

# Audience Responses Towards Positive and Negative Destination Placement in Films: An Experimental Investigation

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**Abstract** *The present study investigated the effects of film posters with destination marketing content on audiences' attitude towards the destination, intention to visit and destination image. The basic assumption was that positive and negative destination placement in films of two different attractive tourist destinations could influence audiences' attitude towards the destination, intention to visit and destination image. Using film posters as experimental stimuli, proposed hypotheses were examined by employing a 2 (destination placement in films: positive/negative) × 2 (attractive tourist destination: high/low) factorial design. Results suggest that audiences' responses towards positive destination placement in film facilitated high and favourable attitude towards the destination, visit intention and destination image than negative destination placement regardless of the type of attractive tourist destination (high/low). Findings of the present study are relevant for tourism and destination marketers who are constantly searching for a suitable way and medium to place destinations in mass media. The results also call for more empirical studies within the influence of films with negative plots on the depicted destinations, such as their long-lasting effect on the destination image.*

**Keywords:** *Destination Placement in Films, Attractive Tourist Destination, Film Poster, Attitude Towards The Destination, Intention To Visit, Destination Image*

## INTRODUCTION

The effects of media in general (Gong and Tung, 2016; Whang, Yong and Ko, 2016; Kim and Jun, 2016) and films in particular (Hudson and Ritchie, 2006; Josiam, Spears, Pookulangara, Dutta, Kinley and Duncan, 2015; Loureiro, and de Araujo, 2015; Hudson, Wang, and Gil, 2011) on attitude towards the destination, travel intention and destination images (Yen and Teng, 2015; Hetland, Vittersø, Fagermo, Øvervoll, and Dahl, 2016) has been widely studied and acknowledged. Media such as films, television and even print media are incredibly influential in promoting and reinforcing images and play a significant role in the image building of a tourist destination (Loureiro and de Araujo, 2015). Therefore, use of such media products builds an expectation that would be compared to the actual travel experience (Crouch, Jackson and Thompson, 2005).

The publicity caused by films, promotional tools of films and by the actors can be tremendous (Beeton, 2005). As, people obtain information from various mass media, including advertisements, posters, books, (Rodríguez Campo, Fraiz Brea and Rodríguez-Toubes Muñiz, 2011). Therefore, the messages produced by the mass media can have a high degree of market penetration and credibility (Gartner and Shen, 1992). Images and depictions of destinations made through media such as literature, cinema, advertisements and television play a substantial part in influencing destination selection (Iwashita, 2006). As a result, film posters as a tool of film promotion can be an effective marketing tool for destinations. Researchers have asserted that inclusion of certain types of textual and pictorial content when designing print advertisements specifically for tourism products can have a significant impact on the targeted consumer (Walters, Sparks and Herington, 2007) and promotional tools such

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as magazines, posters and placards can deliver information to the potential tourists (Holy, 2012). On similar lines, film posters as promotional tool (advertisements) of a visual graphic nature (Mazumdar, 2003) can be an effective tool to promote destinations. Since, film posters make use of images, concepts, ideas, perceptions, myths and elements available in the existing culture (Vamvakidou, Kyridis, Tziamtzi, Zagkos, Kalerante and Gogou, 2012), thereby acting as an effective promotional tool to alter consumer perception and responses. Given the significant role played by film posters, the purpose of the present study is to examine the effect of film posters having destination marketing content on viewers' responses towards positive and negative film destination placement of two different selected tourism destinations with two different levels of attractiveness (high/low) by using fictional film posters as experimental stimuli.

Among various tourist destinations in India, Kashmir has been always extravagantly beautiful. Kashmir is one of the popular tourist destinations in terms of high attractive tourist destination (Lala and Bhat, 2008) as well as favored film shooting destination. While, Assam is the most vivacious destination having clean and organized tea gardens, wildlife and warm people (Dey and Sarma, 2010). However, Assam is an unexplored tourist destination and low in attractive tourist destination. The present study operationally employed Kashmir and Assam as high and low attractive tourist destination respectively.

