

**Bollywood Urge to Tourism Surge: Exploring the Impact of Bollywood Cinema on Domestic
Tourist Motivation**

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Abstract

This research investigates the phenomenon of Bollywood's influence on the domestic tourist motivations of Indians. While existing studies explore how Bollywood incites outbound travel, this paper delves into how Indian audiences are inspired to travel domestically due to cinematic portrayals.

Theories regarding film tourism and tourist motivations in general, as well as in the Indian environment, have been touched upon in order to contextualize the study. Grounded theory methodology guides this qualitative study, employing semi-structured interviews to gather in-depth data. The analysis confirms the profound impact of Bollywood on Indian lives, extending to their travel aspirations.

The findings reveal a multi-faceted influence on domestic tourist motivations. Firstly, the portrayal of cultures and landscapes in films ignites a desire to experience these locations firsthand. Secondly, a sense of fandom drives some to visit filming locations, seeking a connection with their favorite movies and stars. Finally, an interest in the production process itself motivates travel, with some yearning to witness the behind-the-scenes magic.

This research sheds light on a previously overlooked aspect of Asian film-induced tourism. The study focuses on a specific demographic within India, and further research could explore a wider audience. Additionally, future studies could quantify the actual impact of Bollywood on domestic tourist footfall. By delving deeper, a more comprehensive understanding of this evolving phenomenon and its implications for the Indian tourism industry can be gained.

Keywords: *Bollywood tourism, tourist motivations, domestic travel, film-induced tourism, representation in Bollywood*

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1. Introduction

Snowy mountain tops, chiffon sarees, violins in the background, and a love story unfolding, are signature scenes in the majority of the romantic Bollywood films. Most of these shots have been filmed in the Swiss Alps resulting in almost 12 million Indians visiting the stunning European destination for their honeymoons or romantic getaways (Mittal & Anjaneyaswamy, 2013). This example speaks volumes about the influence that Bollywood movies have on the daily lives and tourist behaviors of Indians. In global entertainment, Bollywood stands as a cinematic powerhouse, capturing audiences' interests with its vibrant narratives, infectious music, and glamorous visuals. An industry born in the city formerly known as Bombay is one of the largest producers of films in the world today (Nanjangud, 2020). While the primary purpose of films is often perceived as mere entertainment, the influence of cinema extends far beyond the confines of the silver screen as indicated above. The charm of stunning destinations depicted in Bollywood films has been acknowledged globally, and audiences find themselves transported to breathtaking destinations, from the snow-capped peaks of Switzerland to the sun-kissed beaches of Mauritius.

Domestic tourism in India has witnessed a significant surge in recent years, with millions of Indians opting to explore their own country's diverse landscapes, heritage sites, and cultural treasures (Subash, 2015). A crucial catalyst driving this trend is the pervasive influence of Bollywood, which often showcases stunning locales and picturesque destinations as backdrops for its narratives. Bollywood movies like *Dil Chahta Hai* and *Yeh Jawani Hai Dewani* have immortalized countless Indian destinations like Goa and Manali accordingly, transforming them into must-visit tourist attractions in the eyes of Indian audiences. The allure of visiting locations on the silver screen holds a profound appeal for Indian moviegoers, who often find themselves drawn to these destinations out of a desire to experience the magic of their favorite films firsthand (Biswas & Croy, 2018). Whether it's retracing the footsteps of iconic movie characters or recreating memorable scenes against the backdrop of stunning landscapes, Bollywood-inspired travel experiences offer a unique blend of fantasy and reality for Indian tourists. Tourist motivations, as a result of film-induced tourism in this case, become a crucial aspect to

understand in order to know exactly what reasons are the connecting factors between watching a movie and traveling to a destination.

This thesis explores how Bollywood cinema has become a potent force in shaping the travel aspirations of Indians residing in the country. Delving into the ways Bollywood movies influence domestic travel not only stimulates economic prosperity but also promotes social harmony by going beyond geographical barriers. It is clear from the examples above that Bollywood movies have played some part in the tourist motivations of Indians to travel both domestically and internationally. The concept of portrayal of destinations in Bollywood movies is also looked at in this research paper in order to find out whether it has a subsequent impact on tourist motivations and if so, to what extent and why. Previous studies conducted on this booming industry and the link to travel and tourism are extensive. However, the majority of these studies have explored the attitudes of Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) toward travel to India (Datta, 2008; Nanjangud, 2020; Joshi, 2013) or analyzed the perception of Indians toward foreign travel (Josiam et al., 2020; Nanjangud, 2019; Mittal & Anjaneyaswamy, 2013). This paper goes one step ahead and contributes to the literature by looking at the touristic motivations of Indian citizens with regard to travel within India encouraged by Bollywood movies. In an era where the middle class is experiencing a surge in purchasing power (Nanjangud, 2019), Bollywood's depiction of picturesque destinations serves as both a catalyst for travel and a mirror reflecting shifting aspirations. A study conducted by Nanjangud and Reijnders (2020) justified the research by mentioning the lack of significance given to non-Western film tourism and Bollywood especially. Within a span of 4 years till the current date, Bollywood has been put on the map of film tourism around the world and has numerous studies covering various perspectives (Clini & Valančiūnas, 2023; Tripathi, 2017; Parikh & Katyanan, 2018). The objective of this study is to further diversify the discussion on this vast topic and present yet another point of view that has been missing from the majority of the studies done in this field.

Moreover, Bollywood movies not only serve as virtual travel guides but also evoke a sense of cultural pride and identity among Indian audiences (Ghimire, 2001). By showcasing India's rich cultural heritage, diverse traditions, and vibrant landscapes, Bollywood fosters a

deeper connection between viewers and their homeland, instilling a sense of appreciation and reverence for the country's rich tapestry of cultures. In this context, understanding the motivations that drive Indian tourists to explore domestic destinations influenced by Bollywood becomes paramount. This research delves into the intricate relationship between Bollywood cinema and Indian tourism, exploring the underlying factors that propel Indians to embark on cinematic journeys within their own country. The question that will be guiding this research is: **How do Bollywood films influence the motivation of Indian citizens to travel domestically?**

This has been done by understanding the thoughts and opinions of young Indian citizens through the process of conducting 11 qualitative interviews regarding Bollywood tourism, their personal experiences, challenges, and the subsequent impacts on media influence. Through these interviews, the study aims to assess the extent to which this phenomenon holds true and elucidate the specific ways in which Bollywood influences cultural sensitivity and acceptance. Such insights will also empower policymakers and stakeholders to craft tourism initiatives that go hand in hand with India's diverse cultural fabric, fostering inclusivity and sustainability in the tourism sector.

The research additionally looks at the phenomenon of Bollywood movies being utilized as a medium for fostering cultural awareness. Approximately equivalent in size to Western Europe (yet with four times the population), India comprises two primary ethnic groups, two substantial and numerous smaller religious communities (including the world's third-largest Muslim population), and a vast array of languages (numbering in the hundreds) (Stafford, 2006). However, this diversity also presents challenges, as communal conflicts, religious discrimination, and stereotyping persist in various parts of the country (Graff & Gallonier, 2013). In this complex socio-cultural landscape, Bollywood movies emerge as a powerful tool for promoting awareness and understanding of cultural diversity. Serving as a national medium of entertainment (Mittal & Anjanaswamy, 2013), Bollywood has a wide reach and influence, giving it the power to effectively convey messages of cultural sensitivity and acceptance to audiences across the country. Through its storytelling, characterization, and thematic exploration, Bollywood movies have the potential to challenge stereotypes, foster empathy, and promote inclusivity. This study provides a new perspective for critically analyzing and

contrasting cultural variances within India, shedding light upon an array of viewpoints and stories.

The research paper follows a structured format comprising several key sections, each serving a distinct purpose in elucidating the relationship between Bollywood movies and Indian domestic tourism. The **theoretical framework** delves into various theories and concepts such as the umbrella terms of tourist motivation, film tourism, and fandom behavior and then moves on to more specific concepts like cultural identity influenced by Bollywood and the portrayal of destinations in Bollywood movies. These topics underpin the research, providing a theoretical foundation for understanding the dynamics of Bollywood's influence on tourist behavior. This section may draw upon theories of tourism studies, media effects, representation and portrayal in media, and cultural identity to frame the research question. The **methodology** section outlines the research approach, including details on data collection and analysis methods. It describes the sampling strategy, size and choice of sample, data collection techniques (qualitative semi-structured interviews), and the procedures for analyzing the data (qualitative grounded theory analysis). Additionally, it discusses the operationalization of key variables and measures used in the study. The ethical considerations of this paper have also been explained in this section.

The **findings and analysis** section presents the results of the research in a systematic manner, organized thematically. It provides a detailed analysis of the data, drawing upon relevant theories and concepts to interpret the findings and establish connections between Bollywood exposure and tourist motivations. Finally, the **conclusion** summarizes the key findings, discusses their implications, and offers insights into future research directions. It reflects on the contributions of the study to the existing literature and identifies areas for further exploration, providing closure to the research paper.

2. Theoretical Framework

a) Film-Induced Tourism and Tourist Motivation

Film-induced tourism, a postmodern phenomenon, taps into people's desire for a temporary escape from reality. It combines two forms of escapism—cinematic immersion and travel—into a symbiotic relationship (Gjorgievski & Trpkova, 2012). When individuals explore a site associated with a specific movie, scene, or character, it often offers a more captivating experience due to its symbolic significance rather than solely its intrinsic qualities within a postmodern cultural context. In this context, the enjoyment arises from engaging with the creators, signs, and symbols associated with the movie (Connell, 2012). It's similar to immersing oneself in the narrative of the film, as people find resonance and excitement in connecting with the stories, characters, and places behind the movies they adore. This phenomenon reflects the significant role that movies play in shaping contemporary culture and how individuals perceive and interact with the world around them. Despite this large and direct impact, not all film-related tourism is intentional. There are quite a lot of instances when tourists end up at a location where a film was shot unintentionally.

Incidental tourism refers to travel experiences where individuals visit destinations they recognize from movies or other media without prior intention or planning (Croy & Heitmann, 2011). Unlike intentional tourism, where travelers specifically choose destinations based on their film associations, incidental tourism occurs spontaneously, often as a result of recognizing familiar landmarks or settings while exploring a destination. This form of tourism adds an unexpected dimension to the travel experience, allowing individuals to connect with their favorite movies or TV shows in a real-world context.

Another form of incidental tourism is when people associate a real-life location with a scene in a movie but the film was not actually shot there. This can happen mostly in animated movies or movies with a lot of CGI where imaginary worlds are inspired by the real world. An example of incidental tourism with animated movies is when film tourists started associating the small town of Hallstatt in Austria as the inspiration for the Kingdom of Arendelle in *Frozen* whereas in reality, the art director has clearly mentioned he visited Norway and Canada for inspiration (Vlamiš, 2023). The blockbuster Indian film "Baahubali" captivated audiences

worldwide with its breathtaking waterfall scene, brought to life through stunning visual effects (VFX). However, what many may not know is that the inspiration for this scene was drawn from the Athirapilly Waterfalls in Kerala, India. This instance exemplifies how incidental tourism and destination marketing intersect seamlessly. While "Baahubali " filmmakers incorporated Athirapilly into their movie for its visual appeal, they inadvertently promoted the destination to moviegoers worldwide. As viewers were captivated by the film's awe-inspiring scenery, they became curious about the real-life location that inspired it, sparking interest in visiting Athirapilly.

By analyzing the motivations of film tourists, valuable insights can be obtained into the power of popular media to shape travel desires and ultimately, the experiences sought during journeys (Singh & Best, 2004). This concept is guided by theories of tourist motivation, which delve into the diverse and multifaceted factors that drive individuals to transition from movie enthusiasts to travelers. These motivations are complex and varied, often influencing behaviors and decisions simultaneously, making it challenging to pinpoint singular reasons behind the actions of film-induced tourists (Singh & Best, 2004). To comprehend this dynamic relationship between cinema consumption and travel behavior, it is essential to consider a range of psychological, cultural, and experiential factors that shape tourist motivations. By examining the interplay between these factors, a deeper insight into how film-inspired tourism manifests and evolves can be attained, shedding light on its implications for both the tourism industry and individuals seeking cinematic experiences through travel. As mentioned above, it is tough to pinpoint exact motivations for a tourist traveling to a destination, especially in the case of film tourism because a varied range of factors could play a role in their decision to travel.

