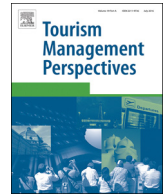




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## Enhancing celebrity fan-destination relationship in film-induced tourism: The effect of authenticity

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## ABSTRACT

Academics and practitioners have focused on the importance of film-induced tourism for destination marketing. Although the relationship between authenticity and destination loyalty has been evidenced, few studies have explored the psychological mechanism through which authenticity influences destination loyalty. The present study fills the research gap by considering the role of celebrity attachment. The statistical analyses conducted in this study included confirmatory factor analysis, correlation analysis, structural equation modeling, mediation analysis, and bootstrapping analysis. Data from 354 purposeful film tourists revealed that constructivist authenticity had a positive effect on existential authenticity but no direct influence on destination loyalty. Existential authenticity had a direct influence on destination loyalty. Celebrity attachment mediated the influences of constructivist and existential authenticity on destination loyalty. Therefore, celebrity attachment is a crucial mediator between authenticity and film destination choices for purposeful film tourists. Finally, existential authenticity had a stronger influence on destination loyalty than did constructivist authenticity.

### 1. Introduction

Films can provide benefits to the locations that they portray (Kim & Kim, 2018a) by stimulating the interests of viewers and in turn influencing their tourism destination choices (Chen, 2018). Numerous scholars and practitioners have focused on the relationship between films and destinations (Fu, Ye, & Xiang, 2016; Itoo & Nagar, 2019; Kim & Kim, 2018b; Kim, Kim, & Han, 2019). Film-induced tourism, which is viewed as a popular media-induced tourism domain (Yen & Teng, 2015), can increase market penetration by inducing interest in or attracting tourists to film-related destinations (Busby, Huang, & Jarman, 2013; Kim, 2012a). Studies have mentioned that tourists exhibit increased willingness to visit destinations that they see in films or TV dramas (Bąkiewicz, Leask, Barron, & Rakić, 2017). Consequently, how film-induced interest in a location can attract tourists and ensure that they revisit and recommend the destination to others is worthy of further investigation for both theoretical and practical applications.

Destination loyalty, which refers to the destination revisit and recommendation (Oppermann, 2000), is essential to film-induced tourism (Chiu & Zeng, 2016; Kim, 2012b) and has been investigated by scholars and practitioners (Chi & Qu, 2008; Yi, Lin, Jin, & Luo, 2017; Yolal, Chi, & Pesämaa, 2017). This is because destination loyalty is a crucial aspect of tourist behavior (Almeida-Santana & Moreno-Gil, 2018) and a crucial

indicator of tourism success (Sun, Chi, & Xu, 2013). Therefore, understanding the determinants of destination loyalty can provide a practical guide for film destination practitioners. Studies on film-related tourism have reported that perceived value, national image, destination image, and place attachment influence tourist loyalty to film destinations (Kim et al., 2019; Wong & Lai, 2015; Yen & Croy, 2016).

Authenticity, which refers to the degree to which a site is perceived to be genuine (Kolar & Zabkar, 2010), is a specific and crucial attribute that is relevant to film-induced tourism (Rittichainuwat, Laws, Scott, & Rattanaphinanchai, 2018). The importance of authenticity for destination success has been recognized and discussed by researchers and practitioners (Bryce, Curran, O'Gorman, & Taheri, 2015; Yi et al., 2017) because of its relationship with positive monetary value and high purchase frequency (Castéran & Roederer, 2013). Prior studies conducted on heritage sites have examined the influence of authenticity on destination loyalty (Kolar & Zabkar, 2010; Shen, Guo, & Wu, 2014). However, these studies have demonstrated an inconsistent link between authenticity and destination loyalty. Additionally, many exploratory studies have mentioned the construct of authenticity in film-induced tourism (Bolan, Boy, & Bell, 2011; Chan, 2007; Frost, 2009; Macionis, 2004). According to our review of the literature, no quantitative research on film-induced tourism has discussed the authenticity-destination loyalty relationship. Hence, this study addresses this research gap

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by examining the association between authenticity and destination loyalty in film-induced tourism.

In film-induced tourism, celebrities can influence the tourist destination choice (Busby, Ergul, & Eng, 2013). Celebrities have been used to develop film locations by the film tourism industry (Chen, 2018; Yen & Croy, 2016) because tourists are likely to be attracted to a celebrity who is associated with a certain brand or product due to recurring connections (Pearce, Morrison, & Moscardo, 2003). Therefore, research has investigated the construct of celebrity attachment, which refers to tourists' attachment to television (TV) dramas or movie celebrities (Wong & Lai, 2015). Among tourists who are inspired by Korean TV dramas, the primary reason for visiting Korea is to confirm the landscapes and architecture displayed in the dramas (Chan, 2007). Mass media (e.g. movies and TV dramas) provide viewers with opportunities to imagine themselves at certain destinations (Crouch, Jackson, & Thompson, 2005). Hence, perceived authenticity positively influences visitors' engagement with destinations (Bryce et al., 2015). This implies that the perceived authenticity of film sites may entice tourists who have watched a TV drama to engage in the specific TV drama-related activities performed by the celebrities in the drama. These activities may allow them to establish a stronger perceived connection with the film celebrities and in turn provide an increased level of celebrity attachment. Moreover, consumers with celebrity attachment develop a deep understanding of cultural values and social behaviors through parasocial interactions (McCourt & Fitzpatrick, 2001). Previous study has revealed that celebrity attachment is associated with destination loyalty (Wong & Lai, 2015). Therefore, we argue that authenticity may influence destination loyalty through the mediating role of celebrity attachment. However, limited academic attention has been focused on the relationships among authenticity, celebrity attachment, and destination loyalty.

