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Impact of Travel Motivation, Experiences, and Tourist Harassment on Behavioral Intentions through Destination Image

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Abstract

A critical indicator of tourism destination success is tourists' post-visit impressions and perceptions of the destination image. Therefore, this research aims to investigate the factors that shape destination image—specifically travel motivation, tourist experiences, and experiences of harassment—and how these factors are associated with tourists' behavioral intentions. Using a mixed-method approach, the research began with in-depth interviews of international tourists, followed by a quantitative study with 278 valid responses. A two-stage PLS-SEM analysis using SmartPLS v.3.2.8 was employed to test the research hypotheses. Results indicate that travel motivation, memorable tourism experiences, and tourist harassment significantly impact the three dimensions of destination image (cognitive, affective, and conative). Both affective and conative images positively influence tourists' behavioral intentions. However, past experience does not moderate the relationship between destination image dimensions and behavioral intention. The findings of the study provide tourism companies and tourism boards (e.g., Destination Marketing Organizations, DMOs) with insights to help design targeted image campaigns that align with tourists' expectations and develop strategies to enhance visitor experiences.

Keywords: Destination image, Revisit intention, Memorable tourism experience, harassment, Travel motivation, Past-experience, Behavioral intention, Egypt.

1. Introduction

Destination image has been widely recognized as a key determinant of tourists' perceptions and travel decision-making (Parrey et al., 2018). Tourists rely on destination image as the primary lens for perceiving and evaluating potential destinations (Nguyen et al., 2025). In addition, it has been considered a critical concept for understanding tourist attitudes and behaviors in the travel and tourism context (Lee and Jeong, 2023; Wang et al., 2024). As a competitive tool, a unique, positive image can captivate potential tourists, whereas a poor image deters them (Jalilvand and Heidari, 2017; Ageeva and Foroudi, 2019). The role of destination image in shaping tourist behavior and encouraging revisits is well-documented, though the findings are varied (Afshardoost and Eshaghi, 2020).

The multidimensional nature of destination image contributes to its status as an engaging area of research (Nguyen et al., 2025; Nguyen and Duong, 2025). Despite decades of destination-image research, most studies focus on cognitive and affective dimensions while giving limited attention to the conative (behavioral) component. Harassment and memorable experiences—especially in Middle Eastern tourism contexts—are rarely integrated as key antecedents. Also, previous studies overlook how safety issues and tourist motivations interact to shape image and, ultimately, behavioral intentions. As a result, policymakers lack contextual evidence linking these factors to tourists' decisions to revisit, recommend, or avoid a destination. Furthermore, recent literature calls for empirical research to identify predictors of destination image, especially in developing regions with rich cultural tourism potential, like the Middle East (Ragab et al., 2026; Kislali et al., 2019; Yilmaz and Yilmaz, 2020).

Therefore, the current study seeks to empirically test a conceptual framework that assesses how travel motivation, tourist harassment, and memorable experiences shape destination image dimensions and influence tourist behavioral intentions in Egypt. Additionally, it explores whether past experiences moderate the relationship between destination image and behavioral intentions. The primary research questions are: a) What are the main antecedents of destination image? b) What are the consequences of destination image? c) What is the impact of past experience on the relationship between destination image dimensions and future behavioral intentions?

2. Literature review

Destination image has long been recognized as a central construct in tourism research, yet its development and influencing factors continue to evolve across different contexts. Zhao and Agyeiwaah (2025) describe destination image as tourists' psychological perception of a destination. Most previous studies that explored various antecedents and outcomes of destination image focused only on its cognitive and affective components (Nguyen and Duong, 2025), offering limited insight into the conative dimension, which reflects tourists' behavioral tendencies. At the same time, influential variables such as tourist harassment and memorable experiences—particularly within Middle Eastern destinations—remain under-examined despite their relevance to safety

perceptions and experiential quality. Additionally, tourism marketing research tends to overlook the interplay among tourists' motivations, on-site experiences, and how these elements converge to shape destination image and subsequent behavioral intentions. Recent literature further underscores the need to investigate these dynamics within developing regions rich in cultural tourism potential, such as the Middle East (Ragb et al., 2026; Kislali et al., 2019; Yilmaz and Yilmaz, 2020). Accordingly, the current discussions in the field increasingly call for integrated frameworks that consider travel motivation, tourist harassment, memorable experiences, and experience as interconnected factors influencing destination image and tourist behavior. Therefore, the following sub-sections discuss how these factors affect destination image and ultimately shape tourists' behavioral intentions.

2.2 Destination Image Antecedents

2.2.1 Travel Motivation

Motivation drives an individual's behavior (Park et al., 2019). In the tourism context, Dann (1981) defines motivation as a "meaningful state of mind" that compels individuals to travel. Identifying travel motivations allows for effective market segmentation, helping tourism managers tailor strategies (Beh and Bruyere, 2007). Motivation also clarifies why tourists travel and what experiences they seek (Kim et al., 2003; Shazly and Mahrous, 2020). Personal factors, such as socio-demographics (age, gender, social class, and education) and psychological factors (personality, values, and motivations), influence an individual's perception of a destination (Beerli and Martin, 2004). Studies confirm that motivation significantly impacts destination image (Pereira et al., 2019).

2.2.2 Memorable Tourist Experience

Providing consistent, meaningful experiences is essential in the tourism industry (Mahrous and Hassan, 2016; Ragab et al., 2024). In addition, tourists seek enjoyable and memorable experiences during their trips (Goossens, 2000). While advertising, friends' opinions, and the media significantly shape tourists' imagined perceptions of destinations, these impressions may change with direct personal experience (Nguyen et al., 2025). A Memorable Tourist Experience (MTE) is an experience retained in long-term memory and recalled post-travel (Kim et al., 2010). Memorable experiences enhance a destination's credibility and influence its perceived image (Kim, 2017). The theory of the tourism consumption system suggests that tourist evaluations of a single experience shape their overall destination assessment (Woodside and Dubelaar, 2002). Consequently, destinations that create positive MTEs improve their image and competitive advantage (Neuhofer et al., 2015).

