

Vila, Noelia Araújo; Fraiz Brea, José Antonio; De Carlos, Pablo

## Article

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## Film tourism in Spain: Destination awareness and visit motivation as determinants to visit places seen in TV series



Noelia Araújo Vila, José Antonio Fraiz Brea, Pablo de Carlos\*

Faculty of Business Sciences and Tourism, University of Vigo, Campus Universitario As Lagoas s/n, 32004 Ourense Galicia, Spain

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### ABSTRACT

TV series have become one of the most successful types of audio-visual product. Their potential to cultivate massive loyal audiences makes them an excellent medium for promoting the places they depict, presenting them as attractive destinations, and inducing the phenomenon known as film tourism. The present study aims to shed light on the determinants behind viewers' decisions to visit a destination they have seen in a TV series. More specifically, two aspects acknowledged as antecedents of travel decisions were considered: destination awareness and visit motivation. To this end, quantitative questionnaires were carried out with domestic tourists during their visits to destinations depicted in Spanish TV series. The collected data was analysed through tests of independence and a binary logistic regression, in which the respondents' sociodemographic characteristics were used as control variables. The results corroborate that both factors significantly influence the decision to visit film destinations, whereas the effect of destination awareness is stronger.

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## 1. Introduction

The audio-visual sector has flourished in the last few decades, among other reasons because of the emergence of new media formats and platforms. In this context, the consumption of television and video on mobile devices has increased by 85% since 2010 (Ericson ConsumerLab, 2017). TV series have been one of the most successful types audio-visual products in recent years, and so the main global television channels have used them to reach new audiences. TV series can attract prestigious actors and directors, as well as choose unique shooting locations all over the world (Spain Film Commission, 2018). They also tend to generate strong emotional connections with viewers due to the extended and repetitive contact (Flayelle, Maurage, & Billieux, 2017; Schmidt, Zureck, Gradetzki, & Seel, 2019), which creates an opportunity for the tourism sector.

The relationship between tourism and the audio-visual sector resulted in the emergence of the film-induced tourism phenomenon, characterised by tourist visits to destinations depicted

or portrayed in films. The available data clearly reflect the significance that this type of tourism has achieved. Results obtained one decade ago by FutureBrand (2008) show that after friends and family, TV shows and films were the next main element influencing travel decisions to a country. The study also revealed that 13% of people initially opted for a country after seeing it on TV or on a film. Arguably, these results hold true even more today. In 2017, no less than 80 million travellers chose their destinations mostly based on films and TV series, with the share of international visitors attracted by films being 2.5 times higher or more than average in destinations such as Los Angeles, Scotland, London or Florence (TCI Research, 2018). In the case of England, one of the countries that hosts the largest number of film and television shoots, it is estimated that in 2014, international tourists attracted by these audiovisual products generated income amounting to £100 million–£140 million (Olsberg•SPI, 2015).

Recent interest in this type of travel has motivated numerous studies over the last decade (Beeton, 2010; Connell, 2012; Hahm, Upchurch, & Wang, 2008; Heitmann, 2010; Hudson, 2011; Kim, 2012a, 2012b; Kumar & Dung, 2017; Macionis & Sparks, 2009; Mendes, Vareiro, & Ferreira, 2017; Wen, Josiam, Spears, & Yang, 2018; Yen & Croy, 2016; Yoon, Kim, & Kim, 2015; Zhang, Ryan, & Cave, 2016). As mentioned by Yoon et al. (2015), most of these studies have addressed the role played by the most popular films and TV

\* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: [naraujo@uvigo.es](mailto:naraujo@uvigo.es) (N. Araújo Vila), [jafraiz@uvigo.es](mailto:jafraiz@uvigo.es) (J.A. Fraiz Brea), [pdecarlo@uvigo.es](mailto:pdecarlo@uvigo.es) (P. de Carlos).

series. In this context, Araújo Vila (2015) highlights the importance of addressing tourism induced by TV series in particular.

In the last two decades, many studies on audio-visual products have noted the impact that feature films and TV series have on viewers (Igartua Perosanz & Páez Rovira, 1998), particularly on the formation of images (Gartner, 1994; Iwashita, 2003; Kim & Richardson, 2003; Schofield, 1996) and the generation of emotional attachment (Hoffner & Cantor, 1991; Kim, 2010; Lee, Scott, & Kim, 2008; Wilson & Cantor, 1985). When compared to traditional tourism advertising, those products reach greater audiences with less resources invested by the destination (Beeton, 2005; Dore & Crouch, 2003). Currently, TV series are one of the audio-visual products in which people invest the most amount of time. Moreover, they are increasingly popular around the world. For example, according to Kantar Media, 50% of the Spanish population with access to internet consumes TV series online (Garza, 2017). TV series create trends and offer an increasing variety of genres and styles. Seeking to cultivate viewers' loyalty, they feature plots related to everyday domestic topics and experiences shared with friends and family, so that consumers identify with characters (Geraghty, 1991; Kilborn, 1992). Moreover, TV series have some characteristics that increase their attractiveness and allow them to maintain viewers' interest: the serial character itself, the temporal distance between episodes, a hiatus in the end of each season, and the transformation of the characters as the plot develops (Benavente, 2007).

Due to the success and attractiveness of TV series, they can potentially induce spectators' interest in the destinations they portray. Therefore, viewers may consider places they have seen in a TV series as possible destinations for future trips, and effectively visit them. In this context, TV series create opportunities to discover different places and situations, i.e. to observe different realities. Meanwhile, the act of visiting and seeing a tourism resource is denominated "vista" (Del Rey-Reguillo, 2007). Therefore, there is a clear similarity between the two activities, as both have the aim of contemplating a reality.

The main goal of the present investigation is to examine how two antecedents of travel decision – destination awareness and visit motivation – act as determinants in the decision to visit a place seen in a TV series. The study analyses the possible influence on this decision of two aspects that are directly linked to the effect the consumption of audio-visual products may have on the destinations they portray: the knowledge and interest they arouse in spectators, and the reasons to visit these places after seeing them in a TV series. To this end, respondents' sociodemographic characteristics, which are common determinants of tourists' perceptions, intentions, and decisions to travel (Baloglu, 1997; Draper, 2016; Oh, Cheng, Lehto, & O'Leary, 2004; Suttikun et al., 2018), have been used as control variables.