With regard to this, a few different types of classification of film tourists have been previously introduced such as serendipitous, general, and specific by Macionis (2004), visual, emotional, and pure by Bolan et al. (2012) that are relevant and could account for the final choice of film tourists. Macionis (2004) describes the push and pull theory as a straightforward method to elucidate these motivations. Kozak (2002) applies this surprisingly well to film tourists. Push factors, the internal desires for escape or adventure, drive people to travel in general. These same desires can fuel film tourism, where people seek experiences related to

their favorite movies. Similarly, pull factors, like a destination's association with a blockbuster film, act as external magnets, drawing film tourists in for a taste of the silver screen.

Macionis (2004) differentiates between three types of film tourists: serendipitous tourists, who coincidentally find themselves in a film's destination; general film tourists, who engage in film-related activities without specific destination preferences such as recreating scenes with costumes and uploading them on social media from any location; and specific film tourists, who actively seek out locations they've seen in films.

Film tourism goes beyond mere sightseeing. It becomes a form of pilgrimage, where tourists seek to recreate scenes or immerse themselves in the environments depicted on screen. Tourists might exhibit behaviors like replicating iconic movie poses at filming locations, seeking out restaurants featured in films, or even dressing in a way reminiscent of their favorite characters (Roesch, 2009). These actions illustrate the emotional connection forged between viewers and the on-screen world. A study conducted by Stone (2016) also classified film tourists on a spectrum instead of in categories and found that they go through a number of phases ranging from a simple surface-level visit to the filming location to a deeply ingrained experience of being the character itself at the place where their favorite movie/ TV show was filmed. The film-induced tourists on one extreme of the spectrum are the ones observed to be going on what is mentioned as cinematic pilgrimages here (Stone, 2016). This media-driven influence extends beyond aesthetics. It can foster a deeper cultural understanding, prompting tourists to explore locations associated with specific traditions or historical events showcased in films.

With regard to the relation to an almost religious experience and shifting the backdrop to the Indian context, Prasad (1998) makes the connection between the Hindu religious form of devotion called *Darsana* and popular Hindi cinema. The argument made here is that people become such devotees of a god that they feel honored to be able to set their sights on the deity or idol and in turn feel 'seen' by the bearer of power. In the case of the extreme film tourists going on pilgrimages, their relationship with the actors and the movies is somewhat similar to *Darsana*. Just like with gods and temples, people flock to the homes of Bollywood celebrities, stand for hours just to catch a glimpse of them, and treat them like a divine figure (Mitra,

2020). It is said that this intense star-fan relationship is a core characteristic of Bollywood fans who are known for their excessiveness to the point of obsession (Srinivas, 2000).

As can be seen from the theories and examples mentioned, media tourism and especially films in this case, is a testament to the powerful influence of media representations and their role in the travel decisions and behaviors of people. As this paper delves into the instances where movies have inspired travel, it is also imperative to look into the kind of behaviors that film tourists engage in and why they do so. The following section delves into what could be one of the factors in film-induced tourist motivation which is fandoms and their subsequent behaviors.

b) Media Tourists and Fandom Behaviour

Recent studies in film tourism have increasingly focused on fans (Waysdorf, 2013). Researchers have delved into how film tourists connect with the films at these sites, and while this connection is not always explicitly linked to fandom, there are notable exceptions (Lee, 2012; Reijnders, 2011). It is a positive shift to see the growing recognition of fandom as an important area of study, considering that being a fan is likely a significant motivating factor for many visitors to film locations. Fans, in this case, are described as people who dedicate the majority of their time and interest towards a specific field or a participant in that field (Thorne, 2011). Fandoms are understood as a community of fans who have a shared interest and revel in discussing this one specific thing that they all obsess over. There is also a sense of superiority in the way that there is something that only they know and love and the rest of the world is oblivious to this part of life (Thorne, 2011).

In line with this definition, Brotherton and Himmetoglu (1997) classify fans into the Special Interest Tourism (SIT) category which consists of tourists that travel with a very specific motive related to their personal obsession or favorite topic. Mackellar (2006) uses this concept of SIT to indicate that when in the process of choosing a destination, fans or special interest tourists focus more primarily on the idea with which they are consumed and the place where they can find an activity to satiate their desire comes second. This relation ties in with the

concept of intrinsic tourist motivation that plays a large role in travel decisions as explained by Kozak (2002) in which he categorizes this type of motivation as a push factor.

In contrast to a clear-cut division, Reijnders (2011) argues that imagination and reality are intertwined. They enrich each other: imagination gains depth when it collides with real-world experiences, and reality becomes more significant when it resonates with powerful fictional ideas. As Reijnders puts it, this interweaving "makes people want to unravel them" (p.5), to explore the points where these two realms touch. Fans, in particular, revel in blurring these lines. They bridge the gap between fiction and reality through cosplay, collecting memorabilia (Geraghty, 2014; Lammerichs, 2014), or even seeking out real-world locations that mirror fictional ones.

Similarly, in a research article, Reijnders (2011) analyzes the intersection of fan culture and travel motivations in which the results showed that Dracula fans are motivated to visit Transylvania by a desire to collapse the boundaries between fiction and reality. Their journeys function as a pilgrimage, seeking a physical connection to the world of the novel. These kinds of journeys and behaviors are linked to the explanation of cinematic pilgrimages (Stone, 2016) in the previous section on general film tourism. The fans yearn to compare the actual Transylvania with their mental image of Dracula's domain, fostered by the novel and popular culture. However, the tourism industry often commodifies this desire, tailoring experiences to align with these expectations. This also brings in the perspective of authenticity and commodification (Cohen, 1988) from the local's perspective when they adjust their traditions to help tourists fit in. This cause-and-effect relationship set in place contributes to the scholarship on tourism and fan studies by demonstrating how fan communities can influence travel motivations. Furthermore, it sheds light on the ways the tourism industry responds to these niche interests, potentially prioritizing commercial gain over cultural preservation.

A study conducted on Indian tourists and the impact of Bollywood movies found that many respondents noted that the behind-the-scenes "making-of" videos, officially released by the Bollywood film companies, played a significant role in encouraging them to visit the real locations featured in the movies (Nanjangud & Reijnders, 2022). These videos provided a unique insight into the actual settings behind the elaborate narratives of the filmi-songs. A

signature part of Bollywood movies, the elaborate song sequences with dance, catchy music, and scenic backgrounds are referred to as filmi-songs in this case (Nanjangud & Reijnders, 2022). By showcasing the genuine landscapes, architecture, and environments where scenes were filmed, these behind-the-scenes glimpses made the locations seem more tangible and reachable. The respondents felt that these videos bridged the gap between the fantasy world of the film and reality, demystifying the magic of filmmaking and making the destinations more appealing as travel spots. The realization that the beautiful scenes they admired on screen were shot in real, accessible places often inspired them to plan visits to these locations.

The exploration of media tourism and its connection to passionate fandom behavior has shed light on how audiences interact with the worlds presented on screen. However, this analysis can be further enriched by examining the impact on cultural identity. While media tourism allows for a physical connection to these fictional spaces and fandoms to foster a sense of community, Bollywood films possess a unique power to shape the cultural identity of Indian audiences. This influence extends far beyond the desire to visit filming locations or engage in fan activities. It permeates the very core of how Indians perceive themselves and their cultural heritage. This section will delve into how Bollywood movies contribute to the construction and evolution of cultural identity for Indian audiences.

c) Cultural Identity & Tourist Motivations Influenced by Bollywood Movies

In the world of movie-based travel, Bollywood holds a significant place. Its influence on the cultural identities of Indians, both within the nation and across its diaspora, is noteworthy in discussions about travel inspired by films. A common misconception is that Bollywood is representative of all movies made in India, while in reality, that is not the case. Indian cinema has 4 major genres which include regional and artistic films as well. Only one of the genres is 'popular Hindi cinema' which is also known as Bollywood (Roy, 2012). These genres are differentiated by the kinds of audiences they cater to. Bollywood serves the section of Indians that are eager to watch a highly entertaining movie with lots of action or comedy and renditions of typically Indian stories (Shafiq, 2015). This is also the genre that most of the international audience recognizes as Bollywood with the 3-hour run times, exaggerated action

scenes, and glamorously choreographed song and dance numbers (Rao, 2010). Bollywood, as the name suggests, has been derived from its predecessor Hollywood while giving importance to its place of origin, Bombay.

By examining how Bollywood shapes cultural identities and perceptions, a better comprehension of the intricate relationship between movies, culture, and travel is attained. This exploration helps understand how Bollywood's stories impact what people imagine and how they choose to travel. It highlights the pivotal role Bollywood plays in shaping cultural engagement and travel choices, both on an individual and collective level. Although Bollywood is characterized by classic Indian stories and behaviors, In the 90s it slowly started presenting more western storylines and values in order to cater to the Non-Resident Indians who stayed abroad but still craved a piece of home. This category of audience could splurge on higher ticket prices giving more incentive to the filmmakers to include foreign locations as filming sets and showing the international immigrant life on the Indian silver screen (Therwath, 2010). Movies like *Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham* and *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* showed the lifestyle of a certain segment of Indians who could afford to move abroad and live comfortably as well as the culture and traditions of the countries they were shot in. This made it relatable for the NRIs and it also gave a glimpse of the outside world to the domestic audiences viewing it from India.

Bollywood movies often serve as a powerful medium for cultural expression, showcasing various aspects of Indian culture, traditions, and values. NRIs, despite living abroad, maintain a strong cultural connection to India through Bollywood, which acts as a cultural bridge, reinforcing their sense of identity and belonging (Tirumala, 2009). As mentioned in the introduction, the booming middle class of India and its ever-growing economy have resulted in a whopping 25 million Indians moving away and settling down abroad (Joseph, 2006). This large community dispersed all across the globe comes together in one sense, their love and desire for Bollywood movies (Overdorf, 2007). This connection to Bollywood movies translates into tangible travel decisions, particularly evident in the case of NRIs visiting India. These individuals seek to immerse themselves in the sights, sounds, and experiences depicted in Bollywood movies, turning their travel experiences into cultural pilgrimages (Bandyopadhyay, 2008). A study conducted (Dissanayake, 2006) found that the diasporic community loved to see movies

that showed stories based heavily on Indian heritage, mythology and cultures, becoming an integral tool for them to stay connected to their homeland and experience a sense of familiarity in a foreign environment.

In contrast, the representation of places in Bollywood movies can sometimes be disappointing, especially when these films are shot abroad and emphasize Western cultural values. The same values that some immigrants recognized and appreciated, are looked down upon and rejected by others for their Westernness. This trend detracts from the authentic "Indianness" that Bollywood is renowned for. This shift can lead to a sense of cultural disconnection for viewers who seek the familiar sights, sounds, and traditions of their homeland in Bollywood narratives (Nanjangud & Reijnders, 2020).

Studies like Takhar et al. (2010) demonstrate the far-reaching influence of Bollywood films. Examining the engagement of British Sikh youth raised in a tradition of arranged marriages, the research highlights a surprising draw towards the passionate, all-encompassing love stories depicted on screen. Despite acknowledging the fictional nature of these narratives, the participants, particularly the women, expressed a yearning for their own "Bollywood love story" – an expectation of grand romantic gestures and an intense emotional connection. However, the participants reported a disconnect between the idealized world presented in film and the realities of their own relationships, resulting in disappointment. This disconnect underscores the profound impact of Bollywood films on audiences, even when the audience is aware of the films' fictional elements. Bollywood films, often critiqued for their melodramatic and unrealistic portrayals, undeniably exert a powerful influence on societal perceptions of love and marriage (Dudrah, 2006).

Given the appeal of entertainment narratives, it was hypothesized in a study that frequent exposure to Bollywood movies would significantly boost job search self-efficacy and job-seeking behavior among female viewers (Rasul & Raney, 2015). This happens through the process of positive reinforcement wherein audiences are exposed to a certain kind of lifestyle and the relatability factor of the characters and stories gives them the encouragement to try and achieve it for themselves as well (Nijhawan, 2009). Numerous studies have shown that

exposure to various entertainment genres enhances self-efficacy, leading to subsequent behavioral changes.