2.2.3 Tourist Harassment

While positive tourist-host relationships enhance visitor satisfaction and encourage repeat visits, negative experiences—such as harassment—can damage a destination's reputation (Korzay and Alvarez, 2005). Tourist harassment, commonly cited as a negative travel experience, lacks a

universally accepted definition (Otoo et al., 2019). Generally, it refers to behaviors that disturb or discomfort visitors (Nicely and Armadita, 2018b; Otoo et al., 2019). Despite its prevalence, many destinations struggle to address harassment effectively (De Albuquerque and McElroy, 2001). One reason is that stakeholders often do not classify harassment as a criminal act (Otoo et al., 2019). Additionally, the subjective nature of harassment makes it challenging to define and regulate objectively (McElroy et al., 2007). Given that tourists are unable to separate impolite behavior from places, this triggers negative emotional responses that adversely affect destination image (Tang et al., 2025). Although research on the relationship between harassment and destination image is limited, some studies indicate a strong connection between the two (Nicely and Armadita, 2018; Otoo et al., 2019).

2.3 Tourists' Behavioral Intentions

Tourists' behavioral intention refers to the willingness to perform actions related to visiting a destination or recommending it to others (Nguyen and Duong, 2025; Pan et al., 2025). Tourists' behavioral intentions—such as revisiting a destination and engaging in word-of-mouth (WOM) promotion—are key indicators of tourism success. Word of mouth, along with media exposure, advertisements, and recommendations from acquaintances, helps shape tourists' perceptions of potential destinations (Nguyen et al., 2025). A positive perception of a destination increases the likelihood of repeat visits and favorable WOM, contributing to economic sustainability (Prayag et al., 2015). WOM, defined as informal, person-to-person communication, plays a crucial role in influencing potential travelers by providing credible information (Zhang et al., 2014). Additionally, positive WOM strengthens a destination's competitiveness and offers valuable insights for tourism managers (Lee, 2009).

Revisit intention is another essential aspect of destination loyalty. It ensures a steady flow of tourists while reducing marketing costs, as repeat visitors require less promotional effort (Alegre and Juaneda, 2006; Cetinsoz and Ege, 2013). The cognitive and affective components of destination image significantly influence revisit intentions across different tourism settings, including coastal and inland destinations (Kim et al., 2024; Hasan et al., 2019).

2.4 Moderating Effect of Past-Experience

Tourist experience refers to the perceptions and emotions a tourist has before, during, or after a visit to a destination (Chen, 2025; Chang et al., 2025). Tourist experiences are subjective and vary even within the same destination or activity (Vada et al., 2019). First-time visitors often perceive a destination differently from repeat visitors. Repetitive visitation plays a critical role in tourist loyalty for several reasons (Niininen and Riley, 2003). First, attracting repeat visitors is more cost-effective than acquiring first-time travelers (Vada et al., 2019). Second, frequent visits lead to higher levels of tourist satisfaction (Alegre and Cladera, 2006). Third, repeat visits by tourists are more likely to lead to recommendations to others (Pritchard, 2003). Their prior

experiences help them navigate destinations more confidently and avoid negative encounters (Chi, 2012).

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

This study explores the factors shaping tourists' perceptions of Egypt and how these perceptions influence their future behavior. A mixed-methods approach is utilized to leverage the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative research (Creswell and Creswell, 2017). The research follows a sequential mixed-methods design, beginning with qualitative online interviews with international tourists who recently visited Egypt, followed by quantitative data collection via an online questionnaire (Creswell and Creswell, 2017). Each phase builds on the previous one to deepen the understanding of Egypt's perceived image among tourists.

3.2. Research Context

Egypt serves as the research setting for several reasons. First, there is limited research on destination image within emerging markets, particularly in the Middle East (Foroudi et al., 2018; Styliadis et al., 2017; Styliadis, 2022; Ragab et al., 2026). Second, Egypt's economy heavily depends on tourism, contributing 15% to its GDP (Ragab et al., 2020). Third, while destination image research often focuses on Western, European, or "Sun-and-Sand" destinations, research on historical destinations remains limited (Ragab et al., 2019). Egypt, with its 7,000-year-old civilization, provides a unique context for examining historical tourism (UNESCO, 2019). Egypt improved its overall Travel & Tourism Development Index (TTDI) ranking from 66th in 2019 to 61st in 2024 (World Economic Forum, 2024).

3.3. Sampling Process

The research employs a non-probability sampling method, beginning with 12 in-depth online interviews with tourists from various countries who recently visited Egypt. This qualitative phase used judgmental and snowball sampling to identify participants with relevant, memorable experiences in Egypt. Interviews were conducted online. Interviews were conducted in English and were recorded with the participants' permission. Following this, a quantitative survey was conducted among tourists aged 18 or older who visited Egypt from 2018 to 2021, providing a comprehensive sample. Questionnaires were distributed via Prolific Academic (ProA) and traveler-focused Facebook groups; the survey yielded 313 responses, of which 278 were valid after data cleaning. All participants were assured that their responses would be kept anonymous and confidential. Data collection took place from August to November 2021. Finally, a qualitative validation phase involved four semi-structured interviews with tourism sector experts, using a judgmental sampling method. This phase enhanced the study by providing industry perspectives to contextualize the survey findings. All participants in both interviews and surveys were informed of the study's purpose and their right to withdraw at any time.

3.4. Data Collection Instruments

In the qualitative phases, interviews followed a semi-structured guide centered on study objectives, facilitating a two-way, conversational approach that allowed participants to share their thoughts openly (White, 2005). Participants were first approached through Facebook groups where international travelers share experiences from various destinations. Alongside purposive sampling, snowball sampling was applied as participants recommended additional eligible respondents. A flexible interviewing approach encouraged participants to express their thoughts and emotions freely, and interviews were conducted only when they had sufficient time. All interviews were conducted in English, recorded with permission, and structured as interactive, two-way conversations to allow for clarification when needed. Each interview began with a brief overview of the study, followed by warm-up questions about participants' backgrounds and travel history in Egypt. Core questions were adapted from White (2005), including: "What is your perception of Egypt as a tourism destination?" and "What image comes to mind when you think of Egypt as a tourist destination?" Additional questions addressed antecedents of destination image and tourists' behavioral intentions. Interviews lasted 20–30 minutes and yielded 12 participants who had visited Egypt within the last 2 years.