The study therefore addresses the following research questions:

- Do destination awareness and visit motivation, two antecedents of travel decision that are positively influenced by the portrayal of destinations in a TV series, influence the decision to visit these destinations?
- Which of these two aspects has the greatest influence on the decision to travel?

The study was based on first-hand data collected through the administration of a quantitative questionnaire with domestic tourists in several destinations in Spain where successful TV series have been filmed. The results point to a significant role of both factors on the decision to visit a destination seen in a TV series, whereas the effect of destination awareness is more prominent. Focusing on one of the most touristic countries in the world, the main contribution of this paper to the literature on film tourism is

to shed light on the direct causal relation between two outstanding antecedents of travel decision, destination awareness and visit motivation, and the decision to visit a destination portrayed in a TV series. In particular, after controlling for the effect of demographic variables, it is found that the influence of the former is greater than that of the later. Additionally, the results confirm that the portrayal of destinations in TV series generates destination awareness and visit motivation. From the point of view of tourism companies and destination managers who want to resort to TV series as promotional tools, the main contribution of the paper is to provide them with a better understanding of the factors that help to attract the loyal audience of these audio-visual products to the destination in question.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. Film tourism

Travel motivated by films has increased significantly in the last few decades, characterising a global phenomenon (Yen & Croy, 2016). By the end of the twentieth century, many scholars focused on analysing this type of tourism in more depth (Beeton, 2001, 2004, 2006; Busby & Klug, 2001; Tooke & Baker, 1996). Some authors have established conceptual differences between the terms *film tourism* and *film-induced tourism*. Film tourism has been described as visits to a place that has been used for or is associated with filming (Buchmann, Moore, & Fisher, 2010), whereas film-induced tourism has been defined as tourism influenced by both television and cinema, which motivate people to travel to a film location (Beeton, 2010; Croy, 2011). To the latter, Beeton (2005) adds visits to production studios, including film-related theme parks. Kim and Wang (2012) defend the use of the term *screen tourism*, while Ward and O'Regan (2009) highlight another market opportunity derived from the relationship between tourism and films: the provision of film and television production services to 'footloose' producers. For the purposes of this study, the term film tourism will be employed, as it is the most widely used in the literature and has broader scope.

Image plays a key role in the way people perceive a tourism destination. According to Butler (1990), image is the most important factor for attracting tourists. A feature film or TV series may create or maintain interest in a destination in a way that is not attainable by traditional advertising (Tooke & Baker, 1996). Due to their potential to influence or strengthen destination image, and consequently, induce trips to the places they portray, audio-visual products represent a powerful destination marketing tool for both domestic and international markets (Kim & Richardson, 2003). The meanings people associate with places can be altered or reinforced through audio-visual products (Croy & Walker, 2003). Therefore, productions that manage to portray the essence of a place are usually more successful in attracting tourists. The places portrayed may even be extraordinarily different from other locations (Hernández, 2004), in which case, films and series may positively influence spectators' decisions to visit them (Hudson, Wang, & Gil, 2011; Kim, Chen, & Su, 2009).

Due to this potential, tourism managers have been working together with film makers in order to capitalise on cinema and television as promotional tools (Cynthia & Beeton, 2009; Mendes et al., 2017). Some of the major tourism destinations worldwide, such as the United Kingdom, the United States, South Korea, Australia, and New Zealand, have taken advantage of cinema in their marketing campaigns (Connell, 2012). VisitBritain, for instance, produced their first movie maps campaign back in 1996, featuring 200 places related to cinema and television in Great Britain that tourists could visit (Grihault, 2003). Another expressive example is the use of the

film *Australia* (2008), starring Nicole Kidman and Hugh Jackman, to boost tourism in Australia (Hudson et al., 2011).

Numerous studies have acknowledged the importance and the positive impact of film tourism on destinations. Im and Chon (2008), for instance, demonstrated that *The Sound of Music* (1965) influenced tourists' decision to visit Salzburg, Austria, where it was shot. Riley and Van Doren (1992) have shown that following the release of *Dances with Wolves* (1990), visits to the historical Fort Hayes (Kansas) which is portrayed in the film increased by 25%, which greatly exceeded the average annual increase of 6% noticed in the years before the release. A particularly significant effect was noticed in William Wallace Monument, in Scotland. The place was virtually abandoned prior to the release of *Braveheart*, in 1995, after which visits to it increased by 300% (Bolan & Williams, 2008; Frost, 2006). *Captain Corelli's Mandolin* (2001) also resulted in a major interest by tourists in the Greek Island of Cephalonia. Visits increased between 15% and 20% in 2001, and many European operators promoted the island through the film (Hudson & Ritchie, 2006). Visits to the city of Canakkale, in Turkey, where *Troy* (2004) was shot, increased by 73% due to the films' success (Hudson & Ritchie, 2006). Another major case of film tourism is that of *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy (2001–2003), which increased visits to New Zealand by 30% (Beeton, 2006; Buchmann et al., 2010). To capitalise on the iconic landscapes depicted in the films, tourism authorities promoted destinations within the country as *Home of Middle Earth* (Carl, Kindon, & Smith, 2007), linking the destination to the film in order to capitalise on the latter's success and attract more visitors.

Film tourism not only includes the effects of feature films produced for the big-screen, but also that of other audio-visual products, such as those broadcast on TV (Beeton, 2005), among which, TV series are particularly popular. Regarding the latter, globally successful productions from the 1980s, such as *Dallas* (1978–1991) – which resulted in a 59% increase in visitors in 1996 in comparison to 1995 – and *Miami Vice* (1984–1989) – which generated a 150% increase in German visitors between 1985 and 1988 – (Busby & Klug, 2001; Hudson & Ritchie, 2006), are early evidence of the potential of this type of cultural product to attract visitors to the places they depict. A more recent example is provided by *Game of Thrones* (2011 – still running), which is broadcast in 180 countries. After the first episodes of the fifth season, in 2014, the number of searches from foreigner travellers to Seville, Spain, where some scenes of the season were shot in 2014, increased by 107% in comparison to the same period in the previous year. As a result, tourist visits to the city increased in 40% (Andalucía Film Commission, 2015). Another expressive example of TV series attracting tourists is provided by Korean TV series, which are extremely popular in Asia, and have led many of their loyal spectators to visit the country (Chan, 2007; Kim & Wang, 2012; Su, Huang, Brodowsky, & Kim, 2011).