In addition to the general impact of Bollywood on daily life across cultures, this paper looks at how the booming Hindi movie industry affects the tourist behavior and travel decisions of Indian citizens.

While the nexus between Bollywood and tourism has gained scholarly attention, the existing body of research predominantly explores its influence on international tourist flows. Studies have examined themes of nostalgia in the Indian diaspora (Bandyopadhyay, 2008; Nanjangud & Reijnders, 2024), foreign destination perception (Josiam et al., 2020), and even the phenomenon of domestic tourism within foreign countries sparked by Bollywood productions (Yue, 2009; Tripathi, 2017). Notably absent, however, is a deep investigation into Bollywood's role in stimulating domestic tourism within India itself. The sole exception appears to be Clini and Valančiūnas's (2023) exploration of Bollywood as a promoter of slum tourism, which, while valuable, represents a limited and potentially stereotypical perspective on this multifaceted relationship. This critical review underscores the significance of research on domestic tourism motivated by Bollywood films, highlighting the need for a more nuanced understanding of this understudied yet potentially impactful phenomenon.

The influence of Bollywood on the travel motivations and behaviors of Indians started in the 1980s when international travel was still a dream for most Indians and quite restricted due to foreign policies (Josiam et al., 2020). This was when the Bollywood industry saw an opportunity to bring the world to the Indian audience wrapped in glamor. At a time when Indians did not even fly domestically, resorting to cheaper options like trains or buses, a long European holiday was a luxury they could only look up to (Mittal & Ajneyaswamy, 2013). Once the liberalization policies in the late 1990s opened up the world to India and its citizens, the middle-class people who had been saving most of their income with no big expenditures found a worthy dream to spend their money on. Swooping in at the right time, Yash Chopra's blockbuster hit film 'Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge' (DDLJ) was released in 1995 awakening the youth to wander beyond the borders, experience the international lifestyle, and become a global citizen. The fact that this single movie accounted for a huge movement of Indian

audiences to Switzerland for holidays speaks volumes about the influence of destination portrayal in media. The next section delves into how the tourist destinations in Bollywood movies are depicted and how they might or might not differ from reality. It will also touch upon how audiences and their tourist motivations are impacted by these portrayals on the screen.

d) The Portrayal of Destinations in Bollywood Movies

The allure of a travel destination isn't just about its scenery or cultural offerings; it's heavily influenced by how tourists perceive it. This perception, or attitude, is a complex tapestry woven from thoughts, feelings, and intentions (Ajzen, 1991; Schiffman & Kanuk, 1994). These attitudes are shaped by various factors, and films, particularly Bollywood's productions, play a significant role in this process (Gasher, 2002). Bollywood's visuals and music can paint a powerful picture of a destination in the audience's mind. A sweeping view of a Himalayan peak bathed in golden sunlight or a Parisian street scene bustling with life can ignite a yearning to experience these locations firsthand. A study conducted (Kim & Richardson, 2003) confirms this, highlighting that positive portrayals in films can significantly enhance a destination's appeal and lead to a heightened desire to visit. Conversely, negative portrayals of crime or environmental degradation can have a detrimental effect on tourism (Rodríguez Campo et al., 2011; O'Connor et al., 2008).

Movies can shape the perception of India, acting as a link between generations (Bandyopadhyay, 2008). The first generation, often filled with nostalgia, uses Bollywood as a tool to reconnect with their view of how the country looked in their childhood. A familiar song playing in the backdrop of a bustling Indian marketplace in a film can evoke childhood memories and spark a desire to experience those sights and sounds once again. The second generation, however, is drawn to the modern India showcased in contemporary films. They see a vibrant nation with a thriving economy and a diverse culture, and they seek to experience this evolving identity firsthand. Furthermore, for those with no prior connection to India, Bollywood films can spark a yearning to explore a romanticized ancestral land (Bandyopadhyay, 2008). This highlights the power of cinema in shaping diasporic identity and fueling tourism to India.

It's important to note, however, that Bollywood's portrayal of foreign destinations isn't always through rose-tinted glasses. Unlike the idealized Switzerland often seen in recent films, older Hindi and Tamil movies frequently depicted foreign destinations with a critical lens (Jain, 2019). These narratives often portrayed characters going abroad for professional opportunities, but with a strong sense of loyalty and duty pulling them back to India. A classic example might be a doctor forced to work in a foreign hospital, yearning for the warmth and sense of community back in his Indian village. This reinforces patriotic sentiments and celebrates the inherent value of Indian heritage in the face of foreign allure.

A curious duality emerges within Bollywood films concerning the portrayal of domestic and foreign locations. International destinations like Switzerland or France are frequently presented through a meticulously crafted cinematic lens, emphasizing their architectural grandeur, picturesque landscapes, and sophisticated ambience (Gyimothi, 2018). This idealized portrayal serves to cultivate a sense of aspiration and allure in the audience. Conversely, Indian locations are depicted with a more grounded and realistic approach, often incorporating elements of poverty, noise pollution, and densely populated environments (Raj & Sreekumar, 2017). This disparity in representation isn't merely an aesthetic choice; it has the potential to significantly impact audience travel aspirations and subsequent destination image management strategies.

Repeated exposure to these idealized foreign settings within the narrative can cultivate a yearning to visit and experience a seemingly perfect world. Viewers may develop a romanticized perception of these destinations, potentially overlooking potential cultural discrepancies, unforeseen logistical challenges, or the realities of social and economic disparities that might exist (Josiam, 2020). This creates a potential for a disconnect between the audience's expectations, fueled by the cinematic portrayal, and the actual experience upon arrival.

This inconsistency in Bollywood's portrayal warrants further investigation. Understanding how this disparity influences tourist decision-making processes and shapes destination image management strategies is crucial. Does the allure of the idealized foreign location outweigh the potential for unmet expectations? Do domestic destinations need to be

showcased in a more aspirational light to compete with their foreign counterparts? The introduction of this paper mentioned the investigation of this concept of portrayal and the theory presented above confirms the disparity on a conceptual level. Exploring these questions can offer a beneficial understanding of the complex relationship between cinema, tourism, and destination image formation. The practical and evidence based proof of this difference is further elaborated on in the findings chapter.

3. Methodology

The methodology chapter of this research paper provides a detailed overview of the methods and procedures used to collect and analyze data. The paper focuses on the research question - How do Bollywood films influence the motivation of Indian citizens to travel domestically? The chapter begins by contextualizing the chapter with the epistemological and ontological approaches used to decide the method of data collection and analysis. The next section outlines the specific methods of data collection employed in the study, including interviews and surveys. Following this, the sample selection process is described, highlighting the criteria and rationale for choosing participants. The method of data analysis which is used to interpret and understand the collected data has been explained. The process that was employed, the amount of time it took and the details of the interpretation have been mentioned in order to give a better understanding of the analysis. The chapter then delves into the operationalization of key concepts and variables to ensure clarity and consistency in measurement. Finally, ethical considerations are addressed, emphasizing the steps taken to ensure the privacy, consent, and well-being of all participants involved in the research.

a) Research Philosophy

Traditionally, tourism research has often employed positivist approaches, seeking to identify universal factors that motivate travel decisions (Ayikoru, 2009). Investigating the motivations of Indian tourists influenced by Bollywood films necessitates an interpretivist approach. This research methodology prioritizes uncovering the subjective meanings individuals ascribe to their travel experiences (Hollinshead, 2015). Interpretivism is particularly well-suited for this study due to its emphasis on lived experiences and the symbolic nature of cultural texts. By capturing their narratives, the research can illuminate how individuals interpret on-screen portrayals and translate them into personal travel desires.

Furthermore, Bollywood films function as cultural texts laden with symbolism (Mishra, 2011). Interpretivism provides the tools to decipher the meanings tourists extract from these portrayals. The allure of romance in a Swiss vineyard, the thrill of adventure in a Himalayan

trek, or the desire for spiritual rejuvenation in a historic temple – these are just some of the symbolic associations that might influence travel decisions.

Finally, interpretivism acknowledges the heterogeneity of the tourist population since tourists are not a homogenous group with uniform motivations (Scauso, 2020). This approach unveils the subjective interpretations and emotional connections that bridge the gap between the on-screen world of Bollywood and the lived reality of travel decisions.

b) Method of Data Collection

This study will thus employ qualitative interviewing as the primary research method. This approach is specifically chosen to unlock new narratives around the relationship between Bollywood films and domestic travel within India. By prioritizing participants' experiences and understandings, the aim is to generate fresh insights and potentially even new theories about this connection (Koskela & Pain, 2000). Qualitative interviewing serves as a cornerstone method in social science research due to its unique ability to delve deeply into the nuances of human experience. As Bryman (2016) highlights, it excels at eliciting rich and detailed data, particularly valuable when investigating complex social phenomena and subjective viewpoints. Unlike quantitative methods that rely on standardized answers, qualitative interviewing allows participants to share their stories and perspectives in their own words.

Beyond simply gathering data, this method fosters a space for rapport-building and empathetic engagement. By creating a trusting environment, participants can be encouraged to share candid and insightful responses (Miller, 2017). Additionally, the flexibility of semi-structured qualitative interviewing allows for adaptive questioning throughout the process. This adaptability ensures that the research can organically explore diverse perspectives and delve deeper into unexpected but potentially significant themes that emerge during the interviews (Alsaawi, 2014). Ultimately, this flexible and in-depth approach to data collection makes qualitative interviewing an appropriate tool for navigating the intricate relationship between human behavior, societal dynamics, and the powerful influence of Bollywood films on travel choices within India.

Over a two-month period, from March to April 2024, eleven in-depth interviews were conducted to explore the connection between Bollywood films and domestic travel in India. These interviews employed a mixed approach, with six participants conveniently located in Rotterdam meeting face-to-face, fostering a more personal connection. The locations of the interviews were also selected by the participants to ensure their comfort, mostly their workspace or a public library which provided a quiet and suitable environment for having a long conversation. An external recording device was used to record the face to face interviews, having asked permission from the participants. For the remaining five participants, video calls using the software Microsoft Teams were utilized to reach respondents from who were currently situated in cities across the world. The software allowed for the interviews to be automatically recorded with consent which later made it more convenient to transcribe and interpret the answers.

An interview guide (see appendix A) served as a roadmap for the conversations, ensuring key topics were covered. However, the guide remained flexible. The order of questions could be adapted based on the flow of the conversation, allowing participants to elaborate on unexpected but relevant ideas and personal experiences. This adaptability ensured a richer data collection process, capturing the unique perspectives and narratives of each participant.

c) Sample

In this study, Indian citizens between the ages of 20-30 (see appendix B) have been interviewed in order to understand how travel decisions are made and get a better understanding of their motivations influenced by watching Bollywood movies. This particular age group has been chosen due to the demographic situation of India right now in which people aged 20-30 are the current working class comprising the majority of the population (James & Goli, 2016). This is also the age group that has grown up watching the iconic Bollywood movies released in the early 2000s and thus has been exposed to the media sufficiently.

The method of sampling that has been used is a mix of criterion sampling and snowball sampling. The criterion which all respondents had to fulfill was that they have to be Indian

citizens and have to have traveled to a destination in India solely because they were motivated by a Bollywood movie. Majority of the respondents are working professionals with a minimum education of a Bachelor's degree. A few of the respondents are currently studying, completing their Master's degrees. The participants were first approached through social media, namely Instagram, since it is the most common platform of digital communication used in India. This resulted in 4 respondents answering the call put out on Instagram and the rest of the participants were interviewed through the network and connection of the initial 4. It is noteworthy to mention here that the researcher is also an Indian national which encouraged the participants to open up about their love for Bollywood and traveling within India. It fostered a connection that made them bring up anecdotes and examples of iconic Bollywood movies and their impacts which was appropriately understood and reciprocated by the interviewer, helping in building a rapport with the respondents.

d) Method of Data Analysis

Investigating the motivations of Indian tourists influenced by Bollywood films requires a research methodology that goes beyond surface level responses and delves into the intricacies of lived experiences. Grounded theory analysis, an established qualitative approach (Khan, 2014), offers a well-suited framework for this endeavor. Unlike traditional deductive methods, grounded theory prioritizes the emergence of theory from the data itself, fostering a deeper understanding of complex social phenomena (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This inductive approach aligns perfectly with the exploratory nature of this research, particularly when considering the multifaceted relationship between Bollywood and domestic travel in India.

