television to their life.

*Destination Image* was measured using eleven items from the push/pull theory (Dann, 1977, 1981). Destination familiarity has historically been associated with prior visitation (Bagalou, 2011). Nevertheless, exposure through film and television should be incorporated as today this medium plays a vital role in the introduction of potential tourist destinations (Kim & Richardson, 2003). By examining different aspects of tourist experience and expectations, researchers are able to ascertain the specific factors that impact the destination image of a potential tourist (Bagalou, 2001; Kim & Richardson, 2003).

*Motivation* to visit a location provides the potential tourist positive perceptions and can impact the final destination selection (Gallarza, Gil, & Calderón, 2002; Bagalou & McCleary, 1999). As previously stated by Morrison in 1989, perceptions are a cognitive and personal measure of a tourism destination. Affective image is described as emotional in nature and cannot be predicted based solely upon cognitive characteristics (Goosens, 2000; Klenosky, 2002). For the purposes of this study, affective and cognitive image were combined into one construct with separate measures. Cognitive image was measured with ten items and Affective image was measured using nine items. The items used to measure this construct were adapted from previous studies that employed components from the cognitive and affective model (Baloglu, 1999; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999a; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999b; Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; Hsu, Wolfe, & Kang, 2004; Litvin & Ling, 2001; Vogt & Andereck, 2003)

The study completed by Lee in 2007 suggests that in addition to push and pull factors, there are also negative factors that can inhibit the likelihood to visit a destination. These *barriers to action* were identified as interpersonal constraints and have been shown to play a significant role in the intent to visit (Hubbard & Mannell, 2001; Lee, et. al., 2008). Eleven items were adapted and used for this study in order to identify possible barriers that would impact the likelihood to travel.

## **ASSUMPTION TESTING**

A frequency check of all variables was conducted to identify inaccurate data and no inaccuracies were noted. In order to test for multivariate normality, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) test was conducted. Numerous subscales demonstrated a positively or negatively skewed layout with leptokurtic tendencies. According to existing literature (Chissom, 1970; Kline; 2005), skewness should measure below 3 and kurtosis below 10. For the pilot study, the



skewness value ranged from -1.897 to 1.583 and the kurtosis ranged from -1.342 to 4.132. In following the aforementioned guidelines, the data was considered normally distributed.

### **EXPLORATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS**

Utilizing principal axis factor extraction with varimax rotation, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was conducted using the pilot data. In following the criteria set forth by Gorsuch (1973, 1997) the standard factor loading cutoff point was set at .40, eigenvalues over 1, and a minimum of three items loading on each factor. Based on the results of the EFA, six indicators were identified for Destination Image, six indicators were identified for Motivation, seven indicators were identified for Involvement, five indicators were identified as Barriers to Action, and three indicators were identified on an unexpected factor to be determined in subsequent analysis.

### **DATA SCREENING**

Since SPSS Amos was to be used to conduct SEM for this study, it was necessary to have no missing data within the dataset. The researchers thought it would be most beneficial to have complete respondent data as opposed to predicting missing values through SPSS. Replacing missing values with the mean or mode has come to be regarded as inadequate for appropriate measure (Royston, 2004). Due to the large sample size available, the researchers chose to remove any respondents with a single missing response. This reduced the usable questionnaires to 421 or 50%. The removed respondent data will be reserved for future studies. The statistical software IBM SPSS version 22 was used to analyze data for normality, outliers, statistical assumptions, and multicollinearity. Additionally, the data positively confirmed to have no straight lining problems such as selecting 7=strongly disagree on all questions. Amos version 22 was utilized to run confirmatory factor analysis (Hoskins, Finn, & McFadyen) and structural equation modeling (SEM).

### **FINDINGS**

This research examined the process by which consumers form an idea about a destination that was initially introduced through reality television and their likelihood of visiting that destination. Specifically, this study was planned to identify: (a) the factors that influence tourists to visit a destination originally introduced through reality television, (b) how the consumption and involvement with reality television influences the likelihood of visiting a reality television destination, and (c) how the destination image of a location impacts consumer ideation of a reality television destination. Additionally, this study sought to discover the demographic information of individuals that would be likely to visit a destination that was initially introduced through reality television.

The findings of the study revealed three factors that influenced consumer likelihood of visiting a reality television destination. These were: Personal Involvement, Destination Image, and Motivation. The level of personal involvement with a reality television shows played a strong role in the personal development of the expectations of a reality television destination. Additionally, destination image was vital to the likelihood that an individual would visit a certain

destination. Motivation was simply what would make a person decide to visit a location seen in a reality television show.