In summary, audio-visual products can effectively be powerful promotion tools for tourism destinations, as they affect viewers' travel decisions by creating favourable images of the places they portray. In this context, examining the film tourism phenomenon, and more specifically, analysing the determinants behind tourists' decision to travel to destinations they have seen in TV series, is an important line of research.

## 2.2. Destination awareness generated by audio-visual products

In the context of consumer behaviour theory, Engel's 'EKB' model (Engel, Kollat, & Blackwell, 1968) is one of the most frequently employed frameworks for analysing the consumer buying decision process (Darley, Blankson, & Luethge, 2010). A fundamental aspect of this process is the effort made by consumers, during the information search stage, to learn about the existence and the characteristics of products that may satisfy their desire. The sum of all

this knowledge acquired by consumers about a certain product or brand constitutes their awareness and determines their choice sets (Barroso & Llobet, 2012). Since one cannot choose what they know to exist or what they recognise, consumer awareness can be considered a necessary condition for consumption. Therefore, any factor that generates or improves consumer awareness of a given product, such as advertising (Honka, Hortaçsu, & Vitorino, 2017), increases the likeliness of such a product being chosen by the consumer.

In the context of tourism, the concept of destination awareness refers to "what someone knows or thinks they know about a destination" (Konecnik & Gartner, 2007, p. 403). To be successful, a tourism destination must be recognised by its potential visitors. Therefore, destination awareness is arguably one of the dimensions that help building destination brand identity (Tsaour, Yen, & Yan, 2016). It is particularly relevant that potential tourists know the attractions offered by a destination. In fact, the development of a new resource or attraction may be the trigger, or the driver, of destination awareness. In this context, McKean, Harris, and Lennon, (2017), highlight how two key attractions (The Kelpies and the Falkirk Wheel) associated with the tourism transformation of the Scottish Canals network have helped to boost the area's destination awareness.

The potential of audio-visual media as vehicles for destination recognition is evident (Riley & Van Doren, 1992). The different elements associated with films and TV series, such as the actors and directors, or historical and biographical events, may capture spectators' attention, and in some cases, motivate them to search for additional information in order to broaden their knowledge about them (Lee et al., 2008). The places portrayed by audio-visual products are also part of those elements (Tooke & Baker, 1996). Therefore, they attract spectators' attention, create good impressions, increase awareness (Iwashita, 2008; Riley & Van Doren, 1992; Rittichainuwat & Rattanaphinanchai, 2015; Ward & O'Regan, 2009), and affect destination image (Kim & Richardson, 2003). In this context, audio-visual products are a vehicle for awareness and image formation during the pre-visit stage, as they create expectations of possible experiences in the destinations that are portrayed (Croy & Heitmann, 2011). Therefore, films and TV series may generate awareness, creating place familiarity and leading to a stronger interest in the destination, which may ultimately lead to an actual visit (Iwashita, 2008; Rittichainuwat & Rattanaphinanchai, 2015).

Destination awareness may therefore be considered as a first and necessary step leading to visiting (Isa & Ramli, 2014). Naturally, lesser known destinations can attain greater benefits in terms of destination awareness by being depicted in films or TV series (Frost, 2006; Hao & Ryan, 2013). Moreover, the study of Rittichainuwat and Rattanaphinanchai (2015) corroborates that, as previously suggested by Croy (2011) and Croy and Walker (2003), only some successful films create destination awareness. This would be the case of *Crocodile Dundee* (1986), for example, which clearly raised destination awareness for Australia (Riley & Van Doren, 1992). Another interesting insight is provided Josiam et al. (2015) study with Indian Bollywood fans, which showed that destination awareness encourages activity behaviour, including visits to set locations.

As a result, considering that destination awareness may be considered an antecedent of the decision to travel, spectators' awareness of destinations they see in TV series can arguably result in effective travel decisions. In this context, the following hypothesis is proposed:

**H1.** People that become more aware of destinations they see in TV series are more likely to travel to these destinations.

### 2.3. Audio-visual products and visit motivation

Motivation is a fundamental element of consumption (Chen & Kanfer, 2006; Fitzsimons, Chartrand, & Fitzsimons, 2008), and consequently, a very important aspect of consumer behaviour. As observed by Crompton (1979), motivation is a critical variable to explain travel behaviour. Accordingly, Jang, Bai, Hu, and Wu, (2009) state that motivation theories contribute to answering why people travel.

Tourists' decisions to travel may be due to multiple reasons, as evidenced by numerous studies on the topic, from the earliest ones (e.g., Iso-Ahola, 1982; Plog, 1974) to the most recent. Visit motivation is a multi-motive dimension (Isa & Ramli, 2014), meaning the same person may choose a destination for different reasons. One of the most widely-used approaches for analysing tourists' motivations is the push-pull model (Fieger, Prayag, & Bruwer, 2019; Xu & Chan, 2016; Yousefi & Marzuki, 2015). Within this conceptualisation, pull factors, which refer to external forces (destination attributes), usually relate to the choice of destination. Meanwhile, push factors, which consist of internal forces (intrinsic motivators), are normally related to the decision to travel (Uysal & Jurowski, 1994; Xu & Chan, 2016). Although most authors agree that both types of factors must be considered separately (Caber & Albayrak, 2016; Uysal & Jurowski, 1994), Yoon and Uysal (2005) observe that pull factors must be used to reinforce push motivations.