Previous studies have shown that authenticity and celebrity attachment play crucial roles in film-induced tourism (Rittichainuwat et al., 2018; Wong & Lai, 2015). The perceived authenticity of a film site by visitors (Kim et al., 2019) causes them to imitate the film's actors and actresses, thus reflecting their personal connection with the film (Buchmann, Moore, & Fisher, 2010), and may subsequently influence their destination loyalty. Therefore, this study investigates whether authenticity influences destination loyalty. Additionally, researchers in other fields have stated that perceived authenticity influences brand attachment (Assiouras, Liapati, Kouletsis, & Koniordos, 2015). Celebrities can be considered brands (Yen & Croy, 2016). However, studies on film-induced tourism have not clarified whether authenticity affects celebrity attachment and consequently influences destination loyalty. Thus, this study fills this literature gap by examining the effect of authenticity on destination loyalty and considering the mediating influence of celebrity attachment. Our study expands on the work of Buchmann et al. (2010) and Rittichainuwat et al. (2018) by investigating the relationship between authenticity and destination loyalty. Additionally, our study complements the study of Wong and Lai (2015) by examining the mediating role of celebrity attachment in film-induced tourism. Finally, our findings could assist film location tourism industry managers by deepening their understanding of the roles of authenticity and celebrity in destination brand management.

## 2. Literature review and hypotheses

### 2.1. Authenticity

Authenticity is a vital topic in the tourism literature (Trinh, Ryan, & Cave, 2014). MacCannell (1973) was the first to apply the construct of authenticity in tourist settings. Although tourists naturally seek authenticity (Cohen, 1988), the distinction between objective and subjective authenticity has been controversial in research on authenticity (Taylor, 2001). Thus, consistent types of authenticity are unavailable in the literature (Buchmann et al., 2010; Wang, 1999). According to

MacCannell (1973), objective authenticity refers to tourism-related objects that are original and authentic (Castéran & Roederer, 2013). Because objective authenticity has limited usefulness, researchers have suggested the use of other terms (Taylor, 2001) or the connection of objects to derive meanings from constructivist (Cohen, 1988) or existential (Betta, 2014) perspective.

Constructivist authenticity is a social and subjective construct generating "various versions of authenticities regarding the same object" (Wang, 1999, p. 352). Existential authenticity emerges from the actual experiences of tourists and relies on intrapersonal sources (e.g. physical sensations) and interpersonal sources (e.g. family ties and tourist communities) (Castéran & Roederer, 2013). Whereas objective authenticity is determined by experts, constructivist authenticity and existential authenticity are subjectively established by tourists (Shen et al., 2014). Moreover, the fantasy dimension is particularly relevant to film-induced tourism (Macionis, 2004). Authenticity in film-induced tourism is purely subjective and is based on the subjective experience of the film and specific site depicted in the film. Furthermore, tourists who have been influenced by a film to visit its site have highly flexible attitudes toward the authenticity of film locations (Frost, 2009). For example, many Asian tourists visit South Korean filming sites (e.g. Nami Island or Art Valley). Tourists' perceived authenticity of film locations influences their perceptions and behaviors toward the relevant destination (e.g. South Korea). Thus, caution is required in considering the role of authenticity in film-induced tourism. We adopt constructivist authenticity and existential authenticity to reflect the degree of authenticity that is perceived by film tourists.

Authenticity has received considerable attention in studies on film-induced tourism. Frost (2009) adopted a historical approach to examine the development of film-induced tourism and stated that film locations and film settings may be different. Thus, researchers (e.g. Bolan et al., 2011; Frost, 2009) have noted the problems of locational dissonance and displacement. In addition, studies have implemented qualitative designs to distinguish between authenticity, hyperreality, and simulacra to determine the role of authenticity in film tourist experiences (Buchmann et al., 2010) and to understand the influence of pull factors (e.g. film scenery) and push factors (e.g. confirming the architecture viewed in TV dramas) on viewers' motivation to visit film sites (Chan, 2007). By contrast, few studies on film-induced tourism have examined the phenomenon of authenticity from a quantitative perspective.

Film-induced tourism is a type of cultural tourism (Busby & Klug, 2001). To the best of our knowledge, only a few related studies on cultural tourism have investigated the relationship between constructivist authenticity and existential authenticity. Bryce et al. (2015) posited the existence of constructive authenticity as a response to object-based authenticity. Kolar and Zabkar (2010) conducted a survey of European heritage sites and reported that perceived object-based authenticity (similar to constructivist authenticity) is positively associated with existential authenticity. Shen et al. (2014) discovered a positive relationship between constructivist authenticity and existential authenticity in the context of cultural heritage sites in China. Thus, the aforementioned findings indicate the existence of an influence of constructivist authenticity on existential authenticity in the context of heritage sites. However, limited academic attention has been concentrated on film-induced sites. Some characteristics of the sites as depicted in the films (e.g. access and dangers) are different from those of the actual heritage sites (Frost, 2009). This study fills this research gap and proposes the following hypothesis:

**H1.** Constructivist authenticity has a positive effect on existential authenticity.

### 2.2. Destination loyalty

Destination loyalty comprises a behavioral component and an attitudinal component (Velázquez, Saura, & Molina, 2011). The behavioral

component refers to the willingness of a tourist to revisit a destination, whereas the attitudinal component refers to the willingness of a tourist to recommend a destination to friends or other potential tourists (Zhang, Fu, Cai, & Lu, 2014). Hence, we define destination loyalty as the degree to which an individual film tourist is likely to revisit a film destination or recommend the destination to others. Past studies have shown that destination loyalty is derived from customer loyalty (Backman & Crompton, 1991), which has received increased attention (Kandampully, Zhang, & Bilgihan, 2015) because of its positive relationship with corporate performance and customer retention (Allenby & Lenk, 1995).