Aiming to contribute to bridge the gap in the literature, the present study employs an experimental design to examine the effect of positive as well as negative film destination placement of two different attractive tourist destinations varying in the level of attractiveness on the viewers' attitude towards the destination, visit intention and destination image. Specifically, the experimental study examines the relationships among two independent variables including destination placement (positive/negative) in film and attractive tourist destination (high/low) on multiple dependent variables; attitude towards the destination (Atd), visit intentions (VI) and destination image (DI). To date, there is no such study that examined the relationships of these variables simultaneously in the context of film tourism using film posters as experimental stimuli. Furthermore, tourism researchers have investigated destinations in the context of known/unknown destinations (Kim and Jun, 2016) and high/low prior knowledge of destination (Sirgy and Su, 2000). However, to date, there is no such study that examined the effect of destination placement of two different attractive tourist destination on audiences' attitude towards the destination, visit intention and destination image in films. Hence, our study experimentally examined audiences' responses towards positive and negative destination placement in films of two types of attractive tourist destinations in India. Finally, by viewing destination

placement in film posters as a form of product placement, we also contribute to the literature on the latter.

A comprehensive research is needed to understand how positive and negative destination placement in films of two different attractive tourist destinations influence audiences' responses including attitude towards destination, intention to visit and destination image. The present research builds upon the literature to validate how film posters containing destination-based content can modify destination evaluation and induce travel intention in film tourism audiences. Therefore, undertaking the present study is justified in order to fill the existing gap in the literature of destination placement in films by examining the main and interaction effect among variables.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### Positive and Negative Destination Placement in Films

Destination placement (or appearance of the destination) in the audio-visual media can be considered as the product placement (Morgan and Pritchard, 1998; Hudson, Wang, & Gil, 2011). Destination placements are imperative in tourism destination marketing. The film and television industry has placed destinations both positively and negatively. With the positive placement of destinations in a dramatic and inspirational way and the association of popular actors, the right film can have the effect in shaping images of a destination to a captive audience. Similarly, negative placement of a destination in films can create harm to the destination image, besides its beautiful scenery and high attractiveness. Moreover, depending upon the type of destination placement, films can build up the image, in the same way, and films can distort the image of a destination. Moreover, films have the potential to create both positive and negative impacts on destination tourism (Hudson and Ritchie, 2006). Hence, films placing a destination positively or negatively may have different effects on audiences' attitude towards the destination, visit intention and destination image.

### Attractive Tourist Destination

Attractive tourist destination is a vital element of tourism as well as a film's success; as higher the attractiveness of a destination, the more likely it will alter tourists' attitude and visit intentions towards that destination. Attractive tourist destination reflects "the feelings, beliefs and opinions that an individual has about a destination's perceived. Research noted that film tourism have significant effects on consumer responses (Kim and Richardson, 2003). However, the effects

of positive as well as negative film destination placement of two different attractive tourist destinations have remained unstudied.

## Attitude Towards the Destination

Tourist attitude towards the destination describes “the psychological tendencies expressed by the positive or negative evaluations of tourists when engaged in certain behaviors” (Ajzen, 1991). While previous research noted that films are one of the significant sectors, creating a destination image by combining various factors which further influence potential visitors’ attitudes toward the destination (Quintal and Phau, 2015). An exposure of a destination in a film changes the attitudes towards a destination mainly by stimulating the interest in visiting destination which in turn influences destination image (Kim and Richardson, 2003). Moreover, when destinations have an adequate level of positive attributes, visitors are expected to develop a favourable attitude toward a destination while negatively perceived attributes account for unfavourable attitude toward the destination (Della Corte, 2000).

## Visit Intention

In tourism literature, it is recognized that films make a major impact on intention to visit a destination (Quintal and Phau, 2014; Choi, Tkachenko and Sil, 2011) mentioned factors such as travel stimuli (advertisement) and external variables (destination image) could play an important role in creating destination awareness, thus influencing tourists’ intentions to visit a destination. In a similar study, Hudson, Wang and Gil (2011) suggested that audiences expressed a desire to visit destinations depicted in the film and were influenced by the landscape of destination and the cultural attractions. However, previous studies revealed that unfavourable portrayal of a tourism destination in the film may also influence viewers desire to visit the destination (Croy and Walker, 2003; Loureiro and de Araujo, 2015). Loureiro and de Araujo (2015) suggested that in films with a negative plot, the breathtaking imagery of destination is the important component that is most likely to boost audiences’ visit intention. It is, therefore, logical to believe that tourists tend to visit specific places motivated by the images, stories or emotional attributes perceived in films (Hahm and Wang, 2011). This also proves that the effect of type of destination placement in films on the audiences and the destination they depict vary from case to case.