Qualitative interviewing serves as the cornerstone of data collection within grounded theory. Participants are free to express themselves organically, revealing previously unknown connections and motivations that wouldn't be captured by standardized quantitative methods. This qualitative richness acts as a good foundation from which theory can grow.

Grounded theory analysis thrives on an iterative process (Orton, 1997). It begins with preliminary ideas but remains flexible, giving the space to constantly revise and refine the understanding as data accumulates. Each interview underwent meticulous analysis, with key

concepts and themes emerging organically. These themes were then compared across interviews, leading to a constant refinement and potential restructuring of the initial framework. This cyclical process continues until a robust and well-supported theory emerges, firmly grounded in the lived experiences of the participants.

This approach offers a synergistic relationship with qualitative interviewing. The open-ended nature of the interviews allows participants to share their unique stories and emotional connections to Bollywood films and their subsequent travel choices. Grounded theory analysis then takes these narratives and systematically identifies recurring themes and patterns, leading to a deeper understanding of the underlying forces at play (Natalini, 2023). For example, an interview participant might discuss their desire to visit a specific location after seeing a captivating dance sequence filmed there. Grounded theory analysis, applied across multiple interviews, could reveal a broader theme: the influence of Bollywood's visual storytelling on igniting a desire for cultural immersion through travel. The strength of grounded theory lies in its ability to unearth previously unknown connections and motivations directly from the data.

e) Operationalization

To truly understand how Bollywood movies influence where Indian travelers vacation within their own country, it is imperative to break down this phenomenon into its key components. This "operationalization" involves identifying specific aspects of movies that resonate with participants, alongside their personal experiences related to these portrayals. The study achieved this by gathering frequent examples from participants about their movie-influenced travel experiences and any patterns they've observed in their own behavior or that of others. As mentioned in the theoretical framework, the influence of Bollywood movies on the daily lives of people across cultures and countries is undeniable (Balabantaray, 2020) and so in order to set the foundation on the level of impact of the films and in what ways, the *Influence of Bollywood Movies* as a concept is introduced in the interview. To make it more tangible, questions like - What aspects of a bollywood movie usually appeal to you? - have been used.

Moving on from the general perception of Bollywood movies to specific concepts like *Destination Portrayal in Bollywood Movies*, helps in understanding how audiences perceive destinations after watching a movie and how this perception plays a role in their travel decisions and behaviors. Studies mention that depictions on the silver screen can hold a lot of power in terms of swaying the audience to one side (Kim & Richardson, 2003) and so by getting to know how the interviewees deal with this phenomenon, the results will be more deeply founded. For this topic there are questions like - Has your perception of an Indian destination changed due to the way it was portrayed in a Bollywood movie? - in order to make it more personalized and also observe how destination images can change by being depicted in a movie.

The interview's primary and extensive segment concentrates on *Tourist Motivations*, centering on how Bollywood movies prompt Indian tourists to travel domestically. The research aims to explore the specific factors within Bollywood films that inspire travel. To thoroughly examine Indian citizens' motivations, the interview guide incorporates questions such as: "Can you give an example of when a Bollywood movie influenced you to travel within India?" This approach encourages narrative storytelling, eliciting abundant information and details pertinent to the topic. By connecting theoretical concepts of tourist motivation with practical examples, the interview seeks to unravel the nuanced dynamics of Bollywood's influence on domestic travel preferences among Indian tourists. This section will also open the doors to discussion on what factors specifically are common influencers in tourist motivation. For instance, as Connell (2012) mentions, film characteristics such as set, scene, actors and editing can also make a huge difference in audience perception.

The final segment of the interview guide zooms in on *Cultural Identity and Influence* within the realm of Bollywood cinemasces, recognizing them as integral components of Indian society. Expanding upon the exploration of movies that inspire domestic travel and the underlying factors driving such inspiration, this section probes the potential influence of India's rich cultural diversity on travel decisions. By addressing questions like, "In what ways do you believe your cultural background has shaped your perception of Bollywood movies and their impact on your travel motivations?" the interview delves into the nuanced interplay between

cultural heritage and cinematic experiences. In doing so, it seeks to acknowledge and examine the diverse cultural nuances within the country and their significance in shaping audience values, beliefs, and perceptions. This paper delves into the intricate relationship between cultural identity, cinematic portrayals, and travel motivations in India. By exploring these questions, it uncovers the multifaceted influences shaping how Indians perceive themselves and make travel decisions. The study highlights the significant impact of film and media on cultural self-image and travel choices, offering a comprehensive understanding of this unique phenomenon. Through detailed analysis, it provides a window into the ways cultural identity and cinematic narratives intertwine, influencing travel behavior and preferences among Indians, thereby enriching the broader discourse on culture and tourism.

f) Ethical Considerations

Throughout the research and writing process, upholding ethical principles was paramount. This research paper adheres to these principles by ensuring informed consent, and confidentiality. Prior to any interview, participants were provided with a detailed informed consent form that outlined the purpose of the study, the data collection process, and their right to withdraw at any point. The form also clarified how their responses would be used and presented in the final research paper. This transparency ensured participants understood how their participation contributed to the study and allowed them to make a well-informed decision. Although the informed consent form stated that the names of the participants would be anonymized, permission was granted by the participants to use their first names in order to give the quotes and thus the data, a more real and experiential meaning. All interview recordings and transcripts were securely stored using password-protected software. The participants were also asked for permission to record the interviews and use their names and ages in the process of analyzing and interpreting their responses in order to make sure they knew how and in what way their identity details would be used.

Beyond these core principles, the research design itself was mindful of potential ethical concerns. The interview guide was carefully crafted to avoid leading questions or language that could influence participants' responses. Instead, open-ended questions encouraged participants

to share their unique perspectives and experiences with Bollywood films and travel. This approach fostered a genuine and unbiased conversation, ensuring the data collected accurately reflected the participants' motivations and viewpoints. These measures ensure participants' rights are protected, their privacy is respected, and the data collected remains reliable and unbiased. Ultimately, ethical considerations form the foundation of responsible research, allowing for a deeper understanding of the topic under investigation while safeguarding the well-being of those who participate.

4. Findings and Analysis

This section presents and analyzes data gathered through semi-structured qualitative interviews, offering a systematic overview of the findings. Through this analysis, overarching themes and patterns have emerged from participants' responses, shedding light on the motivations and reasons driving their preference for domestic travel, particularly in relation to Bollywood movies. The structure of this section unfolds in a logical sequence contributing to the theory building aspect of this paper. The findings follow a thematic flow (see Figure 1), the first and broader finding being an analysis and interpretation of the overall influence of Bollywood on the lifestyle and personalities of the participants. Topics like religion, career choices, and romantic expectations have been touched upon to show the level of impact Bollywood as a form of media has on the youth of India. This has been discussed first in order to set the context for the theme under the umbrella of the findings which deals with the core of this research, the factors with regard to Bollywood movies that play a role in the tourist motivations of young Indian citizens ultimately resulting in domestic tourism. It was observed that the tourist motivations could be categorized into four major themes which are Bollywood fandoms and travel behavior, representation of cultures and destinations, curiosity about production and finally, the practical side of Bollywood tourism.

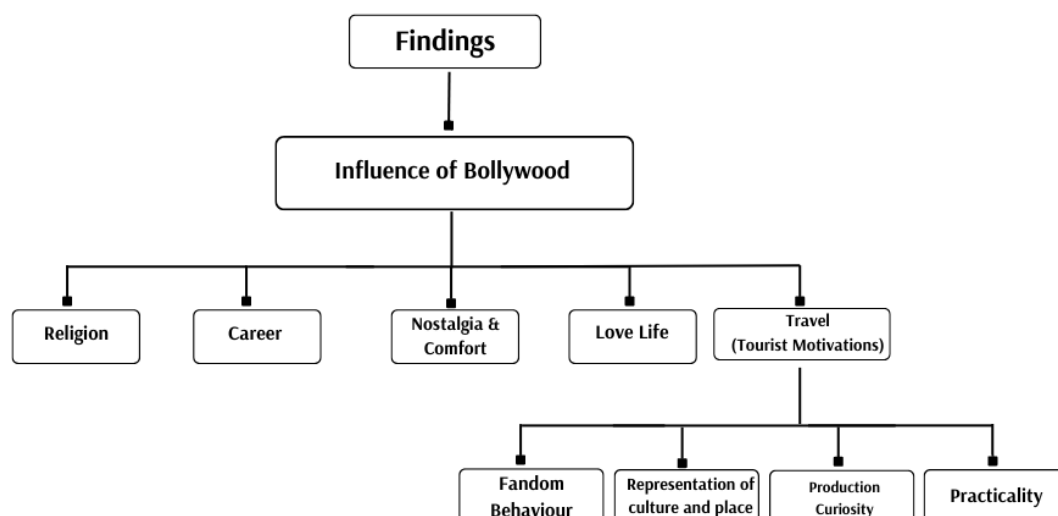


Figure 1. Representation of themes in a flow chart. Design by the author (2024).

Accordingly, the most common tourist motivation which was fandom-like behavior of the participants towards Bollywood movies has been explained using relevant quotes from the respondents. Moreover, the kind of representation of the various cultures and places in India on the silver screen was found to have a significant amount of impact on the travel motivations and decisions of the people and has thus been elaborated upon. This theme also touches upon how representation in media can influence cultural awareness and understanding positively. Another finding was the aspect of the logistics and execution of filming a movie scene that inspired respondents to visit a location and experience it on their own. Finally, the last section shows the reality of domestic tourism compared to the dreamy trips shown on screen and highlights the practical thought process that goes behind making the final travel decision.

a) Lights, Camera, Lifestyle: The Influence of Bollywood on Everyday Life of Indians

Many in India view Bollywood as more than just a source of amusement; it occupies a central role in their daily lives. The catchy tunes from recent hits fill the airwaves, and iconic movie lines find their way into everyday conversations. Bollywood's influence extends far beyond the silver screen, dictating fashion trends and even influencing the way people carry themselves and communicate. From childhood dreams ignited by on-screen heroes to the desire to emulate the dreamy lifestyles portrayed in movies, Bollywood becomes a powerful force that molds individual ambitions and societal expectations. It serves as a cultural foundation, a shared experience that unites communities and contributes to shaping the national identity.

The influence of Bollywood reflects an intricate connection between cinematic narratives and individual life aspirations. Navigating career choices is a pivotal moment for young adults, shaping their futures and identities. For many in India, this crucial decision can be surprisingly intertwined with the world of Bollywood. Highlighting this genuine impact, Tegpreet (23), a recent graduate, shared:

I definitely take a lot of inspiration from Bollywood movies. Watching a random movie in 2011, actually led me to pick a certain career path in a certain university and make friends with certain people.

This quote exemplifies how Bollywood movies transcend entertainment, becoming a source of inspiration and even a guiding force for young adults like Tgepreet as they embark on their professional journeys. Additionally, Palaash (23) talks about his experience of how some Bollywood movies showed him the military way of life which was previously unknown to him thus helping him make an informed decision about his career:

If you talk about (the films) Lakshya or LOC Kargil, they brought to life a certain way of life that had never been introduced to me, the army way of life and it helped me narrow down a few career choices and shortlist army as one of them.

Films in this way can also educate its audiences in the way of bringing new narratives to a wider audience in order to increase awareness. The interviews revealed that many of the respondents modeled their lifestyles and made a number of life changing decisions influenced by the films they saw as outlined further below. The study conducted previously by Nijhawan (2009) is in line with answers like that of Palaash which state that Bollywood movies do indeed have a positive impact on the ambitions of young Indians with regard to a career path. The sociological implications of these answers add onto the studies conducted on Bollywood's influence on diasporic identities (Nanjangud & Reijnders, 2020) showing that Indian audiences attribute popular Hindi cinema with a lot more significance than studied.