Qualitatively driven research is especially important for deepening our understanding of tourists' experiences. (Kim et al. 2024). The quantitative phase employed a structured questionnaire, divided into three parts: an introductory section explaining the study, a filtering question regarding recent travel to Egypt, and questions focused on travel experiences and destination perception. Measurement scales were adapted from existing literature and reviewed for clarity. Tourist motivation was assessed using the scale developed by Beerli & DMartín (2004). A memorable tourism experience was measured through the scale proposed by Kim et al. (2012). Tourist Harassment was measured using the scale introduced by De Albuquerque & McElroy (2001). For destination image construct, the cognitive dimension was measured using the scale adopted from Styliadis (2020), the affective dimension using scales from Baloglu & McCleary (1999) and Wang & Hsu (2010), and the conative dimension using the scale developed by Stylos et al. (2016). Finally, revisit intention was measured through scales adopted from Papadimitriou et al. (2015). Validity and reliability were assessed for each latent variable. The AVE and CR values were calculated for all latent constructs, and each construct exceeded the recommended thresholds of 0.50 for AVE and 0.70 for CR, as presented in Table II."

Most questions used a seven-point Likert scale, except for the affective image (a seven-point semantic differential scale) and tourist harassment (a nominal scale). The questionnaire concluded with socio-demographic questions about participants' age, gender, country of origin, and accommodation type. All measurement scales were adopted from the extant literature to fit the study context.

4. Qualitative Results and Hypotheses Development

The study relied on a content analysis strategy. A theme-oriented approach was used to understand how tourists perceive Egypt's image and what shapes it. Data coding began with the development of a codebook containing definitions of the research variables and additional variables emerging from the interviews. Each variable was assigned a number, which was then applied to the selected sentences. The recurrence of these numbers helped identify the most and least influential variables. All interview scripts were listed in one column with variables in adjacent columns, enabling systematic identification of words and sentences linked to each code. Finally, results were documented, compared with previous studies, and assessed in light of emerging research questions.

The responses from tourists reveal varied perceptions of the destination's image through cognitive, affective, and conative lenses. Many respondents expressed admiration for Egypt's physical features, including its pleasant beaches, historical sites, cuisine, and the welcoming nature of locals. However, dissatisfaction with atmospheric pollution, particularly in Cairo, was commonly noted. From an affective standpoint, tourists' experiences varied. Some described Egypt as "stressful" and preferred staying within their hotels due to negative interactions with certain locals. However, others regarded such experiences as typical of global travel. Despite these mixed feelings, all participants concurred on Egypt's beauty and the excitement it offers. The data support the idea that the aspiration toward a "dream destination" can evolve into an intention to travel, aligning with distinctions in the literature between conative image and behavioral intention (e.g., Perugini and Bagozzi, 2004; White, 2014). Moreover, Egypt's historic sites especially appealed to those with a strong interest in history.

4.1 Antecedents of Destination Image

To understand the factors shaping Egypt's destination image, tourists were asked, "What factors influence your perceived image of Egypt?" Their responses highlight several determinants of destination image and behavior. This study underscores tourist motivation and memorable experiences as two primary predictors. Notably, all participants emphasized the impact of tourist harassment on Egypt's image and behavioral intentions.

Motivated by Egypt's ancient civilization, most tourists expressed a strong desire to explore iconic locations, such as the Pyramids, the Sphinx, the Cairo Museum, Abu Simbel Temple, the Valley of the Kings, and Hatshepsut Temple. For instance, a 23-year-old female tourist stated, "As a child, I was obsessed with Egyptian gods and wanted to go to Egypt." Travel motivation, particularly among young women, has been shown to positively influence cognitive and affective image formation (Khan et al., 2017). The impact of tourist motivation on destination image has been demonstrated in several studies (e.g., Tang, 2014; Maghrifani et al., 2021). Responding to Prayag et al.'s (2015) call for future research on the role of tourist motivation in destination image studies, the following hypothesis is proposed:

***H1:** There is a positive relationship between tourist motivation and cognitive image (H1a), affective image (H1b), and conative image (H1c).*

The interviews also revealed how memorable experiences connected to Egypt's cultural and historical richness serve as significant motivators, suggesting a link between positive memories, destination image, and future tourism behaviors. A 28-year-old female tourist shared, “Until today, I still feel happy when I see an Egyptian, and I don't have as many stories from anywhere in the world as I have from Egypt.” Hu and Shen (2022) recommended further research on the relationship between memorable tourism experiences (MTEs) and destination image. Also, Zhou *et al.* (2023) found a significant impact of MTEs on destination image. Further, it was found that tourism experiences of both domestic and international tourists positively affect the cognitive image of the destination (Guerreiro *et al.*, 2025). This study aims to expand the MTE model by examining its influence on destination image, leading to the following hypothesis:

***H2:** There is a positive relationship between memorable tourism experience and cognitive image (H2a), affective image (H2b), and conative image (H2c).*

Additionally, a previously overlooked factor—tourist harassment—emerged as a central theme in this study. Many participants, regardless of gender, reported experiencing various forms of harassment, including persistent vendor solicitation and aggressive sales tactics. For example, a 33-year-old male tourist stated, “Random people are always coming up to you, trying to get you to buy stuff.” Otto *et al.* (2019) found that tourist harassment negatively affects a destination's image, as demonstrated in their study on Ghana. Similarly, Darabi *et al.* (2025) and Jiang *et al.* (2022) found a negative association between perceived risks, such as harassment, and destination image. However, Alrawadieh *et al.* (2019) and Ha and Nguyen (2023) reported no significant relationship between harassment and destination perception. Given these mixed findings, this study aligns with Otto *et al.* (2019), leading to the following hypothesis:

***H3:** There is a significant difference between tourists who have experienced harassment during their visit and those who didn't in terms of cognitive image (H3a), affective image (H3b), and conative image (H3c).*

4.2 Antecedents of Behavioral Intentions

Prior research indicates that destination image antecedents strongly influence tourists' behavioral intentions, particularly revisit intentions. Thiumsak and Ruangkanjanases (2016) found that motives such as shopping, dining, and accommodations significantly relate to revisit intentions in Thailand. Similarly, Hashemi *et al.* (2017) reported that psychological motivations positively impact revisit intentions. However, the effects of tourist motivation on behavioral constructs remain underexplored (Hsu *et al.*, 2010).