*Involvement*, represented the push motives used for this study. Beeton proposed in 2005 that motivations to visit a tourist destination were a complex activity that was ever changing. She further suggested that tourists are now able to experience a destination through film or television before visiting and then choose to visit the destination in an effort to recreate feelings or emotions that were initially experienced through viewing on screen. (Beeton, 2005). This study data supported this suggestion in the fact that personal involvement with reality television played a vital role in respondent daily life. Respondents of this study indicated that reality television stars played an important and central role in their life, that watching reality television helped them to relax, they often participate in activities centered around reality television, they organize their schedule around watching reality television, and that they often seek out information on the Internet about reality television shows and/or the stars of the shows. Visiting the site of the show would be like going to visit a friend. This research capitalized upon a study that suggested socio-psychological factors played an important role in tourism decision. This research supports the hypothesis that tourists visit a location in an attempt to have the same experience the person did on the show, to relive a fantasy, or to be in the location in which an admired celebrity had once filmed (Beeton, 2004; Beeton, 2005).

Pull motives are historically derived from the traveler and usually consist of factors such as relaxation, escape, change of climate, and others (Crompton, 1979; Beeton, 2004). Pull motives, as related to tourism behavior, can be predicted based upon external and situational imagery (Goossens, 2000; Klenosky, 2002).

The factor *Destination Image*, was based upon these pull motives and was aligned with the current studies regarding those motives. Respondents stated they would visit a location originally introduced through reality television if it provided a good value for the travel expenses, there were good weather conditions, there was good nighttime entertainment, and the location was visitor friendly. Other items that impacted destination image were suitable accommodations and appealing local cuisine. While the traveler might have planned the trip to visit a site from reality television, it would not be their only activity. Hence the destination environment and amenities were important. These findings provide destination marketers associated with reality television production studios the opportunity to market goods and services in the most appropriate and cost effective method.

The factor *Motivation*, measured respondent likelihood to visit a location based upon variables associated with the viewing of reality television. This factor was developed based on previous studies that examined the cognitive and affective image that a tourist develops regarding a destination that was first introduced through film or television (Riley & Van Doren, 2002). The familiarity developed by viewing a destination through film or television can result in reduced anxiety about a visit to a new location, whereas historically familiarity had strictly been associated with prior visitation. In a 2003 study completed by Kim and Richardson, it was concluded that exposure to a destination through film or television should be incorporated in measures of familiarity (Bagalou, 2002; Kim & Richardson, 2003; Riley & Van Doren, 2002). This study further confirmed this conclusion.

In this study, respondents that were familiar with a destination were more comfortable to visit a location introduced through film or television. They wanted to personally experience where the show was filmed and to take photographs of the filming location. Additionally, respondents expressed a desire to see behind the scenes of where filming commenced and to gain firsthand experience with the filming location and what the stars of the show experienced while there.

Contemporary literature suggests that there are several factors that can impede the likelihood of visiting a filming destination. Many of these factors are constraints placed upon the tourist based upon internal forces or social norms. This study identified a factor, Barriers to Action, in order to address the possible negative affect these factors would have on tourism. The barriers identified were primarily related to friends and family being critical of visiting a location strictly because it was portrayed on a reality television show and/or that visitation would be inappropriate for their age, gender, or social status. The responses regarding barriers did not show significance in the final study but will be utilized in a different capacity for future research. After completing the CFA, a structural model was tested using Amos (version 22) utilizing maximum-likelihood estimation. The result of the structural model indicates the model was a good fit to the data,  $\chi^2(421) = 129.196, p < .001$ , CFI = .988, TLI = .985, and RMSEA = .043 (90% CI .031-.055). The constructs of Destination Image and Motivation showed a significant relationship ( $\beta$  INV-DI = .114,  $p < .01$ ) as well as Destination Image and Involvement ( $\beta$  DI-MO = .091,  $p < .01$ ), as well as Motivation and Involvement ( $\beta$  DI-MO = .084,  $p < .01$ ). Therefore, Hypotheses 1, 3, and 4 were supported. As these hypotheses were supported, the literature backs the idea that motivation, involvement, and destination are all interrelated and play a collectively important role in the intent to visit a destination (Beeton, 2007; Crompton, 1979). However, *Motivation* to visit a destination will directly impact the intent to visit a destination portrayed on a reality television show. Furthermore, literature has suggested that no one single item can predict the intent to visit a destination portrayed through film or television. The statistical analysis from this study further cements this fact, although the items comprised the factor *Motivation* identified higher significance than all other items in the study. Therefore, it can be concluded that the desire to see “behind the scenes” of a reality television location greatly impact the likelihood to visit a destination portrayed through reality television.

Although the factor *Motivation* had items with high factor loadings, it can be said that all the factors are interrelated and have an impact on the intent to visit a destination. Moreover, *Motivation* did not have a direct effect on the consumer development of the destination image of a location rendering Hypothesis 2 as unsupported. Additionally, the construct Barriers to Action was dropped as it was hypothesized to have a direct effect on the intent to visit and it did not. This is possibly because the barriers to action are not the single deciding factor that would inhibit tourism. The items from this factor would likely play a role within the factor *Motivations*. Rather than impose the variables from this construct on another factor, the researchers opted to remove the construct and save it for use with a future study. As a result, Hypothesis 5 is not supported.