## Destination Image

Films are particularly advantageous in building positive destination images and awareness, especially of remote and

unknown destinations (Hahm and Wang, 2011). Destination image can be best described as “a totality of impressions, beliefs, ideas, expectations, and feelings accumulated towards a location over time” (Kim and Richardson, 2003) and is formed by processing information from various means over time. Among various sources, films have an effect in enhancing or changing the destination image in viewers’ minds (Larson, Lundberg and Lexhagen, 2013) and destination images positively relate with the overall image of a tourist destination and intention to visit (Whang et al., 2016). It was found that tourists experiencing a destination in a film acquire a more favorable image of that destination than those who have not seen the film (Kim and Richardson, 2003). However, the influence of the films with negative plot tends to negatively highlight the audience evaluations of the destination image attributes (Loureiro and de Araujo, 2015). But recently, Itoo and Nagar (2017) in their experimental study indicated that the negative placement of a familiar destination in movie *Haider* has no significant impact on individuals attitude towards destination, intention to visit and image of the destination. In addition, Beeton (2001) testifies that film induced image created by the negative storylines, such as criminal activities can be deemed undesirable. Moreover, destination image of a place mostly depends upon how the destination is placed in the film (Spears, Josiam, Kinley and Pookulangara, 2013).

## Research Purpose

The purpose of the study is to investigate the impact of two independent variables including destination placement in films (positive/negative) and attractive tourist destination (high/low) on dependent variables; attitude towards the destination (Atd), visit intentions (VI) and destination image (DI) by using film posters as experimental stimuli. Four experimental stimuli were created, two for each destination. The present study focuses on to examine if there is any significant difference in any of these four conditions. To date, there is no such study that examined the main and interaction effect of these variables simultaneously in the context of destination placement in films using film posters as experimental stimuli.

## Hypotheses Development

From the above literature, it is assumed that audiences’ responses towards different attractive tourist destinations (high/low) will considerably change in accordance with the positive or negative destination placement in films. As such, the above discussion based on the review of literature leads to the formulation of following hypotheses

**H01:** Destination placement in films (positive/negative) has a significant effect on audiences’ attitude towards the

destination, visit intention and destination image.

**H02:** Attractive tourist destinations (high/low) has a significant effect on audiences' attitude towards the destination, visit intention and destination image.

**H03:** Audiences' attitude towards the destination, visit intention and destination image will significantly differ for different types of destination placement in films (positive/negative) and this effect will be substantially different for attractive tourist destination (high/low).

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study was conducted as an analysis of effects of destination placement in films (positive/negative)

on attractive tourist destination (high/low). Proposed hypotheses were examined by employing a 2 (Type of destination placement: positive/negative)  $\times$  2 (attractive tourist destination: high/low) full factorial design. Multiple dependent variables were used in the study and include: attitude towards the destination, intention to visit and destination image. The use of a factorial experimental design is considered appropriate for examining the impact of destination placement in films (positive/negative) of two different types of attractive tourist destinations (high/low) on audiences' attitude towards the destination, intention to visit and destination image.

The independent variables in the study are conceptualized as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Experimental Setup**

Film destination placement (I_FDP)	Attractive tourism destination (ATD)		
		High attractive tourism destination	Low attractive tourism destination
	Positive film destination placement	1 High/Positive	2 Low/Positive
Negative film destination placement	3 High/Negative	4 Low/Negative	

### Development of Stimulus Material

Fictional film posters were created and used as an experimental stimulus. Professionals were hired to create destination themed fictional film posters and include associated characteristics and breath-taking sites of the respective destination. In addition, film posters were titled and tag lined by using imaginary title, story, plots, pictures and characters linked with the particular destination. A total of 4 film posters were created, two film posters for each destination. One film poster placed the destination positively while the other depicted the same destination negatively.