Tourists' motivations have also been analysed in the context of film tourism, where many authors have employed the push-pull approach (Chang, 2016; Heitmann, 2010; Macionis, 2004). It should be noted that some authors (Croy & Heitmann, 2011; Macionis & Sparks, 2009; Rittichainuwat & Rattanaphinanchai, 2015) note that specific film tourists, namely those whose trip is solely motivated by an audio-visual product, are quite rare. Conversely, serendipitous film tourists, those who visit film tourism destinations for reasons other than the film connection, are actually the most frequent type. Although this evidence may suggest that film tourism is merely an incidental experience, the same authors observe that a successful film has an impact on the visit motivation of even serendipitous film tourists. Moreover, one of the push factors frequently noted in the literature is to enjoy unique, authentic and different experiences (Cracolici & Nijkamp, 2009; Lee, 2015; Prebensen & Lee, 2013; Proyrungroj, 2017), which is perfectly applicable to film tourism (Macionis & Sparks, 2009). Additionally, regarding the specific context of this type of travel, films may arouse the desire to visit a destination due to a motivation that is deeper than that of having a general experience, such as experiencing landscapes and places seen in an audio-visual product (Chang, 2016; Grihault, 2003; Hudson & Ritchie, 2006). This potential is due to films' role as an organic agent of destination image formation (Kim & Richardson, 2003), which makes viewers see them as unbiased sources of information, unlike traditional advertising (Schofield, 1996). The film *La Dolce Vita* (1960), for instance, transformed the image of Rome held by its spectators, to whom it became the city of sin and pleasure (Gundle, 2002). This image shift leads to the desire of having a first-hand experience in the destination and comparing it with the evoked image. In this context, Beeton (2005) suggests that film tourists are motivated by one or more of the following aspects: simply being in the film location (which is an attraction of its own), enjoying a film-related activity within a larger holiday, paying homage to the film (possibly by re-enacting scenes) being in places related to celebrities, or having a nostalgic experience. Moreover, spectators may, either consciously or subconsciously, identify with film heroes, which could also motivate them to visit the location where the story takes place (Vagionis & Loumioti, 2011).

As noted by Macionis (2004), films and TV series may also contribute to highlighting the pull attributes of potential destina-

tions. In fact, Riley and Van Doren (1992) argue that films should be regarded as pull factors in push locations, due to their potential to display attributes and unique attractions of destinations within a film script. In this context, when films and TV series portray a destination's landscapes and cultural attractions, their role as pull factors that could motivate spectators achieves more potential.

Given that visit motivation is considered an antecedent of the decision to travel, the different reasons that may motivate spectators to visit destinations they have seen in TV series can arguably result in effective visits to these destinations. In this context, the following research hypothesis is proposed:

**H2.** People who become more motivated to visit destinations they see in TV series are more likely to travel to these destinations.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1. Data collection

Primary data was collected through a quantitative survey. Prior to its application, the survey instrument was pre-tested with experts in market research. The survey included two main sections:

- 1 The first section collected respondents' sociodemographic characteristics: gender, age, education, type of occupation, monthly household income and number of household members.
- 2 The second section consisted of 5-point Likert scales aimed at assessing the two aspects relating to the effects of seeing tourism destinations in TV series addressed above.

#### 3.1.1. Destination awareness

The scale includes five items, which measure how much spectators pay attention and recognise tourism destinations they see in a TV series. Respondents were asked to indicate to what extent they agreed with each of the statements in the items. The first three are based on the literature review and refer to the possibility that different aspects portrayed in the watched series, particularly tourism destinations, capture spectators' attention: *When I watch a season of a TV series, I become interested in elements related to it, and sometimes search for additional information in order to further connect with the series; Seeing a tourism destination in a TV series makes me interested in this destination; When I'm watching a TV series, I pay attention to the place where it was filmed.* The other two items were suggested by the experts who were consulted. The first of these refers to the possibility that a destination portrayed in a TV series captures so much of spectators' attention that they would recommend it to their friends and relatives, which has been operationalised through the statement: *I will recommend a visit to a tourism destination I saw in TV series to my friends and family.* The second item refers to the possibility that TV series generate more destination awareness when spectators positively value the exterior scenes, and was measured by the following statement: *Exterior scenes enrich a TV series.*

#### 3.1.2. Visit motivation

The scale consists of eight items related to the different possible motivations for spectators to visit a destination they saw in a TV series. Respondents were asked to express to what extent they agreed with each of the statements in the items. Amongst those, four were based on the literature review, and may be considered push factors. Three of these are specific to the context of film tourism: *Comparing images and icons I have in my mind from watching the TV series with the reality of the location; Having first-hand experience of a place where a TV series has been shot and the actors and directors have been; Visiting the tourism destination for the simple reason of having learned about it through a TV series.* The fourth

item, on the other hand, is more generalist: *Having authentic experiences through the consumption of new tourism products*. The four remaining items were suggested by the consulted experts and refer to pull factors that may reinforce the influence exerted by the push factors on the decision to visit film destinations. One of these is a destination attribute, a typical pull factor that could be potentialized by being portrayed in a film or TV series: *The existence of other tourism products/attractions (e.g., seaside tourism, nature tourism, food tourism... ) in the destination*. The three remaining items refer to aspects that, although not being destination attributes, can also be considered pull factors: recommendations (Caber & Albayrak, 2016) and availability of information about the destinations (Heitmann, 2010). These items were operationalised through the following statements: *Someone in my circle recommended the destination to me; The destination's own promotional campaign; and The TV series' promotional campaign*.

The questionnaire also includes a dichotomic (Yes or No) question about whether respondents had travelled to a destination as a result of seeing it in a TV series. This was aimed at differentiating two relevant groups within the sample: those who travel to a destination motivated by a TV series (Travel) and those who do not (No travel).

The study's focus population consisted of domestic tourists visiting destinations widely portrayed in TV series produced and shot in Spain (3 destinations portrayed in the TV series *Aguila Roja*: Pedraza (Segovia), Toledo and Madrid; 1 portrayed in *Doctor Mateo*: Lastres (Asturias); and 1 portrayed in *Gran Reserva*: Briones (Rioja)). A random systematic sampling technique was employed, as it is suitable for large populations whose elements are randomly ordered (Anderson, Sweeney, & Williams, 2008), which is the case in the present investigation's settings. In this context, after randomly selecting a first respondent, a constant amplitude leap (3, in the present case) was employed. The surveys were conducted face-to-face, and a total of 484 valid responses (sampling error  $\pm 4.25\%$  for a confidence level of 95%) were obtained.

### 3.2. Data analysis techniques

The collected data was subjected to several analysis techniques. First, contingency tables and Pearson's  $\chi^2$  statistic were used to determine whether the Travel and No travel groups differed significantly in terms of sociodemographic profile, as well as in terms of destination awareness and visit motivation items. This was aimed at verifying whether travelling to a destination as a result of seeing it in a TV series was dependent on the respondents' demographic variables and/or of the TV series' effect on their destination awareness and visit motivation. The reliability of the scales was assessed using Cronbach's  $\alpha$  coefficient.