### 2.3. Authenticity and destination loyalty

The tourism literature has addressed the antecedents of destination loyalty (Antón, Camarero, & Laguna-García, 2017). The pull and push factors of tourist motivation theory and tourist experience have frequently been adopted in examinations of destination loyalty. For example, Cai, Wu, and Bai (2003) demonstrated that affective and attitude attributes are more crucial determinants of tourist loyalty to a destination than cognitive attributes (e.g. convenience, facility, and uniqueness). Niininen, Szivas, and Riley (2004) suggested that repeated or varied activities should be the basis for developing destination loyalty. Hernández-Lobato, Solis-Radilla, Moliner-Tena, and Sánchez-García (2006) examined a sample of American tourists who visited Ixtapa-Zihuatanejo and found that affective image, cognitive image (e.g. service quality and entertainment), and satisfaction are all positive determinants of destination loyalty. Li, Petrick, and Zhou (2008) offered a preliminary conceptual model of destination knowledge (including destination awareness and destination image) and destination loyalty, which indicated that destination awareness and destination image positively influence destination loyalty. Yuksel, Yuksel, and Bilim (2010) revealed that place attachment has a positive influence on satisfaction and destination loyalty. Antón et al. (2017) reported that tourist satisfaction has a positive influence on word-of-mouth marketing and a nonlinear influence on the revisiting intention. The aforementioned findings suggest that pull factors (e.g. destination image and attributes), push factors (e.g. internal motivation), and tourist experience (e.g. tourist satisfaction) are all antecedents of destination loyalty.

Researchers have examined sites (e.g. buildings and landscapes) from an authenticity perspective and have connected the perceived authenticity of a site to tourist loyalty. For example, researchers (Bryce et al., 2015; Shen et al., 2014) have observed that the perceived authenticity of cultural heritage sites (e.g. architecture and historical event locations) influences tourists' destination loyalty. As mentioned, film-induced tourism is a type of cultural tourism. Film tourists conceive certain ideas pertaining to the film sites and travel to experience them (Macionis, 2004). Their main motivation for such travel is to validate the scenery and buildings portrayed in the films (Chan, 2007). Hence, the perceived authenticity of film site features (e.g. buildings, scenes, and activities depicted in the film) may influence tourists' film-related experiences and consequently affect their recommendations to other potential visitors to the location and their own inclination to revisit the location. However, few empirical studies on film-induced tourism have examined the linkage between film site authenticity and destination loyalty.

Kolar and Zabkar (2010) observed that destination loyalty is enhanced by object-based authenticity and existential authenticity. In the study of Shen et al. (2014), existential authenticity is positively related to tourist loyalty to world cultural heritage sites. Tourists who experience existential authenticity at a specific location are more inclined to exhibit loyalty to the destination (Bryce et al., 2015). In a study of Castéran and Roederer (2013), perceived authenticity strengthens behavioral loyalty regarding annual events. On the basis of these findings, we argue that film tourists who perceive high levels of authenticity at

tourism sites may be more likely to post positive recommendations, spread positive word-of-mouth discussion, and return to the destination in the future. Thus, both constructivist authenticity and existential authenticity have a positive influence on tourists' loyalty. We propose the following hypotheses.

**H2a.** Constructivist authenticity is positively related to destination loyalty.

**H2b.** Existential authenticity is positively related to destination loyalty.

### 2.4. Mediating role of celebrity attachment

A celebrity, who can be considered a human brand, is an effective instrument for attracting certain film-induced tourists to specific destinations (Yen & Teng, 2015). Dietz et al. (1991) and Thomson (2006) have examined how to build a strong relationship between a celebrity and consumers through celebrity endorsements or celebrity worship. Because celebrity attachment has become a common social practice (Lee, Scott, & Kim, 2008; Wong & Lai, 2015), research has focused on how celebrity attachment influences consumer behavior (Jin, 2017; Maltby, Houran, Lange, Ashe, & McCutcheon, 2002).

Celebrity attachment is the likelihood that consumers maintain proximity to a celebrity (Wong & Lai, 2015). This concept originates from consumers' attachment to well-known human brands (Rindova, Timothy, & Mathew, 2006). Consumers with high levels of celebrity attachment perceive that the celebrity is close to them (Thomson, 2006). These enthusiasts participate in fan clubs, collect mementos, and follow celebrities' activities (Fraser & Brown, 2002). Thus, consumers having high levels of celebrity attachment are likely to have a positive image of film destinations that are connected to the celebrity, resulting in high behavioral intention to visit such locations (Yen & Croy, 2016; Yen & Teng, 2015). In addition, strong celebrity attachment is a main determinant of a satisfied, trusting, and committed relationship (Thomson, 2006). Accordingly, celebrity attachment plays a notable role in film destination management.

A similar construct (i.e. celebrity involvement) has been widely explored in the relevant literature. For example, celebrity involvement positively influences destination image through celebrity worship (Yen & Croy, 2016). Celebrity involvement is positively associated with behavioral intention (Yen & Teng, 2015). Place attachment is enhanced by celebrity involvement (Chen, 2018). However, the focus on celebrity attachment is a novel approach that deserves increased attention. Moreover, involvement refers to a mental willingness of people to allocate their cognitive resources to an object (Thomson, MacInnis, & Park, 2005). Attachment is beyond resource allocation and focuses on the emotions toward an object (Thomson et al., 2005). Therefore, celebrity involvement implies that fans are interested in activities related to celebrities and perceive participation in such activities as both a part of their lives and a way of expressing themselves (Lee et al., 2008). Celebrity attachment is defined as an emotional bond between a person and a celebrity (Wong & Lai, 2015). Thus, celebrity involvement and celebrity attachment are separate constructs.