### Selection of High and Low Attractive Tourist Destination

A pre-test was conducted to determine high and low attractive tourist destinations in India. 35 subjects from a large urban university were asked to list high and low Indian tourist destinations on the basis of their attractiveness. Among 6 destinations listed by the group of participants, Kashmir and Assam were the highest rated destinations as the high and low attractive tourist destination respectively and were therefore selected. Based on the pre-test, Kashmir is operationally defined as high attractive tourist destination and Assam as low attractive tourist destination.

### Manipulation Checks

Manipulation checks were carried out to examine the validity of the two manipulated experimental factors (i.e., destination placement and attractive tourist destination). ANOVA was performed to measure participants' understanding of the destination placement (positive vs. negative) and attractive tourist destination in the film posters (i.e., high attractive tourist destination versus low attractive tourist destination). The results of manipulation checks indicated that participants could easily understand the positive and negative destination placement in film posters ( $F = 82.44, p < 0.001$ ). In addition, participants were able to identify, differentiate and understand the high and low attractive tourist destinations in film posters ( $F = 49.35, p < 0.001$ ). Therefore, the manipulation checks indicated that the proposed two experimental factors were manipulated successfully.

### Research Participants

The participants chosen for the study were 120 university students of tourism and management courses. 72 participants were male and all participants were aged between 20-25 years (70%). Participants were thought to be an appropriate sample since young adults are passionate film-goers (Nagar, 2016). In addition, many social psychological research studies have used college students as participants (Arnett, 2000). Thus, using university students as samples is justified.

## Measurement

120 participants were randomly assigned to one of the four experimental conditions such that each group consisted of 30 respondents. Each group was shown one of the four experimental stimuli in the form of a film poster. After viewing the film poster, questionnaires were distributed and responses of participants were recorded. Several control procedures were employed to maximize the quality of the responses. To ensure that the possible effect of prior attitude towards the destination is disregarded, participants were asked to answer few filler questions, for example, "Whether they have visited the destination before". Those participants who had earlier visited either of the two destinations were removed from the study. Participants who gave incomplete responses were excluded from further analysis. Participants' pre-test assessment of destination image and attitude may affect their post-test evaluation since they may remember their initial ratings. Therefore, pre-test-post-test experimental design may not be suitable in this study as it would induce considerable pretesting effects (Yang, Bergh and Lee, 2017).

## Variable Operationalization

All the questionnaire items were adapted from previously developed scales and further modified to maximize their fit. Reliability tests showed that all the scales had adequate Cronbach's  $\alpha$ 's above 0.80. Attitude towards the destination (Kim and Jun, 2016; Jalilvand, Samiei, Dini & Manzari, 2012); visit intention (Loureiro and de Araujo, 2015;

Jalilvand et al., 2012) and destination image (Loureiro, and de Araujo, 2015; Hudson, Wang and Gil, 2011; Jalilvand et al., 2012) were measured on 7 points Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). A panel of four researchers in tourism research evaluated the scales in order to ensure content validity.

## DATA ANALYSIS

A 2 (destination placement in films: positive/negative)  $\times$  2 (attractive tourist destination: high/low) factorial design was employed. MANOVA (multivariate analysis of variance) was used to find out whether there exist any significant differences between the independent variables {destination placement in films (positive/negative) and attractive tourist destination(high/low)} on the dependent variables - attitude towards the destination, visit intention and destination image. The Wilks' Lambda statistic (Wilk's  $\lambda$ ) was reported and is a favoured measure, and there was an equal sample size for each experimental set (Hair, Anderson, Babin and Black, 2010).

The dependent variables were found to be correlated with each other (correlation coefficient between Atd and visit intention is 0.721;  $p < 0.01$ ; Atd and DI is 0.120;  $p < 0.01$ ; visit intention and DI is 0.114;  $p < 0.01$  and given the positive correlation, MANOVA was applied to examine whether there were any differences in the audience' attitude toward the destination, visit intention and destination image towards positive and negative destination placement in films considering high and low attractive tourist destination.