To identify the determinants behind the decision to travel motivated by a TV series, a binary logistic regression was proposed and estimated. For this purpose, whether respondents belonged to either the Travel or the No travel group was considered a dependent variable. Accordingly, the sociodemographic variables, as well as the two constructs operationalised through the scales, were considered independent variables. The demographic variables were directly incorporated into the regression, while the scales were first reduced to only one component, consisting of a lineal combination of the comprised items. To this end, factor analysis by principal components was employed. The resulting component, which summarises the information provided by the scale, was then included in the regression. This allowed for a parsimonious model that includes all the relevant information (Irimia-Diéguez, Blanco-Oliver, & Oliver-Alfonso, 2016). Finally, to estimate the logistic regression, the variables were selected through the Wald Forward stepwise method.

### 3.3. Sample description

The sample included a slightly higher number of women (57.02%) than men (52.69%). The predominant age group is 25–35 years old (29.96%), and the sample is evenly balanced in terms of higher education (50.21% have a degree). The most frequent occupation group is that of wage earners (45.04%), followed by students (16.12%), whereas no other group reached 10%. Most of the sample (94.42%), has a monthly household income of less than 4500€, and more than half (54.96%) earn between 1501€ and 3000€. At last, 52.48% of respondents belong to a family of three or more members, although the most frequent group is that of 2-member families (36.16%).

Three of the sociodemographic variables (age, monthly household income, and number of household members) are significantly related to whether or not respondents have travelled to a destination as a result of seeing it in a TV series (Table 1). Namely, younger respondents (under 35-year-old), those with higher household incomes (4500€ or higher), and those who belong to large families (3 members or more) are significantly more likely to travel to such destinations. Moreover, people with higher education degrees, as well as wage earners and the unemployed also show a higher tendency to travel to destinations seen in TV series, although the null hypothesis of independence could not be rejected for these variables.

## 4. Results

Regarding the proposed scales, the one measuring travel awareness on destinations seen in TV series presents acceptable internal consistency (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.758$ ) (Doloi, Sawhney, Iyer, & Rentala, 2012). In addition, the five items that comprise the scale are all significantly related to whether or not people travel to a destination after seeing it in a TV series (Table 2). By comparing the distribution of the responses between both groups (Travel and No travel), within the five items, there is a higher tendency to travel among respondents with higher scores. This tendency is stronger among those who become interested in a destination after seeing it in a TV series, and those who pay attention to the place where the series was shot while watching it. Therefore, respondents to whom TV series have produced greater destination awareness are effectively more likely to travel to the destinations they portray than those who have lower destination awareness. In this context, the evidence supports  $H_1$ .

The scale measuring respondents' motivations to visit destinations they have seen in a TV series presents a good internal consistency (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.872$ ) (Doloi et al., 2012). Six out of the eight items comprising the scale are significantly related to whether or not people travel to a destination after seeing it in a TV series (Table 3). Comparing the distribution of the responses between both groups (Travel and No travel), within the mentioned six items, there is a higher tendency to travel among respondents with higher scores. The tendency to travel is more prominent among respondents who are motivated to visit the destination by the desire to compare images and icons they have in their mind from watching the TV series with the reality of the location; the opportunity of having first-hand experience of a place where a TV series has been shot and the actors and directors have been; and mainly, by the TV series' promotional campaign. On the other hand, respondents who are motivated to travel by recommendations from friends and family show a very slight tendency to travel to destinations as a result of seeing them in TV series. In summary, respondents with the greatest visit motivations to destinations seen in TV series are more likely to travel to those destinations than those with lower levels of motivation. In this context, the evidence supports  $H_2$ .

**Table 1**  
Travel decision in relation to the sociodemographic characteristics of the respondents.

Variables and categories	Travel (n = 50)		No travel (n = 434)		Total (n = 484)
		%		%	%
Gender	Female	60.00%		56.68%	57.02%
	Male	40.00%		43.32%	42.98%
$\chi^2 = 0.201, df = 1, p = 0.654$					
Age	Under 35 years	64.00%		45.40%	47.31%
	35 years and over	36.00%		54.60%	52.69%
$\chi^2 = 6.228, df = 1, p = 0.013^*$					
Education	Less than Higher Education	42.00%		50.70%	49.79%
	Higher Education	58.00%		49.30%	50.21%
$\chi^2 = 1.355, df = 1, p = 0.244$					
Type of occupation	Wage earner	52.00%		44.30%	45.04%
	Civil servant	8.00%		9.40%	9.30%
	Self-employed	2.00%		10.10%	9.30%
	Househusband/wife	4.00%		7.40%	7.02%
	Student	14.00%		16.40%	16.12%
	Unemployed	12.00%		6.20%	6.82%
	Retired	8.00%		6.20%	6.40%
$\chi^2 = 7.193, df = 6, p = 0.303$					
Monthly household income	Under 4500€	86.00%		95.40%	94.42%
	4500€ and over	14.00%		4.60%	5.58%
$\chi^2 = 7.508, df = 1, p = 0.006^{**}$					
Number of household members	Under 3	34.00%		49.08%	47.52%
	3 and over	66.00%		50.92%	52.48%
$\chi^2 = 4.087, df = 1, p = 0.043^*$					

\* Significant at 5%.

\*\* Significant at 1%.

**Table 2**  
Destination awareness (1–5 Likert scale questions).

Travel (n = 50)	No travel (n = 434)					Total (n = 484)									
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Exterior scenes enrich a TV series. ( $\chi^2 = 16.125, df = 4, p = 0.003^{**}$ )															
2.0%	8.0%	12.0%	26.0%	52.0%	9.4%	7.8%	23.3%	32.9%	26.5%	8.7%	7.9%	22.1%	32.2%	29.1%	
Seeing a tourism destination in a TV series makes me interested in this destination. ( $\chi^2 = 29.549, df = 4, p = 0.000^{**}$ )															
4.0%	6.0%	30.0%	32.0%	28.0%	22.6%	15.9%	30.4%	23.0%	8.1%	20.7%	14.9%	30.4%	24.0%	10.1%	
When I'm watching a TV series, I pay attention to the place where it was filmed. ( $\chi^2 = 35.186, df = 4, p = 0.000^{**}$ )															
4.0%	2.0%	18.0%	36.0%	40.0%	15.9%	15.0%	29.0%	27.6%	12.4%	14.7%	13.6%	27.9%	28.5%	15.3%	
I will recommend a visit to a tourism destination I saw in TV series to my friends and family. ( $\chi^2 = 21.911, df = 4, p = 0.000^{**}$ )															
10.0%	22.0%	26.0%	28.0%	14.0%	36.9%	15.7%	27.9%	11.3%	8.3%	34.1%	16.3%	27.7%	13.0%	8.9%	
When I watch a season of a TV series, I become interested in elements related to it, and sometimes search for additional information in order to further connect with the series. ( $\chi^2 = 19.734, df = 4, p = 0.001^{**}$ )															
8.0%	20.0%	26.0%	28.0%	18.0%	29.5%	23.7%	25.6%	13.8%	7.4%	27.3%	23.3%	25.6%	15.3%	8.5%	

\*Significant at 5%.