Authenticity is a crucial attribute relevant to film-induced tourism (Rittichainuwat et al., 2018). It is also considered a crucial antecedent of tourist behavior (Castéran & Roederer, 2013). According to intimacy theory proposed by Trauer and Ryan (2005), location attributes are meaningful to visitors because visitors become involved in activities of interest to them and can also relive their personal memories at the location. Audiences motivated by favorable perceptions of the film site relish the sense of the location and the authenticity of the backdrop (Kim et al., 2019). Visitors might portray film celebrities' facial expressions, imitate the main actors in the film, and otherwise connect with the film's sites and celebrities. Such cognition and behaviors enhance the visitors' sense of personal proximity to a film celebrity (Buchmann et al., 2010; Kim, 2012a). Additionally, tourists who are

highly involved with a film are often more familiar with the film's locations than other tourists are, and they are typically keen to reenact or mimic their favorite characters' poses and narratives against the backdrop of the film's locations (Connell, 2012; Kim, 2010). Therefore, perceived authenticity of the film sites strengthens celebrity attachment.

Research has generally been directed toward emotional attachment to products (i.e. specific brands). For example, Gitelson and Crompton (1984) argued that emotional attachment to a destination is a critical explanatory factor for frequent trips to a destination. Folmer, Haartsen, and Huigen (2013) found that the motivation of wildlife observation, the perceived intensity of wildlife experiences, and guided wildlife encounters have a positive influence on emotional attachment to protected areas. Thus, this study applies emotional attachment theory to enhance the theoretical understanding of how celebrity attachment influences destination choices. This theory states that when consumers possess a high level of attachment toward an object, they demonstrate a commitment to that object (Hazan & Shaver, 1994; Thomson et al., 2005). This high level of attachment causes consumers to exhibit interest in products related to the objects (often an icon or a celebrity) to which they are emotionally attached (Ilicic & Webster, 2011). In film tourism, tourists with high celebrity attachment may seek to recreate scenes performed by the celebrities (Kim, 2012a). For example, fans who have a high level of attachment to Korean stars are deeply immersed in Korean popular culture (Lee et al., 2008). Hence, film destination marketing managers target consumers with high levels of celebrity attachment and often view celebrities as catalysts for influencing the attitudes of such consumers toward the film-related destinations.

Accordingly, based on emotional attachment theory, film tourists with high celebrity attachment tend to be interested in films that feature the celebrity, which then influences their travel decisions (Yen & Croy, 2016) and shapes their positive attitudes toward a film destination (Su, Huang, Brodowsky, & Kim, 2011). Moreover, according to the parasocial theory, viewers who have a parasocial relationship with a celebrity seek to establish personal contacts with the celebrity (Sood & Rogers, 2000). The higher a consumer's emotional involvement with a celebrity is—through TV dramas or films—the higher the consumer's likelihood to visit the depicted tourism locations is (Kim, 2012a). Therefore, we argue that consumers with high levels of celebrity attachment pay more attention to the sites that are depicted on screen and in turn have positive attitudes toward and a substantial likelihood of visiting the film locations. Specifically, a positive relationship exists regarding the influence of celebrity attachment on destination loyalty.

In conclusion, both constructivist authenticity and existential authenticity positively influence celebrity attachment and in turn increase destination loyalty. Specifically, celebrity attachment mediates the influences of constructivist and existential authenticities on destination loyalty. However, the mediating effect of celebrity attachment has not been investigated in terms of film-induced destinations, especially for explaining the authenticity-destination loyalty relationship. Additionally, Wong and Lai (2015) explored the association between celebrity attachment and destination loyalty. However, in the study of Wong and Lai (2015), destination loyalty variable has comprised of items which are destination related, not site focused. In this way, other site attributes are neglected, thus diminishing their importance in the destination loyalty process. Therefore, the present study addresses this research gap and proposes the following hypotheses:

**H3a.** The relationship between constructivist authenticity and destination loyalty is mediated by celebrity attachment.

**H3b.** The relationship between existential authenticity and destination loyalty is mediated by celebrity attachment.

Based on this literature review and hypotheses development, our research framework is illustrated in Fig. 1.

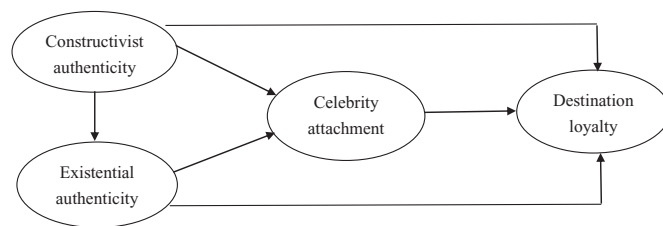


Fig. 1. Research framework.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. Sampling procedure and participants

We conducted a cross-sectional research study to examine the relationships among constructivist authenticity, existential authenticity, celebrity attachment, and destination loyalty. Tourist destinations have been popularized by films and TV dramas (Iwashita, 2008); hence, viewers often cite these programs as a contributing factor in their potential to visit film-related sites (Wong & Lai, 2015). The term *Hallyu* (“Korean wave”) describes the growing influence in numerous Asian countries of Korean pop culture through movies, television dramas, and songs (Chen, 2018; Kim & Kim, 2018a). Fans who are extensively engaged in Korean pop culture exhibit high levels of attachment to Korean stars (Lee et al., 2008). As mentioned, such fans collect Korean cultural items, learn the Korean language, eat Korean food, and visit Korea to increase their familiarity with the film destinations (Cho, 2005). Korean film companies that employ celebrities often maintain the sets used during filming as tourist attractions even after the completion of production. Therefore, the number of *Hallyu*-induced tourists has increased rapidly (Kim & Kim, 2018b), suggesting that the current Korean wave is more effective at increasing tourism than intentional destination promotions (Lee & Bai, 2016).