Interviews also revealed that MTEs significantly influence positive behavioral intentions and word-of-mouth (WOM) recommendations. For example, Adongo *et al.* (2015) found that local

food experiences strongly encourage tourists to recommend destinations. Despite this, research on MTEs' impact on *behavioral* intentions is limited (Kim, 2017). Furthermore, tourist harassment shapes behavioral intentions. Otto et al. (2019) found that harassment negatively affects future visit intentions in Ghana, reinforcing the need for further research in this area. Accordingly, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H4: *Tourist motivation (H4a) and a memorable tourism experience (H4b) positively influence behavioral intentions.*

H4c: *There is a significant difference between tourists who have experienced harassment during their visit and those who didn't in terms of behavioral intentions.*

Additionally, this study found that tourists with a positive image of Egypt expressed strong revisit intentions, while those with a negative perception exhibited little interest in returning. Prior research has shown that affective images have a more significant impact on behavioral intentions than cognitive images (Lee and Jeong, 2023). Given the importance of tourist attitudes and revisit intentions, further research is necessary (Hasan et al., 2019). Thus, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H5: *Cognitive image (H5a), affective image (H5b), and conative image (H5c) positively influence behavioral intentions.*

4.3 The Moderating Role of Past-Experience

Experience plays a crucial role in shaping tourists' perceptions of Egypt. This study found that past experiences moderate the relationship between destination image and behavior, as previous research has shown. Da Silva et al. (2024) found that first-time and repeat visitors perceive destinations differently. While some studies (e.g., Kim et al., 2012; Giraldi and Cesareo, 2014) observed a significant moderating effect of past experiences, others (e.g., Rodríguez Molina et al., 2013) found no notable influence.

The qualitative interviews in this study indicate that first-time visitors are often more eager to return than repeat tourists. Despite extensive research on past experiences and their moderating role in destination image, this area remains underexplored (Tosun, 2015). Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H6: *Past experience moderates the relationship between cognitive image (H6a), affective image (H6b), conative image (H6c), and behavioral intentions.*

Building on a review of previous studies and findings from the qualitative study, a conceptual framework was developed, as shown in the figure below (Figure 1).

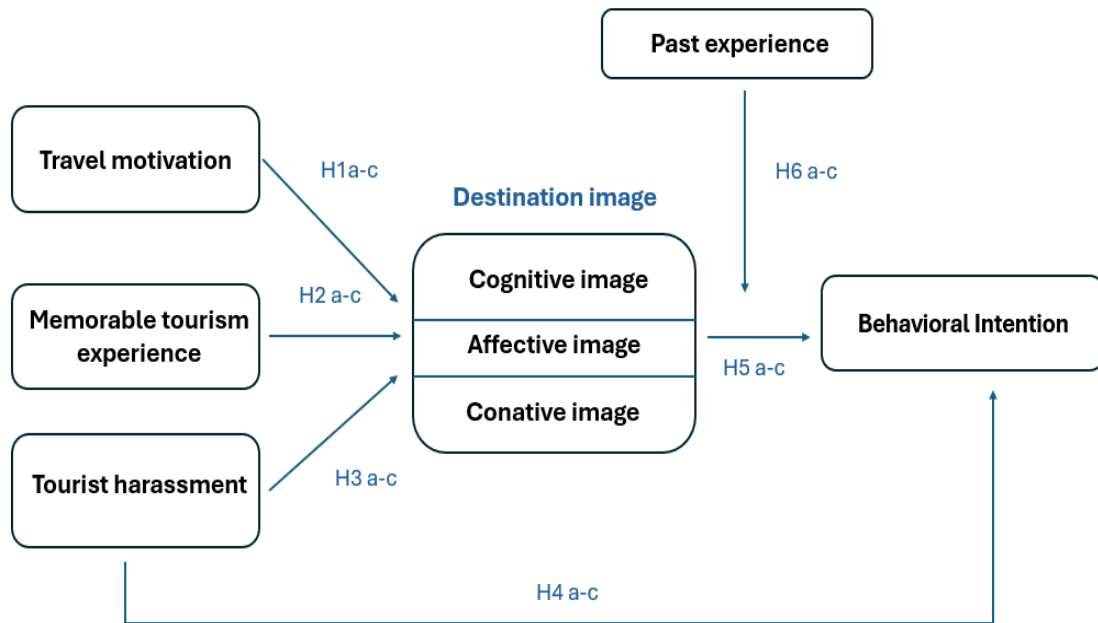


Figure 1. Research Framework

5. Data analysis and results

5.1 Socio-demographic characteristics

This section presents the sample profile and descriptive analysis of the research constructs, based on 278 valid responses from 313 collected questionnaires. As shown in Table I, females constitute 59% of the sample, likely due to the predominance of female-only Facebook groups sharing the questionnaire link. 53.6% of respondents are middle-aged (26–45 years), reflecting younger generations' enthusiasm for new destinations. Most tourists in the sample visited Egypt in 2018 (94 visitors), with the number dropping to 52 in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Still, numbers began to recover in 2021 with 78 visitors, coinciding with the COVID-19 vaccine rollout. Approximately 40% of respondents preferred staying in non-all-inclusive hotels, likely to explore Egypt's many attractions, while 40% of trips were self-organized. Family and friends helped organize 33.8% of trips, and only 25.5% were organized through guided groups due to higher costs and limited flexibility. More than half of the sample had visited Egypt previously, indicating satisfaction with the destination, affordability, and strong connections to the location. Notably, 48% stayed for more than 2 weeks, possibly to experience Egypt's numerous historical sites and activities. The sample consists of tourists from diverse regions, with Arabs forming the largest group at 36% (98 participants). Americans and Europeans each make up around 24% (66 participants), while the remaining tourists come from various countries, including Nigeria, South Africa, China, and Australia (48 participants).