In line with studies done regarding Non-resident Indians and how they link Bollywood movies to a representation of their homeland and a connection to their roots (Datta, 2008), Indian students who have come abroad to study also echo the same thoughts. Aashrayi (23) talks about how Bollywood is a part of her day-to-day life as an international student in Oxford, England:

Whenever I'm feeling a little nostalgic about home I feel like Bollywood has a huge thing for me. It's a comfort zone, sitting back, watching something in Hindi to saying the dialogues is comforting.

According to several respondents, the act of watching Hindi films and reciting dialogues serves as a catalyst for evoking a sense of belonging and connection to one's cultural roots. This engagement with familiar cultural elements like Bollywood movies offers a source of stability and emotional support, particularly during periods of homesickness or displacement. It

underscores the profound impact of media, notably cinema, in shaping individuals' emotional well-being and sense of identity, especially within diasporic communities.

In a diverse country like India, religion ends up holding a very significant place in society in terms of hierarchy, policies and communities. At the very foundation, the majority of the religions vouch for peace and harmony in people; however, opposing perceptions lead to conflicts regarding the concept of god, truth and religion. For growing young adults, Bollywood movies act as a source of information regarding the ways of society as well. Thus participants shared that in their adolescence, movies on religion and spirituality really helped them form an opinion and take a stance on this topic. Palaash (23) elaborates on this with a few examples:

One (film) was Oh My God (OMG) and the other was PK, both dived really deep into questions as to why is there religion, what is god? The first part of my youth led me to a belief that, stay aloof, stay away from religion as much as possible. Then later on, I watched another movie and that had a lot of answers to my questions. It made me realize I'm a Hindu. What Hinduism is like.

In the context of the quote, the media acts as a catalyst for questioning established beliefs. Movies like "Oh My God" and "PK" plant seeds of doubt in the audience's mind by prompting them to critically evaluate religious practices and traditions. This exemplifies the power of the media to challenge the status quo and initiate a process of reevaluating long-held beliefs. Palaash's later shift towards embracing Hinduism, suggests a potential reinterpretation of tradition, where individuals seek to connect with their heritage while forging a more personal connection to spirituality.

Additionally, Bollywood's widespread popularity can be attributed to its intrinsic "Indianness," encompassing its slang, humor, and expressions, which resonate with Indians worldwide. This cultural familiarity creates a sense of exclusivity, akin to an inside joke tailored specifically for local audiences, thereby fostering a feeling of uniqueness and cultural affinity among viewers. Such sentiments further reinforce the significance of Bollywood as a cultural touchstone, bridging geographical distances and connecting individuals to their cultural heritage, even amidst the challenges of living away from home. Varun (29) explains how seeing

the dumb comedy and the silly antics of the characters in these films are what make him feel some sense of familiarity:

And living here in the Netherlands, I have to say that Bollywood movies or Indian content is one of the biggest factors that keeps me connected back at home. So it's like, oh yeah, this is so relatable. This is, yeah, this is so usual. This is so dumb. Yeah, we do it every day. It helps a lot.

Varun and Aashrayi, growing up abroad, were surrounded by global entertainment. Yet, when they felt alone or out of place, they turned to Bollywood movies. This highlights the powerful connection Indians have with Hindi cinema. This isn't just entertainment; it's a lifeline to their Indian identity. Hindi cinema acts as a comfort blanket, filled with familiar languages, traditions, and emotions. It's a portable piece of home. These movies become a bridge, reminding them who they are and connecting them to a shared cultural experience, even across vast distances.

Bollywood movies are known for their dramatic flair and emotional scenes. While it played out positively in the above section, successfully informing and encouraging audiences to make certain decisions, these movies take aspirations a bit too far and set idealistic expectations especially in the case of love and romance. For instance, Indian youngsters who have grown up watching Bollywood's romantic movies have faced some stark differences in expectations and reality. Varun, 29 years old says:

I think it definitely had a huge huge impact on my teenage dating life because I was always very extravagant and I was taking gifts and trying to ask women on dates with like Bollywood dialogues and stuff. So hilarious. I'm sure the girls had a fun time making mockery of me.

Another participant, Divya, 23 years old, adds:

Yeah, it did make me a little bit of a hopeless romantic in every kind of way, I would say. All the kinds of planning that I did back when I used to watch these movies was always like big goals, big dreams, drama. And I think Bollywood has a lot to do with that.

Like a coin, Bollywood's influence has two sides. The respondents while giving these answers spoke in a humorous tone however the underlying interpretations reveal that there was some extent of disappointment when what they saw on screen did not translate into real life. The

responses reveal a potential downside to being overly susceptible to "filmy" storylines. These stories, often filled with larger-than-life characters and dramatic plotlines, can create unrealistic expectations about love, relationships, and even social situations. The gap between the reel and the real can lead to feelings of dissatisfaction and a struggle to reconcile the dream world of cinema with the complexities of everyday life. The sentiments of the respondents reflected what many other Indian audiences have also felt according to past studies (Takhar et al., 2010). This highlights the importance of critical media literacy, where audiences can appreciate Bollywood's entertainment value while recognizing its inherent fictional nature.

A comparison of all the above subsections will reveal an interesting dichotomy. The answers of the respondents in relation to Bollywood's influence on their life showed many different sides of the Hindi film industry. Some were of the opinion that Bollywood rightfully depicted jobs in India which lead to a certain kind of lifestyle and this in turn made them want to structure their own lives accordingly. On the other hand, the portrayal of what love looks like and how to go about it was not very satisfactory for some of the participants as they expressed their unsuccessful experiences of taking inspiration from Bollywood. This phenomenon begs the question of how realistic Bollywood movies really are and where does one draw the line of authenticity since some love it for the drama while others love it for the simple truth. The Hindi cinema industry thus holds a lot of responsibility as it wears many hats and caters to the masala (spice) loving entertainment hungry audience as well as the learning, growing youth that want to have good role models. Although there are many debates and questions that can be raised on this issue, one aspect is undeniable which is visible from the interviews as well which is that audiences take inspiration from Bollywood and make life decisions accordingly, whether it is positive or negative, confirming the impact of films on Indian behavior.

b) From Screen to Scene: Tourist Motivations Influenced by Bollywood

Audiences, as the saying goes, "step into the shoes" of the characters, living vicariously through their triumphs and heartbreaks. This connection extends beyond the screen, as evidenced by the literature on tourist behavior. Fans go to great lengths to bridge the gap between fiction and reality. Dialogue becomes a language, influencing speech patterns. Life

choices can be inspired by on-screen journeys, with viewers seeking to emulate their heroes' paths. Fashion choices mimic the actors' styles. But the ultimate connection for Indian tourists is visiting filming locations. These destinations become more than landscapes; they're tangible pieces of the narrative. By recreating the visual world of the film, tourists complete the "sensory experience" of a media tourist. They're not just sightseeing, they're actively participating in the story, blurring the lines between audience and character. This immersive connection is a testament to the powerful influence of Bollywood cinema.

i) *Fandom behavior*

A huge travel enthusiast and movie buff, Tegpreet (23) talks about why he loves to combine his passion for films and traveling and visit places from his favorite movies:

Let's say sitting on the beaches in Mumbai, just like Wake up Sid did in that movie. And he just gets a epiphany of how he's been living his life and what he must do. I'm just sitting there and wondering if this is my Eureka moment as well and whether me being here, I can understand that character a little better and I get a chance to step into these shoes.

As the quote highlights, viewers go beyond simply watching. Inspired by a scene in "Wake Up Sid," Tegpreet travels to Mumbai's beaches, hoping to recreate the character's experience and perhaps even have their own moment of self-discovery. This trip isn't just about sightseeing, it's a pilgrimage to a place imbued with cinematic meaning. This desire to inhabit the world of the film reflects the power of Bollywood cinema. Manifestations of this desire become what has been described in the theoretical framework as fandom-like behavior (Waysdorf, 2013). The quote perfectly captures this transformative influence, where wanderlust is sparked not just by beautiful landscapes but by the yearning to participate in a cinematic story. Dhriti (23) explains how Bollywood crafts its stories with attractive visuals that make her want to see cities from the characters' perspectives:

I had already visited Udaipur before I saw the movie (Yeh Jawani Hai Dewani). But when I visited again, only for the sole purpose of feeling like I was in the movie, I could feel the

happiness because I saw where it was shot. This is where it happened. Just the excitement of being at the same place that your favorite movie was shot.

She emphasizes that Hindi cinema presents India's cultures, traditions, and destinations, which are generally known as common knowledge, in a captivating manner. When these places are filmed with vibrant color effects, relevant music in the background, and authentic experiences at their core, they become irresistible to audiences. The combination of these elements creates a powerful visual and emotional appeal, transforming familiar locations into dream destinations. For Dhriti, this blend of authenticity and artistic enhancement not only deepens her appreciation for these places but also ignites a strong desire to visit and experience them firsthand. Sayli (30) talks about the kinds of activities she participated in when she visited Pangong Lake in Ladakh, a high altitude destination shown in the iconic Bollywood movie *3 Idiots*:

Ladakhis have a typical dress which they wear there. It was near the *3 Idiots* filming spot where they have already kept those three benches where we did that activity and we were wearing their dresses and posing.

This connection extends beyond internal reflection. Fans take their fandom to a whole new level by dressing up as their favorite characters and imitating iconic poses at filming locations. This immersive act isn't just sightseeing, it's a performance of love for the movie. They become living replicas, blurring the lines between audience and character. This experience of the participants is similar to the imaginations and reality correlation introduced by Reijnders (2011) in which fans like to intermix imagination and reality by visiting filming locations and dressing up in order to have an embodied experience. Sociologically, this behavior fosters a sense of community among fans, allowing them to connect with like-minded individuals and express themselves creatively. It can also lead to a negotiation of reality and fiction, potentially impacting fans' perception of the real location and their own lives.

From a tourism perspective, this fandom behavior has significant implications. Locations immortalized on screen are seen to be experiencing a surge in popularity (Mittal & Anjanaswamy, 2013), attracting fans eager to recreate scenes and participate in the cinematic narrative. This translates to economic benefits for local businesses catering to these tourists.

However, this trend can also lead to a tension between authenticity and commodification (Cohen 1988). Local communities might feel pressure to cater to these tourists, potentially altering the cultural experience for others like the Ladakhis making their traditional attire available and fitted for visitors from outside their cultures in the example mentioned above.

All these examples and experiences fall under specific film tourists as described by Macionis (2004), which are the kind of tourists that travel to a filming location specifically because they saw it in a movie and liked it. The other kinds of film tourism namely, incidental tourism, were also observed to be a common experience in many of the respondents.

Hrishikesh (23) shares his experience of how he came upon a destination where a movie he had loved watching was filmed:

I went to Allahabad because I had some work there but then my work got done in the morning. Because I had seen this movie called Massan I was like, okay, I have come here now I have to come and see this point. That is what made me go out and explore that city a little bit.

Just like Croy and Heitmann (2011) described previously, Hrishikesh experienced incidental tourism when he did not travel to the city with the intention to see the filming location but happened to visit the site once he was there. While this provides some definite economic benefits to the destination or filming location, the unplanned visits from crowds could potentially be a burden on the infrastructure or tourist area.

Thus it can be gleaned that Bollywood films transcend mere entertainment, becoming powerful motivators for travel. Tegpreet's desire to recreate a character's journey and Sayli's immersive experience dressing up at a filming location exemplify the transformative influence cinema can have. This "fandom-like behavior" fosters a sense of community and allows viewers to connect with the stories on a deeper level. However, as Hrishikesh's experience with "incidental tourism" demonstrates, the desire to travel isn't limited to die-hard fans and is unintentional many of the times. Films have the subtle power to spark wanderlust, leading viewers to seek out and explore locations depicted on screen.

ii) *Representation of Culture and Places*

The influence of Bollywood on travel decisions isn't limited to creating a yearning for the unseen. The industry's captivating portrayal of Indian culture and traditions can even inspire return visits. The theoretical chapter of this study talks about cultural identity and Non-Resident Indians preferring to watch movies that are based on Indian heritage and traditions (Dissanayake, 2006). While Dhriti (23) is not an NRI, she feels the same pride and joy when she sees her country's cultures being represented beautifully on the silver screen:

But you just want to embrace, you just want to live the culture of your own country through these movies. Like the Ganga aarti (a kind of worship), I wasn't as attracted to it as I was after I saw it in all those movies. There's something about the movies that shows it in such a glamorous way with all the sound effects that you just want to live it once.