Using maximum likelihood, the model was a good fit to the data although it was recursive in nature. Rigdon (1995) stated that recursive models are always identifiable and easily manipulated. Therefore, the researchers opted to utilize traditional path analysis. The hypothesized model was tested and support was found;  $\chi^2(N = 175) = 129.2, p = <.005$ , CFI =

.988, TLI = .985, RMSEA = .043 (90% CI .031 - .055), SRMR = .105. The final structural model is shown in Figure 2.

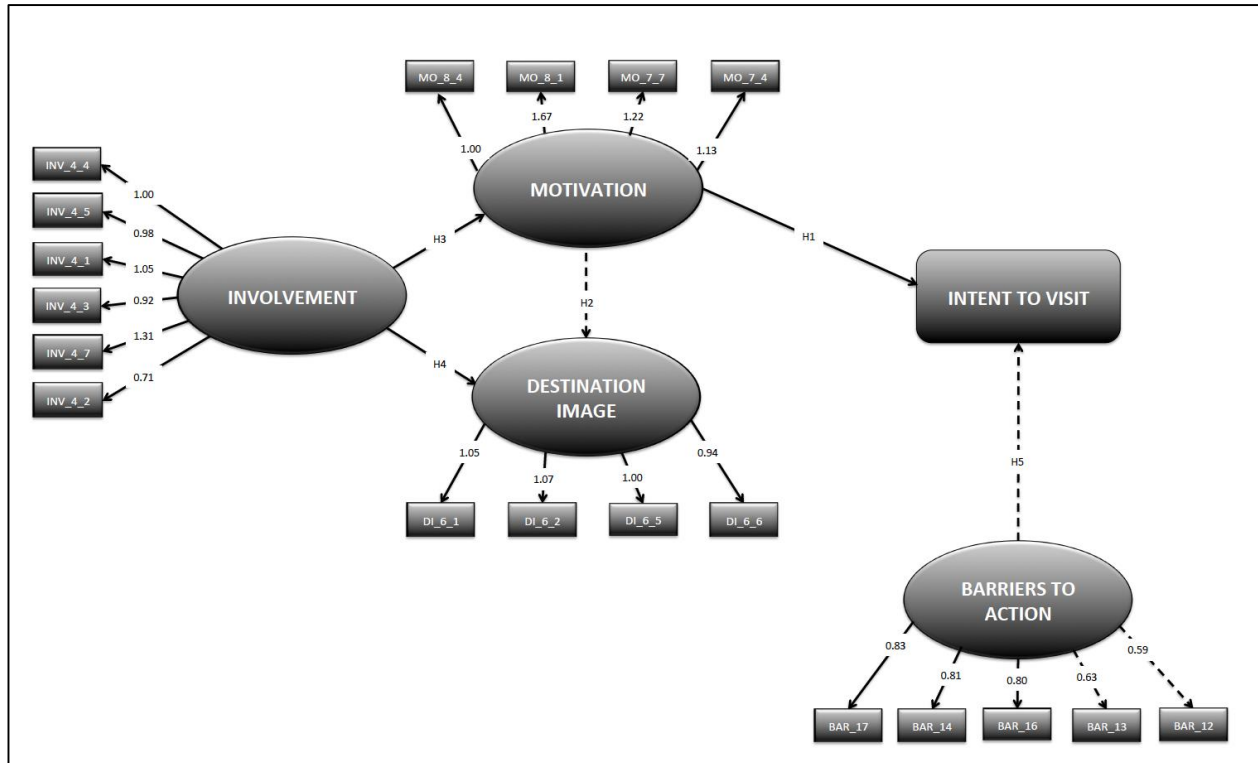


Figure 2 Full Study of Reality Television Tourism, Structural Equation Model

## SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

This study identified many factors relating to motivating influences contributing to the likelihood of visiting a destination first introduced through reality television. Additionally, this research effort has provided many implications for future studies pertaining to tourism research as well as others directed towards economic development and destination marketing. This research project was built upon previous studies pertaining to film-induced tourism and provided insight into a new form of tourism, reality television tourism. This study was exploratory in nature as there was no available literature pertaining to reality television tourism. In an effort to bridge this gap, survey research was conducted to add to the extant literature and provide a framework for future research.

The results of this study include the following:

1. There is no one single factor that is predictive of visiting a destination portrayed through reality television.
2. The demographics collected in this study identified that the audience of reality television is mostly female. This is could possibly be due to a misunderstanding of what reality television is.
3. Choosing to visit a destination portrayed on reality television would be subject to many other factors such as destination image and the involvement with reality television shows.

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