From the total sample of 278 tourists, 168 reported experiencing harassment, including 102 females and 66 males. Vendors' persistence emerged as the most frequent type, with 61 incidents for females and 38 for males, followed by harassment by beggars (females: 36, males: 33) and verbal harassment (females: 36, males: 25). Other types, such as physical harassment, soliciting sex, and drug dealing, were also recorded. Females reported more incidents overall, possibly because their sample was more evenly split between females (59%) and males (41%). Incident locations varied, with street harassment being the most common for both females (76 incidents) and males (54 incidents). This was followed by harassment at tourist sites (females: 48, males: 33) and equal incidents on transportation (32 for each gender). Other locations included beaches, restaurants, and markets.

5.2 The underlying factors of cognitive image

Using SPSS, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was conducted on 278 responses to examine 13 cognitive image attributes via Principal Components Analysis (PCA). The data's suitability was assessed using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure, yielding an acceptable value of 0.843. Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ($p = .000$). The analysis identified three factors, retaining 10 items with factor loadings ranging from 0.541 to 0.858, explaining 60.71% of the total variance (see Table I). Items with factor loadings below 0.5 and cross-loadings above 0.3 were excluded, except for Cog4, which was retained for confirmatory factor analysis despite a loading of 0.494. Reliability, as measured by Cronbach's alpha, ranged from 0.632 to 0.94 across three factors, exceeding the minimum threshold of 0.6 (Malhotra, 2010). The factors were categorized as hospitality and security, cultural attractions, and tourism infrastructure.

Table I. The Underlying Factors of a Cognitive Image

	Factor loading	Eigenvalue	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Cronbach's alpha
F1: Tourism infrastructure					
Pleasant weather	.858	3.670	36.697	36.697	0.632
Quality accommodation	.494				
Appealing cuisine/food	.617				
F2: Cultural attractions					
Interesting culture/events	.814	1.390	13.897	50.594	0.749
Interesting heritage sites	.812				
F3: Hospitality and security					
Nice beaches	.541	1.012	10.116	60.710	0.748
A variety of shops	.549				
Convenient transportation	.731				

Easily accessible	.738				
Safe destination	.700				

Source: Authors' own work

5.3 Structural equation modeling

5.3.1 The measurement model

A two-stage PLS-SEM analysis using SmartPLS v.3.2.8 (Ringle et al., 2015) was employed. In the first stage, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to assess the measurement model, focusing on item validity, construct validity and reliability, multi-collinearity, and predictive power (Hair et al., 2016). The second stage involved testing the study's hypotheses and moderation relationships.

CFA tested the cognitive image's measurement scale for convergent validity, discriminant validity, and reliability. According to Hair et al. (2010), factor loadings should exceed 0.7; items with loadings below 0.4 should be removed. While some items on the cognitive image scale had loadings below 0.7, they were retained if their loadings were above 0.6. Construct validity was assessed using Average Variance Extracted (AVE), requiring a minimum of 0.5 (Hair et al., 2010). For tourism infrastructure and cultural attractions, AVE exceeded 0.5, but the hospitality and security factor AVE initially fell below this threshold (0.489). Removing item Cog6 raised the AVE to 0.556, justifying its exclusion. Discriminant validity was established as the square root of each construct's AVE exceeded correlations with other constructs (Hair et al., 2016, p. 105). Reliability was supported with Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values exceeding 0.6 (Malhotra, 2010).

Ultimately, nine items remained on the cognitive image measurement scale.

Convergent validity, reliability, and discriminant validity were assessed for each latent variable. Two items of the travel motivation construct were also removed due to low outer loadings (<0.5), along with seven items from different constructs (affective image, conative image, memorable experience, and travel motivation) that exhibited cross-loadings below 0.2 (Hair et al., 2010). Despite some items with factor loadings below 0.7, these were retained given their theoretical relevance (see Table II). The AVE and CR were computed for each latent construct, and all constructs exceeded the threshold value of 0.50 for AVE and 0.70 for CR (see

Table II). Further, discriminant validity, verified through the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT), was also supported as HTMT ratios remained below 0.85 across constructs (Kline, 2011; Mahrous et al., 2020; Adel et al., 2018), as shown in Table III. Despite achieving discriminant validity, a full collinearity assessment was conducted to address potential common-method bias (CMB). Variance inflation factor (VIF) values for exogenous constructs ranged from 1.00 to 2.25, within the accepted range of 0.20 to 5.00 (Hair et al., 2014), indicating no significant multicollinearity (see Table IV). Predictive power, measured by the coefficient of determination (R^2), was moderate for all constructs, with R^2 values of 0.487 for cognitive image, 0.353 for affective image, 0.392 for conative image, and 0.475 for behavioral intention at a 5% significance level (see Table V). These values suggest that the research model adequately explains variances in the constructs, supporting its moderate predictive power.

Table II. Results of confirmatory factor analysis

Constructs and Items	Factor loading	AVE	CR
Travel motivation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to know different cultures/ways of life. • To know new, different places • rest • To escape the daily routine • To seek adventure and pleasure • To seek diversion and entertainment 	0.751 0.799 0.642 0.721 0.785 0.719	0.544	0.877
Memorable tourism experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I learned something about myself from this tourism experience. • I had a chance to experience the local culture of a destination area closely. • I experienced something new (e.g., food, activity, etc.) during this tourism experience. 	0.754 0.706 0.831	0.586	0.809
F1: Tourism infrastructure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Egypt has pleasant weather • Egypt has quality accommodation • Egypt has appealing cuisine/food 	0.689 0.783 0.795	0.573	0.801
F2: Cultural attractions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Egypt has an interesting culture/events • Egypt has interesting heritage sites 	0.920 0.867	0.800	0.889
F3: Hospitality and security <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Egypt has convenient transportation • Egypt has easily accessible • Egypt is a safe destination • Egypt has nice beaches 	0.694 0.827 0.772 0.679	0.556	0.832
Affective image <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unpleasant– Pleasant • Boring–Exciting, • Sleepy–Lively 	0.818 0.919 0.867	0.755	0.902
Conative image <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Egypt was always a dream destination to visit sometime during my lifetime. • Egypt expresses to me as a suitable choice for vacation. • Egypt was always a personal goal for vacations. • As a choice, it stems from a personal need of mine that had to be fulfilled. • Egypt has evoked in me the persistence to visit it. 	0.795 0.836 0.876 0.773 0.800	0.667	0.909
Behavioral intention <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I will revisit Egypt in the future. • I will recommend Egypt to others. • I will say positive things about Egypt to others. • I will encourage my friends to visit Egypt. 	0.899 0.950 0.940 0.946	0.872	0.965