The Korean wave has reached Taiwan as well (Chen, 2108). Previous Korean TV dramas (e.g. *Dae Janggeum* and *Winter Sonata*) (Yen & Croy, 2016; Yen & Teng, 2015) and more recent TV dramas (e.g. *Guardian: The Lonely and Great God*) are popular among the Taiwanese audience. For example, more than seven million Taiwanese people (nearly one-third of the population) watched the Korean drama “*Guardian: The Lonely and Great God*” (ETtoday news, 2017). Based on Croy and Heitmann (2011), film tourists can be distinguished into five groups: incidental film tourists, casual film tourists, serendipitous film tourists, sightseeing film tourists, and purposeful film tourists. In their study, purposeful film tourists can be defined as those who are inclined to make pilgrimages, pursue film experiences, and visit the locations viewed in a film. Celebrity fans are inclined to desire film-relevant experiences and to confirm the scenery and sites observed on screen (Chen, 2018; Yen & Teng, 2015). Additionally, empirical research has presented two criteria for distinguishing purposeful film tourists from other tourists (Wong & Lai, 2015; Yen & Croy, 2016). Thus, we used three questions to conduct data screening to select respondents for this study. The first question was whether the respondents had a favorite Korean celebrity, the second question was whether they had watched a Korean drama, and the final question was whether they had visited Korean film-related sites (e.g. Nami Island, Daejanggeum Theme Park, Art Valley, or Songdo Central Park). Respondents who answered “yes” to all three questions were included in this research.

Similar to previous studies (Chen, 2018; Yen & Croy, 2016), a postevaluation design and online surveys were conducted to collect data. Purposeful sampling was adopted to identify qualified respondents and to maximize the range of representatives (Fossey, Harvey, McDermott, & Davidson, 2002). Because Taiwanese fans often visit websites, forums, and online bulletin boards (e.g. Kpopn and Korea Drama) of famous Korean film stars (e.g. Lee Min Ho and Hye-Kyo), the researcher contacted online moderators, explained the research



**Table 1**  
Scale items, reliabilities, and confirmatory factor analysis results.

Scale items	Factor loadings	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability	AVE
Constructivist authenticity		0.83	0.83	0.55
The overall architecture and impression of the Korean filmed sites inspired me.	0.77			
Korean filmed sites reflected the culture of Korea in an authentic way.	0.72			
I liked the way the Korean filmed sites blends with the attractive landscape/scenery, which offers many other interesting places for sightseeing.	0.72			
I liked the information about the Korean filmed sites and found it interesting.	0.75			
Existential authenticity		0.79	0.79	0.48
I liked special arrangements, events, connected to the Korean filmed sites.	0.69			
I was informed about the Korean culture after visiting the Korean filmed sites.	0.68			
I enjoyed the unique Korean culture life experience.	0.71			
During the visit, I enjoyed the re-enacting experiences.	0.69			
Celebrity attachment		0.84	0.85	0.58
I feel captivated by this celebrity.	0.78			
I feel attached to this celebrity.	0.62			
I love this celebrity.	0.84			
I feel inspired by this celebrity.	0.80			
Destination loyalty		0.87	0.87	0.64
I would like to visit Korea filmed sites again.	0.82			
I would recommend Korea filmed sites to my friends or relatives.	0.88			
I would like to visit other Korea filmed sites in the future.	0.87			
I would like to recommend other Korea filmed sites to my friends or relatives.	0.60			

purposes, and inquired their willingness to participate in this study. After receiving permission, we posted the questionnaire survey link (<https://www.surveycake.com/>) on the relevant websites or bulletin boards and invited fans to complete the survey. To enhance participation in the questionnaire survey, each respondent received a gift after completing the questionnaire.

The survey period was from March to May 2016. Of 374 distributed questionnaires, we obtained 354 usable questionnaires after eliminating 20 questionnaires that contained multiple missing answers. According to Siddiqui's suggestions Siddiqui (2013), the sample size cutoff was a ratio of 15 participants for every questionnaire item. This study had 16 questionnaire items, indicating that the minimum sample size was 240. Additionally, a sample size between 300 and 500 was reported to be useful for solving problems in research modeling (Malhotra & Birks, 2007). Finally, according to the formula developed by Westland (2012), the lower bound of the sample size for our model was 100 cases. Accordingly, we obtained a valid sample of 354 responses that satisfied these requirements.

Of the 354 respondents, 125 (35.3%) were men and 229 (64.7%) were women; this is consistent with previous research that indicated that most film tourists who visit Korea are females (Kim, 2012c; Yang, 2012). Additionally, 32.8% were aged 21–30 years, and 34.7% were aged 31–40 years; 79.7% had obtained a bachelor's or higher, and 54.5% identified themselves as single. Therefore, Taiwanese film tourists have the following characteristics: female, 21–40 years old, and single. The sample's individual characteristics are similar to those of prior film-induced tourism studies (e.g. Chen, 2018; Yen & Teng, 2015).

### 3.2. Measures

Authenticity, celebrity attachment, and destination loyalty were measured using statistically validated questionnaire items. Before the primary survey, we adopted back translation and a pretest to diminish potential translation bias (Van de Vijver & Hambleton, 1996). With the assistance of two native English speakers who had work experience at film destinations, we translated the English version of the questionnaire items into Chinese and then retranslated the items back to English. The questionnaire items in the two languages had the same meaning. During the pretest, we collected 30 celebrity fans' answers and then modified the wording of certain items to ensure the validity of the questionnaire.

All constructs were measured using the Chinese version questionnaire items and a five-point Likert scale with anchors ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Authenticity, which comprised constructivist authenticity (four items) and existential authenticity (four items), was measured using the scale created by Kolar and Zabkar (2010) because of its previous use in measuring authenticity in the tourism industry (Shen et al., 2014). From the study of Oberecker and Diamantopoulos's (2011), we adopted four items to measure celebrity attachment. This scale has been used to measure celebrity attachment in the tourism domain (Wong & Lai, 2015). Destination loyalty was measured using a four-item scale proposed by Yoon and Uysal (2005). This scale was chosen because it has been used to measure destination loyalty in the tourism industry (Chi & Qu, 2008). Questions for conducting data screening and personal information (e.g. gender and age) were also included in the questionnaire. All questionnaire items are listed in the Appendix.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Measurement reliability and validity

The researcher tested for normality by conducting skewness-kurtosis tests before analyzing whether all the questionnaire items were reliable and valid. Absolute skewness and kurtosis values lower than 2 were assumed to indicate normality (Kim, 2012). For all variables, the skewness value was between  $-0.46$  and  $-0.24$  and the kurtosis value was between 0.23 and 0.66, indicating that our data complied with the normality assumption.