\*\* significant at 1%.

**Table 3**  
Visit motivation to destinations seen in TV series (1-5 Likert scale questions).

Travel (n = 50)	No travel (n = 434)					Total (n = 484)									
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Comparing images and icons I have in my mind from watching the TV series with the reality of the location. ( $\chi^2 = 30.712, df = 4, p = 0.000^{**}$ )															
10.0%	12.0%	24.0%	40.0%	14.0%	21.2%	27.2%	31.1%	17.1%	3.5%	20.0%	25.6%	30.4%	19.4%	4.5%	
Having first-hand experience of a place where a TV series has been shot and the actors and directors have been. ( $\chi^2 = 24.732, df = 4, p = 0.000^{**}$ )															
6.0%	18.0%	26.0%	32.0%	18.0%	22.1%	26.5%	29.7%	16.6%	5.1%	20.5%	25.6%	29.3%	18.2%	6.4%	
Having authentic experiences through the consumption of new tourism products. ( $\chi^2 = 7.304, df = 4, p = 0.121$ )															
12.0%	10.0%	40.0%	28.0%	10.0%	22.1%	18.2%	35.0%	18.0%	6.7%	21.1%	17.4%	35.5%	19.0%	7.0%	
Visiting the tourism destination for the simple reason of having learned about it through a TV series. ( $\chi^2 = 19.386, df = 4, p = 0.001^{**}$ )															
10.0%	10.0%	12.0%	44.0%	24.0%	27.2%	13.6%	22.8%	23.0%	13.4%	25.4%	13.2%	21.7%	25.2%	14.5%	
The destination's own promotional campaign. ( $\chi^2 = 10.278, df = 4, p = 0.036^*$ )															
10.0%	12.0%	22.0%	48.0%	8.0%	24.2%	15.0%	24.9%	28.1%	7.8%	22.7%	14.7%	24.6%	30.2%	7.9%	
The TV series' promotional campaign. ( $\chi^2 = 45.262, df = 4, p = 0.000^{****}$ )															
10.0%	10.0%	18.0%	52.0%	10.0%	32.9%	17.1%	30.2%	17.5%	2.3%	30.6%	16.3%	28.9%	21.1%	3.1%	
Someone in my circle recommended the destination to me. ( $\chi^2 = 6.192, df = 4, p = 0.185$ )															
10.0%	14.0%	18.0%	28.0%	30.0%	16.8%	7.8%	20.0%	35.3%	20.0%	16.1%	8.5%	19.8%	34.5%	21.1%	
The existence of other tourism products/attractions (e.g., seaside tourism, nature tourism, food tourism. . .) in the destination. ( $\chi^2 = 12.777, df = 4, p = 0.012^*$ )															
8.0%	4.0%	10.0%	24.0%	54.0%	14.1%	6.0%	13.1%	37.6%	29.3%	13.4%	5.8%	12.8%	36.2%	31.8%	

\* Significant at 5%.

\*\* Significant at 1%.

**Table 4**  
Factor analysis for destination awareness and visit motivation.

Scales and questions	Factor loading
<b>Destination awareness</b> (KMO = 0.722; Bartlett's test: Approx. $\chi^2 = 723.283$ , df = 10, p = 0.000)	
Exterior scenes enrich a TV series.	0.546
Seeing a tourism destination in a TV series makes me interested in this destination.	0.852
When I'm watching a TV series, I pay attention to the place where it was filmed.	0.844
I will recommend a visit to a tourism destination I saw in TV series to my friends and family.	0.734
When I watch a season of a TV series, I become interested in elements related to it, and sometimes search for additional information in order to further connect with the series.	0.571
<b>Visit motivation</b> (KMO = 0.844; Bartlett's test: Approx. $\chi^2 = 1,757.22$ , df = 28, p = 0.000)	
Comparing images and icons I have in my mind from watching the TV series with the reality of the location.	0.662
Having first-hand experience of a place where a TV series has been shot and the actors and directors have been.	0.717
Having authentic experiences through the consumption of new tourism products.	0.740
Visiting the tourism destination for the simple reason of having learned about it through a TV series.	0.749
The destination's own promotional campaign.	0.805
The TV series' promotional campaign.	0.755
Someone in my circle recommended the destination to me.	0.709
The existence of other tourism products/attractions (e.g., seaside tourism, nature tourism, food tourism... ) in the destination.	0.677

As addressed in the methodology section, the determinants behind the decision to travel to destinations seen in TV series were identified through the estimation of a binary logistic regression. To this end, each scale was reduced to one only component. The two resulting components were then included in the regression as independent variables. The reduction was carried out via a factor analysis, using the principal components method. In both cases, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) index and the Bartlett's sphericity test indicate that factor analysis is adequate for the data (Parinet, Lhote, & Legube, 2004), as shown in Table 4. In the factor analysis of both scales, the extracted component is the only one with an auto-value higher than 1. Therefore, they meet Kaiser's criterion (Kaiser, 1960). In both cases, the mentioned auto-value (2.60 for destination awareness and 4.24 for visit motivation) is significantly superior in comparison to the auto-values of the other components. Moreover, the factorial loadings of the items to their corresponding component are high in all cases (generally higher than 0.700, the lowest being .546). Therefore, the data suggests the adequateness of reducing each scale to only one component. These components' factorial scores were calculated through the regression method, and then used as variables in the binary regression.

Table 5 shows the results obtained from the estimation of the binary logistic regression, which was carried out using the Wald Forward stepwise method for the selection of independent variables.