Source: Authors' own work

Table III. Discriminant Validity Assessment of the Study Constructs

Constructs	Affective image	Behavioral intention	Conative image	Cultural attractions	Hospitality and security	Memorable tourism experience	Tourism Infrastructure	Travel Motivation
Affective image								
Behavioral intention	0.643							
Conative image	0.481	0.625						
Cultural attractions	0.623	0.467	0.425					
Hospitality and security	0.544	0.518	0.579	0.380				
Memorable tourism experience	0.633	0.562	0.662	0.748	0.544			
Tourism Infrastructure	0.534	0.480	0.635	0.497	0.754	0.611		
Travel Motivation	0.659	0.543	0.693	0.708	0.516	0.773	0.587	

Source: Authors' own work

Table IV: Multi-collinearity Assessment of the Study Variables

	Affective image	Behavioral intention	Cognitive image	Conative image	Cultural attractions	Hospitality and security	Tourism Infrastructure
Affective image		1.696					
Cognitive image		2.249			1.000	1.000	1.000
Conative image		1.740					
Memorable tourism experience	1.593	1.929	1.593	1.593			
Travel Motivation	1.593	2.250	1.593	1.593			

Source: Authors' own work

Table V: Predictive Power Results

Constructs	R Square
Cognitive image	0.484
Affective image	0.349
Conative image	0.387
Behavioral intention	0.465

Source: Authors' own work

Table VI: Research Hypotheses Testing

Hypotheses		T Statistics	P Values	Decision
H1a	Travel motivation -> Cognitive image	7.559	0.000	Supported****
H1b	Travel motivation -> Affective image	5.054	0.000	Supported****
H1c	Travel motivation -> Conative image	8.152	0.000	Supported****
H2a	Memorable tourism experience -> Cognitive image	6.539	0.000	Supported****
H2b	Memorable tourism experience -> Affective image	3.703	0.000	Supported****
H2c	Memorable tourism experience -> Conative image	3.430	0.001	Supported****
H3a	Tourist harassment -> Cognitive image	-3.884	0.000	Supported****
H3b	Tourist harassment -> Affective image	-2.421	0.016	Supported**
H3c	Tourist harassment -> Conative image	-2.441	0.015	Supported**
H4a	Travel motivation -> Behavioral intention	0.217	0.828	Rejected
H4b	Memorable tourism experience -> Behavioral intention	0.381	0.703	Rejected
H4c	Tourist harassment -> Behavioral intention	-3.789	0.000	Supported****
H5a	Cognitive image -> Behavioral intention	1.779	0.076	Rejected
H5b	Affective image -> Behavioral intention	4.687	0.000	Supported****
H5c	Conative image -> Behavioral intention	5.000	0.000	Supported****

Note: ****p < 0.0001; ***p < 0.01; **p < 0.05; *p < 0.1

Source: Authors' own work

Table VII: Parametric Test

Paths/path difference	Path Coefficients-diff (First time - Repeaters)	t-Value(First time vs. Repeaters)	p-Value (First time vs. Repeaters)	H	Results
Cognitive -> Behavioral intention	0.034	0.262	0.793	H6a	Rejected
Affective -> Behavioral intention	0.016	0.110	0.912	H6b	Rejected
Conative -> Behavioral intention	-0.044	0.396	0.693	H6c	Rejected

Source: Authors' own work

5.3.2 The Structural Model

This phase of the SEM analysis examines direct relationships and tests for moderation. The main objective here is to confirm the statistical significance of direct relationships. Significance is determined by a p-value of less than 0.05 and a t-value above 1.96. The path coefficient indicates the strength and direction (positive or negative) of each relationship (Hair et al., 2010; Mahrous et al., 2020). Table VI and Figure 2 display these direct relationship results. Table VI presents analytical results across 11 paths. Eight hypotheses were supported, while three were rejected. Specifically, travel motivation and a memorable tourism experience positively impact the three destination image dimensions: cognitive, affective, and conative. Travel motivation significantly influences cognitive image (40%, $T=7.559$, $p<0.0001$), affective image (40.6%), and conative image (46%), supporting H1a, H1b, and H1c at a 99.9% confidence level. Memorable tourism experience significantly affects cognitive image (37.8%, $T=6.539$, $p<0.0001$), affective image (25.3%), and conative image (22.9%), supporting H2a, H2b, and H2c at the same confidence level. Additionally, affective image has a significant positive effect on behavioral intention

(34.2%, $T=4.687$, $p<0.0001$), supporting H5b, while conative image also positively impacts behavioral intention (35%), supporting H5c at 99.9% confidence.

Conversely, three paths were rejected. Travel motivation showed a non-significant negative effect on behavioral intention (-1.7%, $T=0.217$), leading to the rejection of H4a. The memorable tourism experience did not significantly impact behavioral intention (2.7%, $T=0.381$), leading to the rejection of H4b. Lastly, cognitive image's non-significant influence on behavioral intention (13.8%, $T=1.779$) led to the rejection of H5a at a 95% confidence level.

About the tourist harassment construct, an independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare tourists' perceived image (cognitive, affective, and conative) of Egypt and their behavioral intention between those who experienced harassment during their visit and those who did not. According to Levene's test, equal variances were assumed for the cognitive image scores, allowing an independent-sample t-test comparison between tourists who experienced harassment and those who did not. The results show a significant difference: tourists who experienced harassment scored lower on cognitive image ($M = 5.19$, $SD = 0.836$) compared to those who did not ($M = 5.58$, $SD = 0.78$; $t(278) = -3.884$, $p = .000$). The effect size, calculated as eta squared, is moderate at 0.051, meaning that harassment experience accounts for 5.1% of variance in cognitive image, supporting H4a. For affective image, Levene's test indicated unequal variances, and the t-test revealed significant differences: tourists who experienced harassment scored lower ($M = 5.74$, $SD = 1.14$) than those who did not ($M = 6.05$, $SD = 0.96$; $t(278) = -2.421$, $p = .016$), with a moderate effect size (eta squared = 0.020), explaining 2% of the variance in affective image, thus supporting H4b. Similarly, the conative image was tested under the assumption of equal variances. Tourists who experienced harassment scored lower ($M = 5.33$, $SD = 1.18$) than those who did not ($M = 5.68$, $SD = 1.14$; $t(278) = -2.441$, $p = .015$). The effect size (eta-squared) is 0.021, indicating that 2.1% of the variance in conative images is influenced by harassment, supporting H4c. Behavioral intention was also significantly impacted by harassment, with tourists who experienced harassment scoring lower ($M = 6.09$, $SD = 1.22$) than those who did not ($M = 6.52$, $SD = 0.652$; $t(278) = -3.789$, $p = .000$). Here, the effect size of eta squared is moderate at 0.021, showing that harassment explains 4.9% of the variance, supporting H4c.