As presented in Table 1, the individual Cronbach's alphas values for constructivist authenticity, existential authenticity, celebrity attachment, and destination loyalty were 0.83, 0.79, 0.84, and 0.87 respectively. Each individual value was higher than 0.7, indicating that our questionnaire had high reliability (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010). The confirmatory factor analysis results were shown as follows:  $\chi^2 = 261.55$ ,  $df = 99$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 2.64$ , goodness-of-fit index (GFI) = 0.92, root mean square residual (RMR) = 0.02, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = 0.07, incremental fit index (IFI) = 0.95, and comparative fit index (CFI) = 0.94. Therefore, all fit indices were acceptable, suggesting that the overall model provided a good fit (Hair et al., 2010).

Convergent validity and discriminant validity of the scales were

**Table 2**  
Measurement model comparison.

Models	$\chi^2$ (df)	GFI	RMR	RMSEA	IFI	CFI
Criteria	< 3	$\geq 0.90$	$\leq 0.08$	$\leq 0.08$	$\geq 0.90$	$\geq 0.90$
Hypothesized model	261.55 (99)	0.92	0.02	0.07	0.95	0.94
One-factor model	874.09 (104)	0.72	0.05	0.15	0.74	0.74

confirmed using the following steps. As shown in Table 1, the factor loadings were between 0.60 and 0.88. The composite reliability was in a range of 0.79–0.87. Therefore, these empirical results supported convergent validity (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). The average variance extracted (AVE) coefficients for constructivist authenticity, existential authenticity, celebrity attachment, and destination loyalty ranged from 0.48 to 0.64. The AVE for existential authenticity (0.48) was slightly lower than 0.5 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988; Fornell & Larcker, 1981), suggesting that the measurement items revealed moderate to high validity and reliability (Kang, Jeon, Lee, & Lee, 2005; Wu & Liang, 2011). For discriminant validity, all correlation values were less than the square root of AVE values of each construct (Table 3), indicating that discriminant validity was supported (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Thus, all constructs were distinct and had discriminant validity.

Common method variance (CMV) may affect the empirical results because the data for this study were collected from self-report questionnaires. The results demonstrated that the fit values of the one-factor model were less favorable than those of the measurement model (Table 2). Consequently, CMV was not a problem in the current study.

4.2. Correlation analysis

As presented in Table 3, constructivist authenticity was positively associated with existential authenticity ( $r = 0.65, p < 0.01$ ), celebrity attachment (0.48) and destination loyalty (0.59). In addition, existential authenticity was positively related to celebrity attachment (0.47) and destination loyalty (0.63). Finally, celebrity attachment was positively related to destination loyalty (0.49).

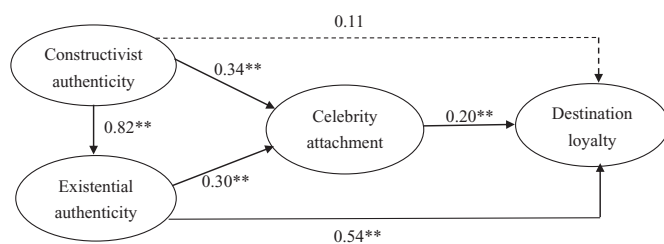
4.3. Hypothesis testing

To test our hypotheses, we performed structural equation modeling analysis using AMOS 22.0. The results indicated that the values of the fit indices were high ( $\chi^2 = 259.36, df = 98, \chi^2/df = 2.65, RMR = 0.02, RMSEA = 0.07; GFI = 0.92, IFI = 0.95, \text{ and } CFI = 0.95$ ). The results (Fig. 2) reported that constructivist authenticity had a positive effect on existential authenticity ( $\beta = 0.82, p < 0.05$ ). Therefore, H1 was supported. Constructivist authenticity was not related to destination loyalty ( $\beta = 0.11, p > 0.05$ ). Therefore, H2a was not supported. However, existential authenticity had a positive and significant influence on destination loyalty (0.54). Therefore, H2b was supported. Additionally, both constructivist authenticity and existential authenticity were positively associated with celebrity attachment (0.34 and 0.30, respectively). Celebrity attachment had a positive relationship with destination loyalty (0.20). Therefore, celebrity attachment may mediate the influences of constructivist authenticity and existential authenticity on destination loyalty.

**Table 3**  
Means, standard deviations, and correlations of all variables.

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
1. Constructivist authenticity	4.06	0.56	0.74			
2. Existential authenticity	3.98	0.55	0.65**	0.69		
3. Celebrity attachment	3.85	0.66	0.48**	0.47**	0.76	
4. Destination loyalty	4.20	0.57	0.59**	0.63**	0.49**	0.80

Note: \*\* $p < 0.01$ ; Diagonal elements indicate square root of AVE values.



**Fig. 2.** Structural path estimates model.  
Note: All path estimates are standardized; \*\* $p < 0.01$ . A dotted line indicates a non-significant path.

We performed bootstrapping analysis to confirm the mediating effect of celebrity attachment (Zhao, Lynch, & Chen, 2010). The results (Table 4) indicated that the confidence interval (CI) for the influence of celebrity attachment on the constructivist authenticity-destination loyalty relationship did not include zero (0.021 to 0.201). Similarly, the CI for the influence of celebrity attachment on the existential authenticity-destination loyalty relationship also did not include zero (0.004 to 0.175). Thus, H3a and H3b were supported. According to the mediation classification developed by Zhao et al. (2010), the mediating role of celebrity attachment on the constructivist authenticity-destination loyalty relationship was indirect-only mediation because constructivist authenticity exhibited no influence on destination loyalty. The mediating role of celebrity attachment on the existential authenticity-destination loyalty relationship was complementary mediation because both the direct and mediating effects existed in the same direction. Finally, the total effect of constructivist authenticity on destination loyalty was 0.18; the total effect of existential authenticity on destination loyalty was 0.6. Thus, existential authenticity had a higher influence on destination loyalty than did constructivist authenticity.