Similarly, Tegpreet also elaborates on how depiction of a place and certain typical Indian cultural events in a Bollywood movie made him change his travel preferences:

If I'm talking about (the film) *Yeh Jawani Hai Dewani*, they go to Udaipur and there's a scene where they are exploring the city and the shops. I never fancied Udaipur before that. I was more of an adventure, hills, beaches guy. I don't wanna go to a city with palaces, but just looking at the picturesque beauty and how the entire city is shown, the wedding, the great sightseeing spots, and that just piqued my interest in them.

This shift is not merely about the visual appeal but also about how Bollywood encapsulates the essence of a place, blending authenticity with cinematic enchantment. The respondent's experience highlights the role of narrative and visual storytelling in altering preconceived notions and broadening horizons. It suggests that Bollywood doesn't just showcase locations but immerses audiences in the cultural and emotional landscapes of these places, fostering a deeper connection. Furthermore, the quote underscores the nuanced interplay between personal identity and cinematic influence. Tegpreet, previously uninterested in Udaipur's heritage, finds a new dimension to his travel aspirations, revealing how cinema can subtly influence and expand one's cultural and experiential repertoire. This phenomenon points to a

broader cultural dynamic where media consumption shapes real-world choices and enriches the viewer's understanding and appreciation of their own cultural heritage.

While Dhriti and Tegpreet had very positive experiences of the representation of cultures on the silver screen, other respondents did not share the same thoughts. When questioned on this topic, it was revealed that many were not satisfied with the representation of the North and South Indian cultures which are usually depicted in a very stereotypical way. This points to the fact that while Bollywood sometimes does a good job of showing the unknown to its audiences, it also could do a better job of showing the people in the correct light. Divya (23), a South Indian herself, speaks about her personal dissatisfaction:

If they're trying to show the northern region, say Himalayas or something, women are always wearing big jhumkas (earrings) and colorful clothes. Or Punjabis as well, always long hair plaited (braided). If it's in Kashmir, then it's like terrorist people. Even for South India, it's always people talking in broken Hindi, always wearing lungies (typical South Indian attire). So there are a lot of stereotypes about how they portray these places.

This quote exemplifies the problematic nature of stereotypical portrayals in media. Rather than reflecting the nuanced cultural tapestry of regions like the Himalayas or South India, these depictions reduce individuals to easily identifiable tropes based on clothing and superficial mannerisms. Such constant reiteration serves to solidify these stereotypes within the minds of the audience, fostering a sense of "otherness" and hindering the development of a more comprehensive understanding of these diverse cultures. Furthermore, the quote highlights the potentially harmful consequences of negative stereotypes, such as the association of Kashmir with "terrorist people." This reinforces Islamophobic attitudes and can have negative real-world implications by promoting prejudice.

Speaking of stereotypes, when asked about their opinion on the portrayal of domestic and international destinations in Bollywood movies, there was a consensus among all the respondents that there was a significant difference. The disparity is outlined in the theories mentioned in the past by Gyimothi (2018) and Raj and Sreekumar (2018) which highlight the pretty and impressive parts of foreign locations while catering to stereotypes of domestic

locations like noise, pollution and crowds. Varun (29) elaborates on this difference in portrayal by sharing his opinion:

Sometimes the poverty of India is over depicted. The reality of a foreign country is under-represented, so if you only pick the good parts of each country, then you've definitely painted a picture which is not very real. It may be true, but not in the complete sense.

The essence of Bollywood lies in its ability to reflect Indian culture, emotions, and values, which are sometimes overshadowed by the allure of Western settings. Additionally, a study conducted by Josiam (2020) outlined how the repeated overly positive image of foreign locations presented in Bollywood movies can create an unrealistic perception of these destinations in the minds of the audiences. Such representations risk alienating the core audience that looks to Bollywood as a mirror of their own cultural experiences and heritage. Rishav (23) highlights a pattern in Bollywood films where domestic locations are portrayed comprehensively, showing both positive and negative aspects, while foreign locations are depicted by focusing primarily on their positive traits. This selective representation may influence cultural perceptions and national identity, potentially affecting how individuals view their own country in comparison to foreign cultures. It can also impact tourism dynamics, potentially increasing interest in foreign travel while affecting domestic tourism. Rishav emphasizes:

Most of the Bollywood films will cover all the aspects of the nation, the good, the bad, the ugly, everything. But when it comes to foreign locations, they will only show the good part. The bad part will be there, but it would comparatively be less. So I feel they keep the abroad locations at a higher pedestal compared to our own country.

This focus on Western settings can inadvertently promote a skewed perception of aspirational living, where Western lifestyles are glamorized at the expense of celebrating Indian diversity and uniqueness. It was also an observation by some of the participants that earlier, a few decades back, the portrayal was more extreme and stereotypical referencing the movie *Slumdog Millionaire* as the movie that made India look like a poverty stricken nation. However the interview answers revealed a positive shift in dynamics as the participants explained how

Bollywood is striving to depict destinations as they are, showing the positive and negative of both domestic and international places. As Bollywood continues to evolve, there is a critical need to balance global appeal with the preservation of its cultural roots, ensuring that the "Indianness" remains at the heart of its storytelling (Nanjangud & Reijnders, 2020). This distinction is relevant in answering the research question about tourist motivations since the positive portrayal of destinations does indeed reflect an increased desire to visit a filming location as indicated by Kim and Richardson (2003) and vice versa. Thus, if Bollywood represents places in different lights, it subsequently affects how the audience views those destinations and considers them for their next holiday.

iii) *Curiosity About Production*

Having examined how storylines, characters, and dialogues in Bollywood movies influence Indian tourists, it is equally important to explore the impact of the production and execution aspects of these films. This section delves into how the intricate logistics, filming techniques, and behind-the-scenes elements of Bollywood productions motivate Indian tourists. While the narrative and emotional components of movies undoubtedly captivate audiences, the technical aspect and execution often inspire a different kind of admiration and curiosity. Aashrayi (23) explains why she visited an otherwise pretty ordinary river in India but became famous due to a Bollywood film song being shot on it:

We wanted to go there because of the intricacies behind the music video. So it (the scene) goes through marble rocks and I think the ghat (mountainous terrain) is really really really deep, like thousands of feet deep. And Kareena Kapoor for the music video, wanted to be without any safety harness. And I'm strapped into a boat and it's still really rocky and really scary. It's just more of a, oh, she did that here.

It is a common phenomenon when people want to visit sites or locations where impressive things have been done, as has been the case with historical sites (Ries & Schwan, 2023). This has transcended into media tourism where tourists flock to places to see where artists found their inspiration, where actors or actresses performed certain stunts, etc. The urge to visit can be attributed to the culmination of a beautiful song sequence laced with a bit of danger

accentuated by the natural beauty and wildness of the location. This exploration not only highlights the diverse motivations driving film-induced tourism but also underscores the multifaceted influence of Bollywood on its audience. This connection between the filmic representation and real-world geography not only sparked curiosity but also made the magical cinematography become a real experience (Nanjangud & Reijnders, 2022).

Additionally, respondents also shared admiration for the filmmakers who went ahead of their time in terms of creativity and execution of shots. The cinematography and planning behind each scene is what fascinated audiences and irked their interest to understand the behind-the-scenes process and see the location where it all happened. Anhaita (27) shares her interest in a movie for similar purposes:

There was this drone shot in (the film) *Salaam Namaste*. It's filmed so long back, how did they take that drone shot because there was nothing related to a drone at that time. I am that person who would look into the scene and how it's shot and what I really like is how detailed art directors are.

By appreciating both the content and production sides of cinema, Indian tourists engage more deeply with the film industry, enriching their travel experiences and fostering a profound connection to the art of filmmaking.

iv) Convenience & Practicality of Bollywood Tourism

Bollywood movies undoubtedly influence and motivate many travel decisions, inspiring viewers to dream of idyllic vacations in exotic foreign locales. These films, with their glamorous portrayals of places like Mauritius, Iceland and Australia create a powerful allure that captivates audiences, making them yearn to experience the same magic they see on screen. However, the reality of travel is often quite different, as people must consider practical factors such as their current financial situation, available time, and the effort required to plan and execute such trips. This discrepancy between cinematic fantasy and real-life logistics means that not all tourist motivations are fulfilled. While the dream of a perfect vacation can be enticing, the complexities of budgeting, scheduling, and the actual travel experience itself can temper expectations and outcomes, leading to a gap between the romanticized ideal and the

achievable reality. Rishav talks about why he thinks tourists traveling abroad and traveling domestically are not equal in numbers:

It depends on a person's budget. I don't think it has much to do with films because a person might be equally interested in going abroad as much as traveling in India. But because of budgetary constraints, they might be restricting themselves to India for now.

Palaash also adds:

If you had the money, a person or a family would prefer visiting a foreign location as compared to an Indian one.

Anhaita agrees by mentioning the influence of Bollywood movies on tourist motivation:

That would depend on the kind of strata that we're talking about. If there is someone who can afford it, definitely I think Bollywood movies would be the biggest motivator of really going abroad.

These quotes challenge the idea that Bollywood movies are the main driver behind the desire to travel abroad, positing instead that financial considerations play a more significant role. Therefore, despite a potential desire to explore foreign locations inspired by films, budgetary constraints can lead people to opt for more affordable domestic destinations. It might also point towards the pattern that Bollywood-inspired domestic travel is often a plan B for people that would rather go abroad if they had the resources. This perspective highlights the pragmatic aspects of travel planning, emphasizing that economic factors can override the aspirational influence of movies. It implies that while films might inspire travel dreams, the practical decision of where to go is ultimately governed by financial reality. Additionally, since the people interviewed are either fresh graduates who are earning the most basic income currently or still students, it was observed that when they need to make decisions about where to travel, the money aspect also dictates the company they are traveling with. Hrishikesh talks about how his travel destination choice and budget is impacted:

This depends on who I'm going with. If I'm going with family, the budget restraints are not that much. We can choose to spend a little bit more. But if I'm going on a trip with my friends, then we won't be that free.

This perspective emphasizes the variability in travel budgeting based on social context. It reflects the idea that financial flexibility can vary significantly depending on who is involved in the trip. The willingness to spend more with family could be tied to the value placed on family experiences and shared enjoyment, while the need for budget discipline with friends could stem from a desire to maintain affordability and equality among the group. This analysis underscores the multifaceted nature of travel decision-making, where financial considerations are intertwined with social dynamics and group relationships. This connection adds a new perspective to answering the research question regarding tourist motivations. While Bollywood ignites an interest to visit a destination, someone with a family who are also keen to travel may be able to manifest that motivation into a travel experience whereas a bachelor with friends on a limited budget and time restrictions can only resort to domestic travel.

Furthermore, it was also touched upon that other factors such as level of education, social class and economic strata are all directly connected in a cause-effect relationship with the kinds of destinations that people are able to choose at the end. Dhriti elaborates:

Bollywood alone, it could obviously be a secondary reason why I have seen people choose a domestic place. But the primary reason is, according to me, the fact that the social economic status is rising.

The literature presented above also confirms her comment and attributes increased tourism in India as well as internationally to the boom of the middle class (Nanjangud, 2019) that gives them a higher level of education, making them think deeply about how they want to spend their money and time.

This section significantly contributes to the theory-building aspect of this paper, as it explores the complex relationship between the logistics of travel and the influence of Bollywood movies—an area previously unaddressed in studies and research. A noteworthy addition to this relationship is the proactive role of the national government and filmmakers, who have recognized and begun leveraging this connection to their advantage. Respondents highlight initiatives that promote domestic destinations through Bollywood movies, aligning with audience tourist motivations and film tourism trends. An example of these initiatives is one by the national government which set up a Film Facilitation Office (FFO) that makes the

process of getting filming access and licenses significantly convenient (Cardoz, 2023). Another strategy by the governments at state level to promote domestic filming was the eradication of all taxes and fees with regard to filming on government property (Cardoz, 2023). These efforts aim to balance the appeal of cinematic inspiration with the practical considerations of affordability and accessibility. By integrating popular film locations with domestic travel promotions, stakeholders seek to enhance local tourism while catering to the financial and logistical realities of the audience. This strategic approach not only boosts local economies but also makes travel more attainable for a broader segment of the population. Thus, this section sheds light on the emerging synergy between film-induced travel inspiration and practical travel planning, offering new insights into the dynamics of tourism influenced by popular culture.