Several goodness of fit indicators point to an adequate fit of the estimated model. The contrast between the global significance and the regression coefficients is favourable, as the omnibus test on the model coefficients points to the rejection of the null hypothesis that the value of all estimated coefficients is 0. Moreover, the Hosmer-Lemeshow test points to the non-rejection of the null hypothesis that the model fits the data. Regarding the model's predictive capacity, which is another goodness of fit indicator, the model can correctly classify 90.5% of cases. Additionally, the area below the Receiver Operating Characteristic (ROC) Curve (Fig. 1) is higher than 0.8 (0.847, for a confidence interval ranging from 0.791 to 0.904), which suggests that the discriminatory performance of the model is excellent (Hosmer & Lemeshow, 2000).

From the six sociodemographic variables considered, four have been included in the final model. They are all significant at 5% (p-value < .05), although 5 out of the 7 categories in which the variable Type of occupation has been divided (Wage earner, Civil servant, Self-employed, Househusband/wife and Unemployed), were not. The odds ratio values indicate that viewers under 35 years old are

2.35 times more likely to travel to a destination as a result of seeing it in a TV series than those who are 35 or older. Accordingly, people from families with a higher monthly household income (4500€ or more) are 5,78 times more likely to travel to TV series destinations than those from families with a lower monthly income (under 4500€). Regarding type of occupation, retired people are 10.99 times more likely to travel than students are. Lastly, people from bigger families (3 or more members) are 2.58 (1/.387) times more likely to travel than those from smaller families (under 3 members).

The components representing Destination awareness and Visit motivation are also significant at 5%, and their coefficients are positive, as expected. In this context, as suggested by the Pearson's  $\chi^2$  statistics results, people for whom TV series generate higher destination awareness for the places they portray are more likely to travel to those places than those who attain lower levels of destination awareness. Accordingly, the results also corroborate that viewers who become more motivated to visit destinations depicted in TV series are more likely to travel to those destinations as a result of seeing them in a TV series. However, the difference made by a higher destination awareness is more prominent than that of a higher visit motivation. In summary, the evidence reinforces the support to both hypotheses.

## 5. Discussion

The present study was aimed at assessing the influence of two aspects fostered by the portrayal of tourism destinations in Spanish TV series – destination awareness and visit motivation – on domestic tourists' decisions to visit these destinations. For this purpose, demographic characteristics were used as control variables. The results corroborate this influence and show that it is particularly prominent in the case of destination awareness.

The findings also corroborate the conclusions of previous studies (Croy & Heitmann, 2011; Macionis & Sparks, 2009; Rittichainuwat & Rattanaphinanchai, 2015) about specific film tourists being a minority, since only 10.4% of the sample stated that they had travelled to a destination as a result of seeing it in a TV series. As pointed out by Croy (2011), films are not strong attractors on their own, although they contribute to create awareness, and therefore play a subtle, but crucial, role to generate tourism interest.

The logistic regression results evidence the influence of some sociodemographic characteristics on people's decision to visit a film destination. Amongst those, having a high monthly household income (4500€ or more) and being retired are the ones

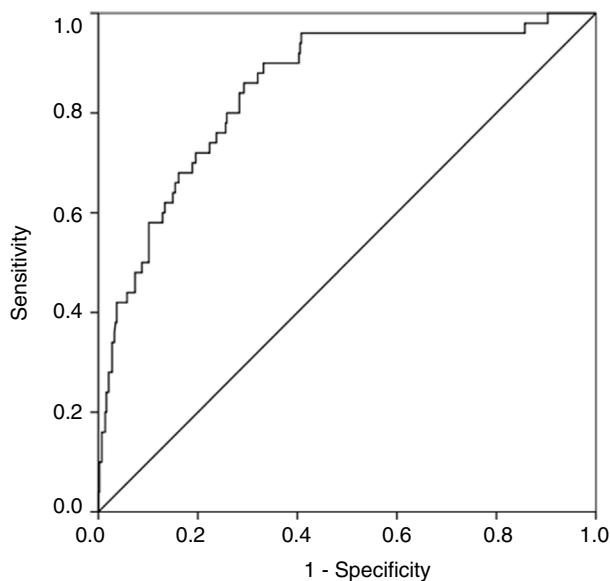


**Table 5**  
Results of the binary logistic regression.

Independent variables	B	SE	Wald	p	Exp(B)
Constant	-0.372	0.801	0.216	0.642	0.689
Age: Under 35 years (Reference: 35 years and over)	0.855	0.432	3.910	0.048*	2.351
Monthly household income: Under 4500€ (Reference: 4500€ and over)	-1.757	0.603	8.492	0.004**	0.173
Type of occupation (Reference: Retired)			17.635	0.07	
Type of occupation: Wage earner	-0.513	0.689	0.555	0.456	0.599
Type of occupation: Civil servant	-0.535	0.874	0.375	0.540	0.586
Type of occupation: Self-employed	-2.012	1.212	2.755	0.097	0.134
Type of occupation: Househusband/wife	-1.805	0.969	3.470	0.062	0.164
Type of occupation: Student	-2.393	0.873	7.518	0.006**	0.091
Type of occupation: Unemployed	-0.347	0.878	0.156	0.693	0.707
Number of household members: Under 3 (Reference: 3 and over)	-0.949	0.376	6.350	0.012*	0.387
Destination awareness	1.145	0.244	22.008	0.000**	3.143
Visit motivation	0.521	0.255	4.171	0.041*	1.684
-2 Log likelihood	242.479				
Cox and Snell R <sup>2</sup>	0.151				
Nagelkerke R <sup>2</sup>	0.311				
Omnibus test on model coefficients	( $\chi^2 = 79.174$ , df = 11, p = 0.000)				
Hosmer-Lemeshow test	( $\chi^2 = 15.132$ , df = 8, p = 0.057)				
% of correctly classified cases	90.5%				

Dependent variable: Have you ever travelled to a destination as a result of seeing it in a TV series? Selection method: Forward stepwise (Wald).

\* Significant at 5%.  
\*\* Significant at 1%.



**Fig. 1.** ROC of the proposed model.

with the strongest connection to the likelihood of travelling to film destinations. Respondents with lower monthly household incomes and students, on the other hand, are the least likely to visit film destinations. These characteristics merely reflect two common determinants of travel decision: disposable income and time (Reiser, 2003; Walton, 2009).