**Table 2: MANOVA Test Results**

Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis Df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
<b>Destination Placement in films (DPF)</b>	Wilks' Lambda	.164	193.406	3	114	.000*	.836
<b>Attractive Tourism destination (ATD)</b>	Wilks' Lambda	.703	16.032	3	114	.000*	.297
<b>DPF <math>\times</math> TDA</b>	Wilks' Lambda	.905	3.993	3	114	.010*	.095

Note: \*Significant at  $p < 0.05$  level

Source: Authors' analysis

As shown in the Table 2, the MANOVA results reveal that the type of destination placement in films (positive or negative) significantly influenced attitude towards the destination, intention to travel and destination image ( $F_{3, 114} = 193.406$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , partial Eta Squared= .836). Therefore, results do support the first hypothesis(H01).

Further analysis reveals that the type of attractive tourist destination (high or low) significantly influenced attitude towards the destination, intention to travel and destination image. The multivariate effect is significant ( $F_{3, 114} = 16.032$ ;  $p < 0.05$ , partial Eta squared= .297) (Table 2) supporting H02.

The experimental model tested not only the main effects of types of destination placement in films (positive vs. negative) and type of attractive tourist destination (high or low) but also tested the interaction effect of destination placement in films (positive vs negative) and attractive tourist destination (high vs low) on the three dependent variables (Atd, VI, DI). The multivariate effect shows that there is a significant interaction effect of the destination placement in films  $\times$  attractive tourist destination on all the dependent variables (Atd, VI, DI) ( $F_{3, 114} = 3.993$ ,  $P < 0.05$ , partial Eta squared = .095) (Table 2), supporting H03. Therefore, the results of interaction effect suggest that the destination placement in films depends on the type of attractive tourist destination.

**Table 3: Tests of Between-Subjects Effect**

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Destination placement in films (DPF)	Attitude toward the destination(Atd)	159.160	1	159.160	545.478	0.000*	0.825
	Visit Intention(VI)	58.451	1	58.451	125.517	0.000*	0.520
	Destination image(DI)	.456	1	.456	3.072	0.082	0.026
Attractive tourist destination (ATD)	Attitude towards the destination (Atd)	5.376	1	5.376	18.426	0.000*	0.137
	Visit intention(VI)	8.401	1	8.401	18.039	0.000*	0.135
	Destination image(DI)	1.875	1	1.875	12.620	0.001*	0.098

Note: \*Significant at  $p < 0.05$  level

Source: Authors' analysis

The univariate main tests were also examined. As shown in Table 3, destination placement in films (positive vs. negative) has significant univariate main effects on attitude towards the destination (Atd) ( $F_{1,116} = 545.478$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , partial Eta squared= 0.825) and visit intention ( $F_{1,116} = 125.517$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , partial Eta squared= 0.520) while destination placement in films (positive vs. negative) has in significant univariate main test for destination image ( $F_{1,116} = 3.072$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , partial Eta squared= 0.026).

Further analysis indicated significant univariate main effects across the type of attractive tourist destination (high vs. low) on all the three dependent variables; attitude towards the destination ( $F_{1,116} = 18.426$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , partial Eta squared= 0.137); visit intention ( $F_{1,116} = 18.039$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , partial Eta squared= 0.135) and destination image ( $F_{1,116} = 12.620$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , partial Eta squared= 0.098) (Table 3).

**Table 4: Means and Significance Test**

Dependent Variables	Destination placement in films		F-Value	Sig.
	Positive	Negative		
Attitude toward the destination (Atd)	4.363	2.060	9.454	.000*
Visit intention(VI)	3.467	2.071	4.629	.000*
Destination image(DI)	3.475	3.352	1.820	.000*

Source: Authors' analysis; Note: \*Significant at  $p < 0.05$  level

Seven-point scales were used for all the variables. High scores indicate more favorable Atd, VI, and DI.

Specific means (Table 4) suggest that the effect of destination placement in films on audiences' responses (i.e., Atd, VI,

DI) will be larger when the destination placement in film is positive compared to negative destination placement.

**Table 5: Means and Significance Test**

Dependent Variables	Attractive tourist destination		F-Value	Sig.
	High	Low		
Attitude towards the destination (Atd)	3.432	3.000	9.783	.050*
Visit intention(VI)	3.033	2.504	7.624	.004*
Destination image(DI)	3.828	3.538	.462	.001*

Seven-point scales were used for all the variables. High scores indicate more favorable Atd, VI, and DI.