5. Conclusion

This study investigated the motivations of Indian tourists to travel domestically in order to understand what factors inspire them to go visit the locations they see on the silver screen of Bollywood. The analysis of 11 in-depth interviews revealed the answer to the question of this research paper in a flowchart manner leading from one broad theme which is the pervasive influence of Bollywood on the daily lives of Indian citizens. One aspect of daily life is travel and tourism and thus the influence of Bollywood movies on their tourist motivations has subsequently been outlined in detail.

Primarily, it was established that Bollywood films have an undeniable impact on the imagery of India and of its cultures and traditions on the people watching them. Whether it is a citizen born and brought up in India or an Indian student who is studying abroad, fans watch Bollywood movies for their familiarity, sense of nostalgia and the Indian aesthetic. For today's 20-year-olds, Bollywood transcends mere entertainment; it serves as a window into Indian culture, traditions, and values. This is very much in line with the kind of insight into Indian culture that NRIs seek from Bollywood movies (Dissanayake, 2006) highlighting the 'infotainment' and educational aspect of the Hindi cinema industry.

These individuals not only watch Bollywood movies for enjoyment but also as a means to learn about their own heritage and identity. Through the characters and storylines modeled after real life, audiences re-learn the values and traditions that they have been taught at home and are happy to see famous actors also live by the same principles as them. Respondents seemed to develop a deep emotional connection with the cultural elements depicted in Bollywood films, influencing their tourist motivations and travel patterns. Identifying with relatable stories on screen, the participants felt acknowledged and understood, leading them to integrate the characters' experiences into their own lives. Bollywood movies profoundly influence various aspects of life, including romance, futures, careers, jobs, and aspirations, while also evoking a sense of nostalgia and comfort. This multifaceted impact renders them highly influential and relevant to their audiences.

Previous studies (Takhar et al., 2010; Rasul & Raney, 2015) corroborate the responses of interviewees in this research concerning themes of romance and nostalgia, highlighting

Bollywood's significant impact in these areas. However, a notable discrepancy emerged in relation to careers and jobs (Pinnamshetty & Rayaprol, 2021). This study advances the discourse on the representation of everyday life in Bollywood films and its subsequent influence on audiences. It underscores how these cinematic portrayals inspire viewers to model their lives accordingly. By examining the divergence in career and job-related impacts, this research contributes to a more nuanced understanding of Bollywood's role in shaping audience perceptions and behaviors. The findings indicate that while Bollywood effectively shapes romantic ideals and nostalgic sentiments, its influence on career-related self-efficacy and behaviors may be less pronounced, suggesting areas for further exploration in media influence studies. This research thus enriches the theoretical framework surrounding the societal impacts of Bollywood, emphasizing the genre's complex and varied effects on different life domains. Inspired by their idols, they embarked on journeys to destinations featured in movies, mirroring the adventures of beloved characters. This intertwining of personal narratives with cinematic narratives reflects the profound impact of Bollywood on shaping individuals' travel decisions and cultural exploration.

Additionally, it was also derived that audiences took part in fandom behavior in the form of repeating dialogues, recreating pictures and even wearing similar clothes. The respondents, as avid Bollywood fans, exhibited their fervent devotion through a variety of behaviors that reflected their deep connection to the industry and its offerings. One notable manifestation of this dedication is the recreation of iconic scenes from their favorite movies. Whether it's reenacting dramatic dialogues or traveling to the filming location to recreate the scene, fans immerse themselves in the cinematic world, paying homage to their favorite films and stars.

These journeys are almost like pilgrimages that the Bollywood fandom takes in order to worship the cinematic masterpieces that have captured their hearts. This allows them to forge tangible connections with the stories and characters they cherish.

Furthermore, the interviews showed that Bollywood fans enjoy being part of the community that watches and understands Bollywood films, the culturally aligned jokes and antic behaviors that characters portray. Destinations also were observed to encourage this

behavior by providing sets items from the movie at the filming location motivating audiences to recreate the iconic shots. In essence, the behaviors exhibited by Bollywood lovers in the form of scene recreation, pilgrimage to filming locations, and dialogue repetition reflect a profound sense of attachment and identification with the cinematic universe which translates into their tourist motivation to go to filming locations and perform these fan behaviors. Fandom behaviors with regard to films are sparsely studied and the few papers that have been written compare Bollywood fandoms to the Indian form of worship for gods (Mitra, 2020). While the respondents did reflect an urge to merge reality with fantasy from the movies thus mirroring a kind of worship, the actions of recreation of poses and costume wearing are on the less extreme side on the spectrum of idol crazed worship.

Going deeper into the answers of the respondents also revealed the emergence of a significant theme that was common among many. It reflects the social and societal relevance of Bollywood movies that successfully translates in the minds and hearts of the audiences. Bollywood often raises awareness about the diversity of cultures within India. The extravagant weddings, colorful festivals, sincere prayers and strict rituals show what life looks like for Indians across the country to people sitting in one part of the nation. By portraying characters from different regions, religions, and backgrounds, these movies stand for recognition and showcase the multifaceted nature of Indian society. A possible critique in this case could be that while Bollywood is representative in terms of cultures, religion and gender, it is still somewhat stereotypical (Pinnamshetty & Rayaprol, 2021) in these representations. Thus inclusivity, diversity and a more varied representation of the people is something that Bollywood can strive for in the future.

The findings show that these movies act as a medium of spreading awareness about the diversity of cultures, religions and traditions in India. Given the amount of conflicts that rise due to cultural and religious differences in India, the popular Hindi cinema industry with its nationwide reach and entertaining facade could probably send a message of sensitivity to the audiences which other more explicit and serious mediums could not. From vibrant wedding celebrations in Punjab to colorful festivals in Rajasthan, Bollywood movies offer glimpses into the kaleidoscope of cultural practices that define the Indian landscape. By depicting these

traditions on screen, filmmakers not only celebrate the richness of Indian heritage but also foster appreciation and respect for diverse cultural expressions according to the audiences. For many participants, Bollywood often addressed themes related to religion by exploring the complexities of faith and spirituality in contemporary society. Whether through historical epics, social dramas, or romantic sagas, these films delve into the interplay between religion and identity, challenging stereotypes and promoting interfaith dialogue. By depicting characters from diverse religious backgrounds and portraying their interactions with empathy and authenticity, Bollywood movies encourage tolerance and understanding, fostering a sense of unity amidst diversity. Bollywood's narratives can act as powerful tools for dismantling stereotypes. By presenting fresh perspectives on destinations and cultures, these films can spark a desire in viewers to experience these places firsthand. This motivation to travel often stems from a newfound appreciation, challenging preconceived notions viewers might have previously held.

Finally, the interviews conducted provided intriguing insights into the evolving dynamics of Indian tourist motivations influenced by Bollywood. While the cinematic content has traditionally been a primary source of inspiration for travelers, there emerged a notable shift in perspective. Participants expressed a growing fascination with the behind-the-scenes aspects of film production, particularly the logistics and execution involved in filming at specific locations. This shift suggests a deeper appreciation for the intricacies of filmmaking and a desire to engage with the tangible elements of the cinematic process. By shifting focus from the narrative content to the practical aspects of production, participants demonstrated a nuanced understanding of the filmmaking process and its impact on their travel motivations. Previously studied in the context of Bollywood music tourism, the idea of visiting a location due to being interested in the making of a music video (Nanjangud & Reijnders, 2022) has been observed to be prevalent even in film tourism and the logistics of filming. The fascination with risky stunts, and stunning backdrops hold the same significance in tourist motivation as it did previously in addition to the findings of this paper. When tourists are able to associate a real life location with the awe-inspiring production story behind it, their travel motivations influenced by Bollywood movies become concrete. This finding underscores the multidimensionality of

Bollywood's influence on tourist behavior, highlighting the significance of both narrative content and production logistics in shaping travelers' experiences.

While Bollywood films often showcase stunning locales, a new finding reveals a fascinating disconnect between cinematic inspiration and the practicalities of travel planning for Indian tourists. While picturesque landscapes ignite a spark of wanderlust, factors like economic resources and social status ultimately shape where Indian tourists choose to vacation within their own country. This study, conducted amidst India's booming tourism and film industries, highlights a surprising truth. Though Bollywood movies might spark initial interest in a destination, the logistical hurdles associated with domestic travel become the deciding factor. Respondents overwhelmingly agreed that navigating transportation, language differences, currency exchange, and unfamiliar food options play a significant role in choosing their next travel adventure. In essence, the initial spark ignited by the silver screen is ultimately trumped by the comfort and feasibility of the travel experience itself.

This finding presents an interesting opportunity for both the tourism industry and filmmakers. Tourism destinations could potentially collaborate with Bollywood productions to not only showcase beautiful scenery but also highlight the ease of access, language support services, and familiar culinary options available to potential visitors. This could bridge the gap between cinematic inspiration and the reality of travel planning for Indian tourists. Similarly, filmmakers could incorporate logistical considerations into their narratives, showcasing not just the beauty of a location but also the smooth travel experience it offers. This subtle shift in storytelling could empower viewers to translate their Bollywood-inspired wanderlust into real-world travel plans. By acknowledging the practical concerns of Indian tourists, both the tourism industry and Bollywood can work together to turn cinematic dreams into unforgettable travel experiences.

This research paper breaks new ground by identifying the factors that inspire Indian tourists to travel domestically based on Bollywood movie portrayals. By delving into this unique niche, the study significantly enriches the broader conversation surrounding Bollywood tourism. The findings contribute to existing theories on fan behavior by touching upon the urge to retrace characters' lives and model their lives accordingly, tourist motivations are explained

through factors like representation of cultures on screen and the financial considerations of travel. These additions to the academic field advance our understanding of how the concepts of Bollywood and tourism intersect. By introducing themes like "production curiosity," which explores the desire to see filming locations firsthand, and "attachment to cultural components," which examines the emotional connection viewers form with on-screen representations of their heritage, the research adds a valuable layer to the theoretical framework of Bollywood tourism. This not only deepens our understanding of the phenomenon but also paves the way for future studies to explore these nuanced connections between film, travel, and cultural identity.

The burgeoning field of Bollywood tourism research offers a captivating lens through which to examine the confluence of popular culture, travel, and social dynamics. While the current study employed a readily accessible sample through social media platforms due to resource constraints, this approach, while practical, necessitates further exploration from a broader perspective like a more varied and larger sample size. As India's tourism and film industries continue their remarkable ascent, future research holds immense potential to delve deeper into this multifaceted phenomenon.

One particularly intriguing avenue for future studies lies in understanding how tourist destinations perceive and respond to the influx of Bollywood tourists. Do these destinations view these visitors as a golden goose, eager to capitalize on the increased revenue opportunities they present? Alternatively, are they grappling with challenges associated with overtourism, where the sheer volume of visitors strains local infrastructure and resources? Exploring these divergent perspectives could yield important findings beneficial to both tourism and film industries.

For instance, destinations struggling with over tourism could potentially collaborate with filmmakers to depict alternative locations within their regions, thereby dispersing tourist traffic and fostering a more sustainable tourism model. Conversely, destinations eager to attract Bollywood tourists could develop targeted marketing campaigns that capitalize on the allure portrayed on screen. Understanding these dynamics would allow both industries to strategically leverage Bollywood's influence to maximize mutual benefit.

Another critical area ripe for further exploration lies in the intricate relationship between filmmakers and destination management businesses. While artistic freedom remains a cornerstone of filmmaking, the question arises: Do filmmakers prioritize complete creative control when choosing shooting locations, or do they engage in collaborative partnerships with destinations to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes? Examining these "behind-the-scenes" dynamics could offer valuable insights for both parties.