It is quite unsurprising that retired Spanish people show a higher willingness to travel, as most of them are seniors, with higher purchasing power, and consequently, a higher tendency to enjoy their free time travelling in comparison to their younger counterparts. In this context they play a significant role in the Spanish tourism sector (Alén, Losada, & de Carlos, 2017). Also, when interpreting the greater tendency to travel to film destinations of young respondents (under 35), it must be considered that they are more

familiarised with the use of new information and communication technologies. This leads to a greater flexibility to watch TV series, provided by video-on-demand platforms, such as Netflix and Amazon Prime Videos (Mikos, 2016), as well as to comment on them in real time through social networks (Wang & García, 2017). Spanish TV series have managed to reach this social audience (Castro-Mariño, 2018; Lacalle, 2015), whose active and participative consumption of audio-visual products may lead to the desire, and ultimately to the decision, to visit the locations they depict.

The direct influence of destination awareness and visit motivation on travel decision has been previously acknowledged in the context of other types of tourism. A good example is provided by Isa and Ramli (2014), who corroborate that destination awareness and visit motivation are two determinant factors of the decision to visit a marine tourism destination such as the FRI Aquarium Penang (Malaysia). In the context of film tourism, many previous studies empirically corroborate related aspects, such as the role of visit motivation (Macionis & Sparks, 2009), destination familiarity generated by celebrity involvement (Lee et al., 2008), and film nostalgia (Kim et al., 2009) on visit intentions. Nevertheless, the literature addressing the relationship between these three specific variables – destination awareness, visit motivation, and travel decision – within this phenomenon is scarce.

The present study's findings evidence the direct influence of destination awareness on the decision to visit film destinations. Therefore, they corroborate the results obtained by Iwashita (2008), who considered both films and television dramas with a sample of Japanese tourists visiting the United Kingdom. The findings are also in line with those obtained by Josiam et al. (2015) through a Structural Equations Model (SEM) in the context of Indian Bollywood fans.

The results also corroborate the direct influence of visit motivation on the decision to visit film destinations. This evidence supports the results of the study of Rittichainuwat and Rattanaphinanchai (2015), which analysed a sample of Thai tourists visiting a South Korean film destination and found a higher level of motivation among the specific film tourists, those whose travel to a film destination is primarily motivated by what they saw on screen.

Two push factors – comparing mental images and icons with the reality of the location; and having first-hand experience of a place where a film was shot and where actors and directors have been – are among those with higher influence on travel decision. These two items fit the description of [Macioun and Sparks \(2009\)](#) of novelty and personalisation motivations, which influence the intention to visit a film destination in a sample consisting of people who stated that they were interested in both cinema and travel pursuits. The specific potential of celebrities to boost tourism, is noted in several previous studies ([Kim, Agrusa, Lee, & Chon, 2007](#); [Lee et al., 2008](#); [Yen & Croy, 2016](#)).

Regarding pull factors, [Riley and Van Doren \(1992\)](#) highlight the role played by two elements on people's impressions of tourist destinations: advertising and word of mouth. The results of the present investigation suggest that recommendations exert a smaller influence on the decision to visit a film destination. In turn, the promotional campaign of the series (and not that of the destinations) has shown to be the most influential pull factor. In this context, [Croy \(2011\)](#) notes the importance of promotional campaigns to stimulate film tourism. The same author adds that in order to link the film to the destination, these campaigns must include journalists' reports focused on the location and highlighting potential tourist experiences with references to the film, rather than focusing on the film itself.

## 6. Conclusions

Once the influence of sociodemographic variables was controlled, the role of the two aspects that are directly linked to the effect the consumption of audio-visual products may have on the destinations they portray – destination awareness and visit motivation – could be properly assessed. Between these, destination awareness was shown to play a stronger role on the decision to visit a place seen in a TV series than visit motivation. The results reveal how destinations can potentially benefit from serving as locations for TV series, and consequently, capturing their viewers' attention. More specifically, the findings suggest that Spanish TV series that generate attention and interest in the places they depict are more likely to attract domestic visitors to these destinations. This potential is even stronger when the series manage to motivate viewers to visit the portrayed destination in order to have a first-hand experience of the places they see on screen and where actors and directors have been, as well as to compare their mental image with the reality of the location.

From a theoretical standpoint, the present study reinforces the role of destination awareness and visit motivation as antecedents of tourists' decisions. Moreover, it corroborates these roles in the context of film tourism, in which both factors are stimulated by the portrayal of tourism destinations in TV series. In this context, the causal path between an audio-visual product and the tourist consumption is evidenced. This represents an argument in favour of the potentially fruitful relationship that may be established between the audio-visual and the tourism industries.

From a practical stance, the results lead to interesting insights to destinations interested in capitalising on film tourism as a promotional tool to attract visitors. To this end, destination management organisations and film commissions must seek to ensure that the places' most attractive features are depicted in the TV series. They must also try to make sure that the projected image of these attractions is as suggestive as possible, in order to capture viewers' attention and interest. They must also guarantee that when this does occur, the viewer and potential tourist is immediately capable of identifying the destination in question. Moreover, stakeholders in the destination must attempt to work together with TV series producers in the promotional campaign for the series, which is

the pull factor with the greatest influence on viewers' decision to visit the portrayed destinations. In this sense, the use of social networks and similar types of digital media is essential in ensuring that the promotional campaign effectively reaches young people, the age group that is most prone to travel to the locations seen in series. These 2.0 tools not only provide the channel through which the campaign can be carried out, but also encourage the exchange of opinions and comments that help to maintain and increase audience interest in the series. Naturally, the effectiveness of these proposals is highly dependent on the power of the destination management organisation (and that of the film commission) to negotiate with producers. In any event, these representatives of the audiovisual industry are interested in cooperated with the locations, in particular allowing the locations to have a prominent role in the series (almost as if they were another character). However, they can benefit from the services that the film commissions offer to facilitate filming, among which some of the most vitally important, based on the results of this research, are those that help in the location-finding process.

Despite its original contribution, the present study does have a limitation, which should be addressed in future investigations. Different factors that can mediate the influence of destination awareness and visit motivation on the decision to visit a destination seen in a TV series have not been considered. One of these factors could be word of mouth, which, as concluded by [Isa and Ramli \(2014\)](#), mediates this effect in the context of marine tourism. In this context, future studies should provide further theoretical and practical contributions by testing the role of this and other possible mediators.

## Declarations of interest

None.

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