5. Discussion

Film-induced tourism is an emerging niche marketing strategy in the tourism industry (Chen, 2018; Croy, 2011). Authenticity has been recognized as a crucial film-induced site attribute and a crucial factor influencing tourist destination selection (Castéran & Roederer, 2013; Rittichainuwat et al., 2018; Yi et al., 2017). The dynamic nature of authenticity and its verification process is critical to the study of tourism (Kolar & Zabkar, 2010). Meanwhile, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, few studies on film-induced tourism have explored the psychological mechanism underlying how authenticity is linked to destination loyalty. Therefore, this study contributes to the literature by considering the mediating role of celebrity attachment in the authenticity-destination loyalty relationship. The findings revealed that constructivist authenticity had a positive effect on existential authenticity but had no direct effect on destination loyalty. Existential authenticity was directly associated with destination loyalty. Celebrity attachment mediated the influences of constructivist authenticity and existential authenticity on destination loyalty. Thus, these results indicate that celebrity attachment should be considered a factor to investigate how authenticity affects destination loyalty. Finally, existential authenticity had a higher influence on destination loyalty than did constructivist authenticity.

5.1. Theoretical implications

Cultural tourism is prevalent globally (Chen & Rahman, 2018). Previous studies have stated that both object-based authenticity (from a constructive perception) and existential authenticity are positively associated with loyalty to heritage locations (Kolar & Zabkar, 2010). Our study complements this line of thinking by exploring these two types of authenticity in terms of film-induced tourism. This study also examined

**Table 4**  
Indirect effects for celebrity attachment on destination loyalty.

Hypothesized relationships	Direct effects	Indirect effects	Mediation
From constructivist authenticity to celebrity attachment and then to destination loyalty	Not significant	0.07 (0.021, 0.201)	Indirect-only mediation
From existential authenticity to celebrity attachment and then to destination loyalty	0.54 (0.281, 0.831)	0.06 (0.004, 0.175)	Complementary mediation

Note: Values in parentheses are 95% confidence intervals.

film tourists' perceptions and experiences of the filmed sites, as suggested in previous film experience studies (Kim, 2012a). However, in our study, only a high degree of perceived existential authenticity positively increased destination loyalty. This result is consistent with the findings of Shen et al. (2014) but inconsistent with those of Kolar and Zabkar (2010). Therefore, compared with constructivist authenticity, existential authenticity, to some degree, is a more crucial antecedent of film tourists' revisit intentions and recommendation of film-related destinations. These findings appear to be in accordance with the statement by Buchmann et al. (2010) that existential authenticity is a significant explanatory factor in film tourism experience.

There exists a debate about exploring the influence of the two authenticities separately or together (Shen et al., 2014; Wang, 1999). Our findings revealed that constructivist authenticity had a positive influence on existential authenticity and thus had an influence on destination loyalty. Accordingly, in film-induced tourism, both constructivist and existential authenticities should be considered to enhance loyalty to film destinations. Existential authenticity cannot be neglected when developing a link between constructivist authenticity and destination loyalty. This finding appears to partially supplement the framework of Yi et al. (2017), who examined the relationships between perceived authenticity (e.g. subjective perception), existential authenticity, and destination loyalty in a sample of Chinese heritage sites.

By combining the intimacy, emotional attachment, and parasocial theories, our findings reported that celebrity attachment had a mediating influence on the association between authenticity and destination loyalty. Specifically, celebrity attachment fully mediated the relationship between constructivist authenticity and destination loyalty. Celebrity attachment partially mediated the relationship between existential authenticity and destination loyalty. These findings complement the assertion presented by Yi et al. (2017) that the relationship between existential authenticity and destination loyalty is uncertain. Because of the crucial mediating influence, the role of celebrity attachment cannot be ignored when strengthening the authenticity-destination loyalty relationship. Macionis (2004) argued that purposeful film tourists are typically not highly concerned about a film site's authenticity. However, her study ignored the role of celebrity for the purposeful film tourists. Hence, the true influence of authenticity constructs can be understood by examining celebrity attachment. Perceived authentic experiences have been depicted on screens at film sites to emotionally attach specific film tourists to the film's celebrities, thus increasing the likelihood of film tourists to revisit or recommend the destination to others. The present study introduces a new perspective pertaining to the authenticity-celebrity attachment-destination loyalty relationship and complements previous studies that have examined the direct influence of authenticity on destination loyalty (Castéran & Roederer, 2013; Kolar & Zabkar, 2010).

### 5.2. Managerial implications

In an intensely competitive environment, film destination tourism industry managers strive to establish effective and economical strategies for accomplishing and maintaining destination loyalty. Past studies on film tourism have focused on strategies used to develop a relationship between films and tourists' memories and experiences (St-James, Darveau, & Fortin, 2018; Trauer & Ryan, 2005). This study suggests that film destination marketers prioritize design activities related to

existential authenticity that film-induced tourists can experience for meeting their hyper-real expectations. Such activities involve taking photographs, re-enacting scenes, and interpersonal encounters. Marketers should thus maintain the scenery and the site portrayed in the film, which enhances the perceived constructivist authenticity of film-induced tourists in addition to enhancing activities related to existential authenticity. Specifically, the film destination marketers can design guided authentic film encounters (i.e. a combination of physical and interpersonal authentic site attributes) to facilitate authentic film experience encounters and thus enhance the destination loyalty of film-induced tourists.