On the one hand, understanding the extent to which filmmakers collaborate with destinations might lead to a more nuanced comprehension of how locations are portrayed on screen. The portrayal of pristine landscapes in films can range from purely aesthetic showcases to collaborations highlighting the cultural and environmental significance of those destinations. This knowledge could empower filmmakers to become inadvertent stewards of responsible tourism practices, encouraging viewers to visit with respect for the local environment and culture. Conversely, exploring the perspective of destination management businesses could illuminate the extent to which they actively court Bollywood productions. Do they offer financial incentives to filmmakers in exchange for positive portrayals, or do they prioritize maintaining authenticity and local character? Delving into these considerations could pave the way for the development of mutually beneficial partnerships that marry artistic vision with sustainable and responsible tourism practices.

By expanding the scope of Bollywood tourism research beyond the immediate confines of audience perspectives, future studies can play a pivotal role in fostering a more symbiotic relationship between the film industry and the tourism sector. By examining the perspectives of stakeholders within the destination management landscape and the intricate dynamics between them and filmmakers, future research can contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of Bollywood tourism's impact on India's socio-economic landscape. Ultimately, this deeper understanding can inform the development of responsible tourism practices, ensuring that Bollywood's influence translates into a sustainable and mutually beneficial force for both the film industry and the destinations it showcases.

6. References

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7. Appendix A

Interview Guide

Hello, I am Kajori Ganguly. I am currently doing my Masters in Tourism, Culture and Society at Erasmus University Rotterdam. As a part of my course I am conducting a study on the influence of bollywood movies on the tourist motivation of Indian citizens to travel within the country. Thank you so much for agreeing to participate in this research. Today I would like to talk to you about your motivations to travel, your preferences in bollywood movies and the connection between these two concepts. As you read in the informed consent form that you signed, this interview is completely confidential and your name will not be mentioned if you do not want it to be. You can also choose to withdraw your answers at any point in time. Do you have any questions at this point?

Let's start with some general information.

Introduction

1. Could you tell me a bit about yourself?
 - Where are you from?
 - How old are you?
 - What gender do you identify as?
 - What do you do?
2. How often would you say you travel, internationally as well as domestically?
3. What are some of your experiences of traveling within India?

Understanding the Influence of Bollywood Movies

4. Do you like Bollywood movies?
 - Why?
5. What aspects of a bollywood movie usually appeal to you?
 - What are your favorite Bollywood movies?
6. Have you observed any ways in which Bollywood has influenced your day-to-day life?

Destination Portrayal in Bollywood Movies

7. Have you watched a Bollywood movie set in India?
 - What do you think of the image of India that has been portrayed?
8. How do Bollywood movies portray different regions and tourist destinations in India according to you?
 - Do you think the portrayals you mentioned are accurate? Why/Why not?
9. Has your perception of an Indian destination changed due to the way it was portrayed in a Bollywood movie? How so/Why not?
10. Have you seen any Bollywood movies that are shot in foreign locations?
 - What do you think about the portrayal of the foreign destination?
 - Have you observed any differences in domestic and international destination portrayals?

Tourist Motivation

11. What do you usually take into account when choosing a travel destination?
12. Could you describe an experience where you were influenced by a Bollywood movie to travel to a destination within India?
 - What was the destination like?
 - Did the portrayal in the movie match your expectations of the place? How so/Why not?
 - What kind of activities did you do at the destination?
 - Did the trip affect your understanding of cultural differences within India?

Cultural Influence and Identity

13. How has Bollywood played a part in your upbringing or in shaping your cultural identity?
14. How would you say your own cultural background has affected the way you perceive Bollywood movies?

Closing

15. Do you think Indian tourists motivated by Bollywood movies travel to domestic and foreign locations in equal numbers?

- Why?

16. What kind of behavior inspired by Bollywood have you noticed in tourists around you while traveling?

That's the end of my questions. Do you have any questions for me?

Thank you so much for participating in this interview.

8. Appendix B
Participants Demographics

Name	Age	Gender	Profession
Aashrayi	23	Female	Student
Palaash	23	Male	Marketing Executive
Rishav	23	Male	Business Developer
Tegpreet	23	Male	Entrepreneur
Dhriti	23	Female	Student
Hrishikesh	23	Male	Sports Broadcaster
Divya	23	Female	Digital Marketer
Prithu	23	Male	Operations
Anhaita	28	Female	Dentist
Varun	29	Male	Intermodal Batch Planner
Sayli	30	Female	Physiotherapist

9. Appendix C
Code Sheet

Code Group	Sub-codes	Definition	Quotes
Fandom Behavior	acted on travel motivation action of characters comparing real life to movie film tourism film tourism marketing film tourist behavior identifying known places Media influence film tourist behavior movie merchandise recreating iconic poses reason for travel repeating dialogues symbolic locations touristy behavior inspired by films	The kinds of behaviors that the participants exhibited while visiting a filming location sometimes pinning them as their motivations for traveling.	“So 24 years ago the movie was released and people are still going to that fort and making that pose because of Dil Chahta Hai.” - Sayli
Values and Beliefs	Acceptance assumption bollywood and family father influenced choices father initiated travel influence of bollywood Social factors	The set of values and beliefs regarding travel and movies which have either been instilled by parents or learnt from	“Whenever my dad used to come home, at least on Saturdays, we would just watch a movie on

		society.	television when we were having dinner.” - Tegpreet
Factors of travel	Adventure Adventure seeking Analysis freedom ideal conditions of shooting main source of motivation to travel	These are the characteristics respondents look for while selecting a travel destination.	“I'd say if it's something new to me, that's one thing I definitely look out for warm and beachy, I'm not a, I'm not a physical activity person, so no hikes. Yeah, these are the things I look into.” - Dhriti
Reality of Travel	Adventure domestic travel gaining fire domestic travel is easier tough international travel finance international travel not practical Logistics travel hard personal experience	Apart from the influence of Bollywood and other factors, these aspects play a significant role in finally deciding a destination to	“Apart from the crowd, well, Goa is known for its relaxed lifestyle, the chill atmosphere, you need some peace and quiet. That

	<p>reality of foreign locations</p> <p>Preference</p> <p>prices in UK</p> <p>Public engagement</p> <p>reason for not visiting</p> <p>shift in travel preferences</p> <p>wfh made travel easier</p>	visit.	<p>was a bit missing from the locations I chose in my itinerary.”</p> <p>- Palaash</p>
<p>Cultural Enlightenment</p>	<p>Contrast between cultures</p> <p>Culinary tourism</p> <p>Cultural awareness</p> <p>Cultural difference</p> <p>Cultural diversity</p> <p>Cultural event in movie</p> <p>Different religions</p> <p>Diversity</p> <p>Familiarity of culture Influence of culture</p> <p>Intrigued by sheer diversity</p> <p>Movies break prejudices</p> <p>Previous opinion</p>	<p>The ways in which Bollywood movies have made audiences aware of cultural differences in India.</p>	<p>“It was very interesting to see how the entire city, how different it is from the rest of India and so similar and how so many things can exist in such a place, especially the amount of stories.”</p> <p>- Rishav</p>
<p>Portrayal of Destinations</p>	<p>Countries not shown accurately</p> <p>Another stereotype of india</p> <p>Confirmation of glorification</p> <p>Cultural identity</p> <p>Cultural representation</p>	<p>The way in which different locations (international vs domestic as well as domestic vs</p>	<p>“When it comes to India, no one thinks twice before taking a kick out of it.</p>

	<p>Differences in imagery</p> <p>Fascination international travel</p> <p>Foreign rarely shown negatively</p> <p>Foreign means positive change</p> <p>Foreign locations symbolized as Prosperity</p> <p>Geography</p> <p>Glorification of foreign locations</p> <p>Glorified image of foreign</p> <p>Glorifying india</p> <p>India in Bollywood</p> <p>International domestic contrast</p> <p>Nationalism</p> <p>Portrayal of a place</p> <p>Positive perception</p> <p>Rural life abroad and at home</p> <p>Stereotype</p> <p>Stereotype of delhi</p>	<p>domestic) have been represented on the screen in Bollywood movies.</p>	<p>Yeah and there is a lot of stuff about India which even in movies has to be portrayed as, okay, this is not great.”</p> <p>- Aashrayi</p>
Reel vs Real Life	<p>Ambiguity</p> <p>Awareness</p> <p>Bollywood not accurate</p> <p>Crowding at locations</p> <p>Ground reality is not the same</p> <p>Influence of media</p> <p>Movies mirror reality sometimes</p> <p>Movies romanticize</p>	<p>The difference between expectation based on movies and reality from personal experiences.</p>	<p>“Like Goa is shown as this party place where everyone just goes and gets drunk and does stupid stuff. But Goa is so much more of nature, beaches</p>

			and surfing. And you get to do so many fun things, which is not just partying. And you don't see a lot of that.” - Divya
Bollywood filming abroad	Example of movies shot abroad Bollywood and budget Bollywood conquering tourism International travel glorification Party scenes shot abroad Sensible foreign filming Trend of exotic locations	Examples and thoughts on instances when Bollywood films were filmed in foreign locations.	“Things start looking in high definition, start seeing brighter colors.” - Tegpreet
Bollywood filmed in India	Based on reality India's beauty not showcased Type of locations are mundane	Examples and thoughts on instances when Bollywood films were filmed in domestic locations.	“First thing is I feel like more of them should be set back home” - Aashrayi
Influence of Bollywood	Balance Bollywood is nostalgia Career Influence	The various aspects of life that have been influenced in some	“Yes, it has influenced my day to day life from 2016 till

	<p>Chain of thoughts triggered</p> <p>Character inspiration</p> <p>Cultural influence</p> <p>Enjoyment</p> <p>Existential-Spirituality</p> <p>Feeling of life is a movie</p> <p>Frequently watched a thriller</p> <p>Film tourism is more richer</p> <p>How bollywood makes him feel</p> <p>Huge role of bollywood</p> <p>Idealism</p> <p>Impact of a good movie</p> <p>Introducing niche bollywood</p> <p>Life influenced by bollywood</p> <p>Media encourages travel</p> <p>Movie affecting life goals</p> <p>Peer influence</p> <p>Relatability fuels motivation</p> <p>Situation of learning</p> <p>Talking to international friends</p> <p>Worldly realization</p>	<p>way by Bollywood.</p>	<p>today as we speak. It has influenced my career decisions. It has influenced my personality in the sense, the physical part of my personality. It has helped me reach certain health standards that I respect about myself. And some of my humorous ways are influenced by Bollywood as well.”</p> <p>- Hrisikesh</p>
<p>History and Culture through movies</p>	<p>Bollywood with social issues</p> <p>Bollywood opens eyes to history</p> <p>Bollywood sheds light</p> <p>Bollywood teaches a lot</p> <p>Diversity of bollywood</p> <p>History and stories</p> <p>Realistic portrayal of issues</p>	<p>Instances where participants were educated about the country’s history and culture through the medium of</p>	<p>“I think a lot of ideas and a lot of possibilities that I didn't know existed.If not, I would have not known they</p>

		Bollywood.	existed.If not for Bollywood movies.” - Varun
Cliches of Bollywood	Cliche scene in bollywood Dramatic bollywood Duration of stay Example of growth abroad Example of bollywood songs Flair of bollywood Movie experience Reason for stereotype Stereotype of bollywood Typical bollywood scene	Stereotypes and prejudices that are present and observed in Bollywood by audiences.	“Because if you're walking on the road and you have like 100 people dancing behind you.” - Prithu
Bollywood, Nostalgia and Comfort	Comfort movies Comfort zone Deeper connection abroad Example of familiar movie Familial links to bollywood Familiar scenes in a movie Familiarity of culture and Location in domestic filming Life after going abroad Relatability	The ways in which Bollywood evokes a sense of nostalgia and comfort in audiences when they are need of familiarity.	“It's like a comfort zone, sitting back, watching something in Hindi to doing the dialogues.” - Varun
Curiosity about Production	Curiosity about production Curiosity from film Dangerous filming location	Tourist motivations being attributed to	“Entire reason why we wanted to go there was

	Stunts by actress	fascination with behind-the-scenes executions and planning of the film.	because of like the intricacies behind the music video.” - Aashrayi
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