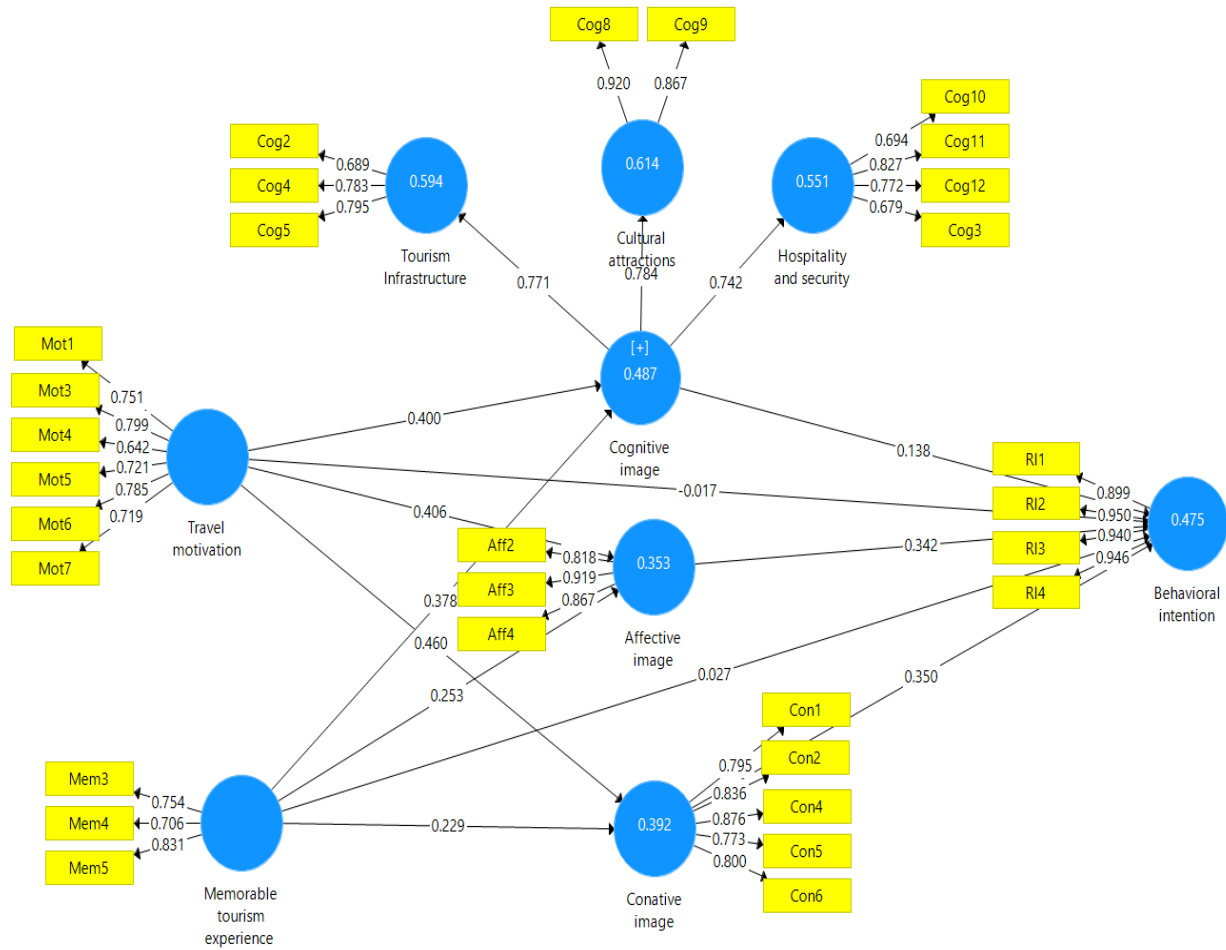


Figure 2: Measurement Model of the Study Constructs

5.3.3 The Moderating Effect of Past-Experiences

Lastly, a Multi-Group Analysis (MGA) using Smart PLS tested past experience as a moderator in the relationship between destination image dimensions and behavioral intentions, dividing participants into those who had visited Egypt once and those who had visited twice or more. The results showed no significant differences between groups across cognitive, affective, and conative paths to behavioral intention, with p-values exceeding 0.05 (e.g., cognitive image: $p = 0.793$) as shown in Table VII. Thus, hypotheses H6a-c are rejected, indicating that experience does not moderate the relationship between destination image and behavioral intention.

6. Discussion and Implications

This study examines how tourists perceive Egypt's destination image, the key components that shape it, and its influence on behavioral intentions. The study framework was initially developed by reviewing the literature on destination image and tourist behavior, and by conducting in-depth interviews with visitors to Egypt. Following this, a quantitative analysis was conducted to validate the framework and compare the findings with existing research.

The results indicate that travel motivation, memorable tourism experiences (MTE), and tourist harassment significantly impact the three dimensions of destination image: cognitive, affective, and conative. Among these, affective and conative images notably influence tourists' behavioral intentions. However, no significant relationship was found between cognitive image and behavioral intentions. These findings are intriguing because prior research indicates that cognitive aspects of destination image, such as infrastructure and facilities, should predict tourists' behavioral intentions, including destination visits. However, this finding indicates that affective dimensions of destination image, such as feelings and emotions, play a more decisive role in tourists' intentions. Overall, the absence of a significant relationship underscores the need for destinations to focus not only on improving facilities and infrastructure but also on cultivating positive emotions, meaningful experiences, and a strong sense of safety—elements that more directly translate into repeat visits and positive word of mouth. These findings are similar to those of Nematpour et al. (2025) and Zhang and Shi (2025).