Source: Authors' analysis; Note: \*Significant at  $p < 0.05$  level

Further, specific means (Table 5) suggest that the effect of attractive tourist destination (high or low) on audiences' Atd, VI and DI will be more when the attractive tourist destination is high compared to low attractive tourist destination. Therefore, significant result suggests that audiences' response varies significantly depending on the type of attractive tourist destination (high/low).

## GENERAL DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

There is no doubt that film tourism has an influence on people's attitudes toward the destination (Quintal and Phau, 2015), their intention to visit (Beeton 2001; Kim and Richardson, 2003) and destination image (O'Connor,

Flanagan and Gilbert, 2010). However, no study was conducted that simultaneously examined the impact of both positive and negative destination placement in films of two different attractive tourist destinations (high vs. low). In this regard, the present study examined the effects of destination placement in films of two different attractive tourist destinations on audiences' attitudes towards the destination, visit intention and destination image. Destination marketers are increasingly paying attention to film tourism and destination portrayal and research is growing in this area (Loureiro and de Araujo, 2015; Yen and Teng, 2015; Hetland et al., 2016). The present study contributes to the existing line of work in destination marketing by examining audiences' responses towards positive and negative film destination placement of two high and low attractive tourist destinations in India.

The findings imply that audience' evaluations of film posters may influence their attitude towards the destination, intention to visit and destination image. Findings suggest that audiences' response towards positive destination placement in films facilitated high and positive attitude towards the destination, visit intention and destination image than negative destination placement regardless of the type of attractive tourist destination (high/low). However, irrespective of the type of destination placement in films, high attractive tourist destination generated higher responses. Similarly, negative destination placement in films of high attractive tourist destination facilitated higher responses as compared to negative destination placement of low attractive tourist destination. Our results were consistent with, Shani, Wang, Hudson and Gil (2009). Therefore, even films with negative plots can be advantageous as long as they depict positive elements strongly enough to balance or cast aside the negative elements. The other possible reason for such results to be true may be that audiences' move toward becoming inundated in a fantasy film world and utilize the depiction on film as a symbol of what that destination offers in actuality (Nayar, 1997). In addition, according to Hudson and Ritchie, (2006), a few movies are more successful than others in instigating tourism and modifying viewers' reactions.

Results from the main effect illustrate that audiences' responses towards the destination placement in films (positive vs. negative) vary significantly depending on the type of attractive tourist destination (high vs. low). Results from the second main effect indicate that there are significant differences across the type of attractive tourist destination on audiences' responses considering the type of destination placement in films. Audiences showed higher responses towards high attractive tourist destination irrespective of destination placement in film. The reason for such results to be true may be that the beautiful landscape has an indispensable influence in the storyline (Roesch, 2009),

the destination placement in films will create favorable and positive audiences' responses towards the destination. In addition, Zhang (2012) suggested that scenery, specifically, can become a pull factor for a destination visit. However, limited exposure and low pleasant appearance of the low attractive tourist destination in films is an important factor for low and negative audiences' responses.

The results also indicate a significant interaction effect between destination placement in films and attractive tourist destination on audiences' attitude towards the destination, visit intention and destination image. This suggests that audience responses towards positive and negative destination placement in films of high and low attractive tourist destination could be influenced. Since audiences believe the landscapes and cultural aspects which are portrayed in films to be more authentic. Therefore, positive destination placement in film can raise interest about those destinations which the audiences have not been previously aware of and movies might influence viewers enough to visit the featured destinations. Similarly, negative destination placement in films can undesirably decrease the audiences attitude towards the destination, visit intention and severely damage the destination image. However, results of our study indicated that irrespective of destination placement in films (positive vs. negative), audiences' responses were high towards the high attractive tourist destination. Low attractive tourist destination generated least and negative responses irrespective of the type of destination placement.