Film celebrities are treated as crucial destination promoters (Yen & Croy, 2016). For enhancing film-induced tourists' destination loyalty, destination practitioners should not restrict their scope to the authentic nature of film site attributes perceived by such tourists. The role of celebrity attachment should not be neglected when building the authenticity-destination loyalty relationship. Devotees of celebrities join fan clubs, eat at places that are displayed in films, and collect cultural items of film locations (Cho, 2005). Through these activities, fans familiarize themselves with the sites associated with the celebrity (Chiu & Zeng, 2016). Therefore, strategies for increasing emotional attachment, such as providing exclusive fan clubs and celebrity activities, can be considered as a method for reinforcing the fans' sense of belonging toward film celebrities.

### 5.3. Research limitations and future studies

Although this study has several theoretical and managerial implications for film-induced tourism, it has limitations that can be addressed in future research. First, the cross-sectional research design used in hypothesis testing could not enable the confirmation of causal relationships. A longitudinal research design should be employed when examining the impact of authenticity on destination loyalty. Second, the current study investigated the authenticity-celebrity attachment-destination loyalty relationship. Past studies have demonstrated that demographic variables (e.g. gender, age, and education) are related to authenticity (Kirillova, Lehto, & Cai, 2017). Additionally, national attributes perceived by visitors may influence their expectations of the film sites. For example, the country image influences tourist intentions to visit film locations (Kim et al., 2019). Cultural familiarity may also affect viewers' perception of sites depicted in a film (Hudson, Wang, & Gil, 2011) and in turn influence their intentions to visit the film destinations. Accordingly, these variables can be considered in future studies to obtain a deeper understanding of the authenticity-destination loyalty relationship.

Third, our samples were from Taiwanese fan tourists who visited these film locations. This study did not examine cultural differences or travel behaviors among different nationalities; hence, our results may not be generalizable to other populations. Future studies can adopt data samples from other regions or countries to examine the authenticity-destination loyalty relationship. Fourth, the AVE of existential authenticity was marginally lower than the threshold value. This result may occur because the items of existential authenticity were modified from previous studies on heritage sites (Kolar & Zabkar, 2010). Moreover, to the author's knowledge, our study may be the first to empirically test the aforementioned construct for film-induced tourism. Future studies should pay attention to this issue. Finally, the researchers

gathered data from a single source, indicating a possibility that CMV may account for its significant findings. As suggested by Podsakoff,

MacKenzie, and Podsakoff (2012), future studies can examine multiple data sources instead.

**Appendix A. Questionnaire**

**A.1. Part I**

1. Do you have a favorite Korean celebrity? Yes No.
2. Have you watched the Korean dramas? Yes No.
3. Have you visited Korean film-related locations seen on screen (e.g. Nami Island, Daejanggeum Theme Park, Art Valley, or Songdo Central Park)? Yes No

**A.2. Part II**

This part is to measure your feeling on celebrity attachment. Please indicate your situation with each of the following items 1.Strongly disagree 2.Disagree 3.Common 4. Agree 5. Strongly agree that corresponds most closely to your desired response.

1	I feel captivated by this celebrity.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
2	I feel attached to this celebrity.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
3	I love this celebrity.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
4	I feel inspired by this celebrity.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

**A.3. Part III**

This part is to measure your feeling on constructivist authenticity. Please indicate your situation with each of the following items 1.Strongly disagree 2.Disagree 3.Common 4. Agree 5. Strongly agree that corresponds most closely to your desired response.

1	The overall architecture and impression of the Korean filmed sites inspired me.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
2	Korean filmed sites reflected the culture of Korea in an authentic way.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
3	I liked the way the Korean filmed sites blends with the attractive landscape/scenery, which offers many other interesting places for sightseeing.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
4	I liked the information about the Korean filmed sites and found it interesting.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

**A.4. Part IV**

This part is to measure your feeling on existential authenticity. Please indicate your situation with each of the following items 1.Strongly disagree 2.Disagree 3.Common 4. Agree 5. Strongly agree that corresponds most closely to your desired response.

1	I liked special arrangements, events, connected to the Korean filmed sites.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
2	I was informed about the Korean culture after visiting the Korean filmed sites.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
3	I enjoyed the unique Korean culture life experience.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
4	During the visit, I enjoyed the re-enacting experiences.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

**A.5. Part V**

This part is to measure your feeling on destination loyalty. Please indicate your situation with each of the following items 1.Strongly disagree 2.Disagree 3.Common 4. Agree 5. Strongly agree that corresponds most closely to your desired response.

1	I would like to visit Korea filmed sites again.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
2	I would recommend Korea filmed sites to my friends or relatives.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
3	I would like to visit other Korea filmed sites in the future.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
4	I would like to recommend other Korea filmed sites to my friends or relatives.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

**A.6. Part VI Personal information**

1. Gender: Male Female.
2. Age: 21–30 31–40 41–50  Above 51.
3. Marital status: Unmarried Married.
4. Education level: Below senior high school Senior College Undergraduate Above graduate.



## Appendix B. Research instrument

### B.1. Celebrity attachment

1. I feel captivated by this celebrity.
2. I feel attached to this celebrity.
3. I love this celebrity.
4. I feel inspired by this celebrity.

### B.2. Constructivist authenticity

1. The overall architecture and impression of the Korean filmed sites inspired me.
2. Korean filmed sites reflected the culture of Korea in an authentic way.
3. I liked the way the Korean filmed sites blends with the attractive landscape/scenery, which offers many other interesting places for sightseeing.
4. I liked the information about the Korean filmed sites and found it interesting.

### B.3. Existential authenticity

1. I liked special arrangements, events, connected to the Korean filmed sites.
2. I was informed about the Korean culture after visiting the Korean filmed sites.
3. I enjoyed the unique Korean culture life experience.
4. During the visit, I enjoyed the re-enacting experiences.

### B.4. Destination loyalty

1. I would like to visit Korea filmed sites again.
2. I would recommend Korea filmed sites to my friends or relatives.
3. I would like to visit other Korea filmed sites in the future.
4. I would like to recommend other Korea filmed sites to my friends or relatives.

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