Research confirms that travel motivation plays a crucial role in shaping destination image (Pereira et al., 2019; Su et al., 2020; Maghrifani et al., 2021). While previous studies primarily focused on cognitive and affective images (e.g., Li et al., 2010), this study extends the discussion by considering conative images as a predictor of behavioral intentions (Shazly and Mahrous, 2020). Findings suggest that motivated tourists actively construct an image of a destination based on its attributes, emotional responses, and their intent to visit. Consistent with prior research, MTE significantly impacts all three dimensions of destination image (Sharma and Nayak, 2014; Kim, 2018). In line with Bonn et al. (2005), this study confirms that actual travel experiences shape a more realistic and enduring destination image than pre-visit expectations.

Tourist harassment, an underexplored factor in tourism research (Alrawadieh et al., 2019), is found to significantly impact the cognitive, affective, and conative image dimensions. Studies such as those by Wijesundara and Gnanapala (2019) support this relationship, whereas others (e.g., Qiao et al., 2017) do not. This research aligns with findings that harassment creates feelings of insecurity, negatively affecting tourists' overall impressions of a destination. The sequential model proposed by Otoo et al. (2019) further suggests that harassment indirectly influences behavioral intentions.

Regarding behavioral intentions, the study confirms that affective and conative images significantly impact tourists' likelihood of revisiting or recommending a destination, consistent with previous literature (Qu et al., 2011; White, 2014; Taghipourian et al., 2019). However, cognitive image alone does not strongly predict behavioral intentions, aligning with Li et al. (2010). This reinforces the argument that affective impressions are stronger predictors of tourist behavior.

Previous research highlights the moderating role of experience on destination image and behavioral intentions, with varying findings (Kim et al., 2012; Tosun et al., 2015; Rodríguez Molina et al., 2013). This study finds no significant moderation by experience but notes that first-time visitors exhibit slightly higher predictive power for revisit and recommendation intentions than repeat visitors. This variation may be attributed to new visitors forming initial impressions, whereas repeat visitors have established expectations.

This research offers insights for managers and marketers to optimize destination image strategies, with a particular focus on emerging tourism markets in developing regions

6.1. Theoretical implications

This study enhances destination image research by integrating an expanded model that examines both antecedents and consequences of destination image. Building on Baloglu and McCleary's (1999) model, this study introduces context-specific constructs, particularly tourist harassment, as critical factors influencing destination image and behavioral intentions. The findings highlight harassment's significant impact on all image dimensions, reinforcing its role in shaping tourist perceptions and behaviors.

Additionally, this research broadens the understanding of destination image by emphasizing the conative component, which has often been overlooked in prior studies. Conative image is identified as a key predictor of tourist behavior, distinguishing it from cognitive and affective dimensions. Contrary to expectations, cognitive image did not significantly influence behavioral intentions. Instead, conative image directly shapes future travel decisions, underscoring its importance in destination marketing. Furthermore, the study reaffirms the role of travel motivation and tourist experiences in shaping destination image, providing insights relevant to destinations working to enhance their tourism appeal, such as Egypt.

6.2 Managerial and Public Policy Implications

The study findings offer insights for tourism practitioners, including travel and tourism agencies and hotels. Also, it helps public policy organizations such as DMO and the Ministry of Tourism. Tourist harassment has been identified as a significant issue affecting Egypt's destination image, revisit intentions, and recommendations. Persistent vendor behavior was the most reported form, followed by verbal harassment. It is advised that tour operators educate travelers on local micro-trading customs to manage expectations and reduce negative experiences, as recommended by Hossain et al. (2022). Additionally, tourism-related websites should enhance visibility through SEO to improve engagement and counterbalance negative feedback by promoting new, positive tourist experiences (Nazifi et al., 2021).

Policymakers should implement measures to curb harassment, especially in popular areas such as the Pyramids, where regulated vendor behavior and appearance can enhance visitor satisfaction.

Training and identification badges for service providers could enhance service quality and instill trust. Furthermore, implementing quality standards for hospitality services, with regular evaluations, is essential, as Egypt competes with nearby destinations such as Turkey and Greece, which are known for high service standards. Marketing campaigns by tourism authorities should also focus on fostering public awareness of tourism's value and on highlighting the impact of residents' behavior on Egypt's image (Styvén et al., 2020; Tse et al., 2022). Campaigns could showcase Egypt's unique tourist experiences, such as local cuisine and festivals, through social media videos featuring authentic testimonials from tourists. Infrastructure improvements, especially at major airports and with eco-friendly buses to tourist sites, would further enhance accessibility and perceptions of safety. Additionally, maintaining security in tourist areas by deploying English-speaking police and providing a hotline for complaints could boost tourists' sense of safety. Incentivizing foreign investment through tax benefits would further encourage sector growth.

Furthermore, improving experiential quality and safety can reposition destinations such as Egypt as high-trust destinations, enabling them to compete more effectively with other Mediterranean destinations like Turkey and Greece, where service reliability is part of their brand identity. Finally, addressing harassment is not only a safety issue but also a core competitive strategy essential for sustaining repeat visitation, a high-value market segment.

7. Limitations and future research

This study has several limitations that suggest avenues for future research. First, data were collected via a snowball sample; future studies should consider quota sampling to better represent the population. Second, data collection was conducted online, limiting the ability to capture participants' verbal and nonverbal cues. In-person data collection is recommended for richer insights. Third, the moderating role of experience on the relationship between destination image and behavioral intentions was not significant. Future studies could validate these findings in diverse tourism contexts, such as beach or cultural tourism, and compare perceptions between visitors and non-visitors to Egypt.

Additionally, this study focused on three key antecedents: tourist motivation, memorable tourism experience, and harassment. Future research should explore other factors, like negative

experiences, emotional solidarity, and resident-tourist interactions. Lastly, this study examined revisit intentions and willingness to recommend; future research should consider additional outcomes such as place attachment and negative behaviors, including negative word-of-mouth.

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