In conclusion, this experimental examination of the persuasiveness power created by film posters containing destination placement content contributes to the literature in some significant ways. The results indicated that the viewers' evaluations of film posters associated with destination marketing content may significantly influence viewers' Atd, VI and DI. Therefore, destinations managers should consider carefully the danger dimension in the marketing campaigns of destinations and how destination placement in films of different attractive tourism destinations could influence the audiences. In addition, destination image is also altered by the destination placement in films. However, destination image of high attractive tourist destinations in both the cases of destination placement (positive or negative) altered favorably.

## IMPLICATIONS

The promotional value of films and marketing tools associated with films cannot be overemphasized. Film posters being one of the important tools to promote films on worldwide basis have a substantial influence on viewers in altering their evaluations. Just like good story and plot in Bollywood films inter linked with the destination are paramount for destination marketing. Similarly, destination

marketing content-based films and film posters will act as vital tool for destination marketing and influencing viewers' attitude towards the destination and inducing intention to travel. Therefore, the present study provides destination tourism marketers with valuable information regarding the film posters used as stimulus often referred to by audiences as an information source. The results can assist tourism destination marketers to better understand how certain stimuli are processed psychologically by audiences (Burns, Biswas and Babin, 1993). However, the understanding of these advertising stimuli lies in the mind of the consumer and, therefore, one particular stimulus may represent different meanings to different markets (Uzzell, 1984). The results demonstrate that the destinations varying in the level of attractiveness should be carefully placed in films by selecting an appropriate film. Low attractive tourist destination image suffer miserably when placed negatively. In addition, the tourism destination marketers should consider which films and promotional tools to focus on in their campaigns and how the different destinations varying in the level of attractiveness should be presented with respect to selected movie. The present research is applicable to destination marketers and film makers, as it suggests that film poster content can impact audiences destination evaluations and image of destination. In general, should tourism marketers have an understanding of the usage and effectiveness of these types of stimuli, the more likely they are to sell their destinations (Walters, Sparks and Herington, 2007).

Furthermore, tourism destination marketers should keep in mind two important points. First, that the way in which their destination is placed could definitely determine the direction of effects on attitudes, travel intentions and destination image. Second, indeed attractiveness of the tourist destination plays a significant role in evoking audience responses towards a destination. Therefore, the attractiveness of a tourist destination is important to influence viewers' and must be taken into account when placing a destination in a particular media or program type. Also, destination marketers preferably choose a program of which the content fits in with the destination, such that people interested in the program content are more likely to favour the destination.

Making and distributing destination themed film posters is a much effective and cheaper form of promotion than TV. Therefore, promotion with destination-themed film posters, tourism destination marketers can bombard viewers with imagery and textual content about the destination, making sure what they see will stick in their heads for longer and can target particular region with film posters to improve destination image and audiences attitude towards the destination and visit intention. Moreover, the flexibility of film posters makes them an ideal form of marketing and promotion.

The study also has an empirical contribution towards understanding the effects of positive and negative destination placement in films within the context of two different attractive tourist destinations (high vs. low) on audiences' Atd, VI and DI using film posters as experimental stimuli. Moreover, destination placement of Kashmir or Assam as a tourist destination in films may be beneficial as destinations are exposed to viewers and are laid into the realizable opportunity set. Previous literature agreed that 'any publicity is good publicity' (Shani et al., 2009); even the perceived negative aspects of destination may not affect the general image that viewers acquire. However, it only holds true to the extent that other elements are attractive enough to counterbalance the negative ones. Therefore, destination marketers need to use the more positive dimensions such as famous attractions, landscapes, breath-taking beauties, nature and culture.

## LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

There are limitations to the present study that need to be accepted. First, the small sample in this study was generally drawn from post-graduate students at a large urban university. This sample could restrict the generalizability of the results to the broader population. Second, there are other forms of communication such as mass media and the present study did not compare the findings in this context with other forms of communication. The present study adopted only print advertisement in the form of film posters to examine audience responses.

Future studies could also extend to different attractive foreign tourist destinations to establish the boundaries of these findings. In addition, future research may extend to a wider national sample of consumers. As the media landscape has become highly diversified, not only reality TV shows but also other new symbolic media can serve as relatively cheap vehicles to communicate information about a destination and help form an authentic destination image. Therefore, the present research may also be extended to other media forms. The popularity of TV reality shows and Indian award shows held overseas may be of particular interest to researchers.

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