# African Tourists' Perceptions of Türkiye's Image: The Mediating Effects of TV Series and Destination Country Image

**Muhammet Caner KAYA[1]**
**Rabiaa ALLAMI[2]**
**Orhan BATMAN[3]**

## Abstract

This study examines African tourists' perceptions of Türkiye by modeling the relationships among country image, engagement with Turkish TV series, destination country image, and conative intentions. African tourists were chosen because they represent a growing yet under-researched long-haul market for Türkiye and offer a useful context to test media-driven mechanisms. Data were collected from 254 African tourists with prior visits to Türkiye and analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling. Conative intentions refer to the action-oriented component of attitude, namely intentions to revisit and recommend. Country image had no significant direct effect on conative intentions; however, its total effect became substantial when the mediators were included. Both TV series and destination country image significantly mediated the country image–conative intentions link, with destination country image exerting the stronger influence; all indirect paths were significant. The study's originality lies in specifying and testing TV series as a cultural-product mediator alongside destination country image. Practically, DMOs should integrate screen-content and branding by linking series narratives and locations to campaigns, developing screen-tourism itineraries with tour operators and guides, and aligning hospitality and airline promotions with culturally resonant messages for African markets.

**Key words:** African tourism market, country image, conative intentions, destination country image, Turkish TV series, Film tourism.

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[1] Corresponding author. Asst. Prof., Duzce University, Türkiye, muhammetcanerkaya@gmail.com http://orcid.org/0000-0001-9975-8011
[2] Sakarya University of Applied Sciences, Türkiye, y215016009@subu.edu.tr http://orcid.org/0000-0003-0471-0934
[3] Prof. Dr., Sakarya University of Applied Sciences, Türkiye obatman@subu.edu.tr http://orcid.org/0000-0001-7186-7064

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## 1. Introduction

In the contemporary global tourism industry and the realm of international marketing strategies, the country image (CI) holds significant importance. The decision of consumers to select a particular destination is influenced not only by the services or experiences offered by the destination, but also by their general perceptions of the country. In this context, the concept of CI is multifaceted, reflecting a nation's political, social, economic, and cultural characteristics. It also conveys the comprehensive array of consumers' sentiments and cognitions regarding that country. Given the abstract nature of the tourism sector, it is susceptible to the influence of various factors that impact consumer behavior. In this regard, CI occupies a pivotal role within this intricate framework. A substantial body of research has demonstrated that CI is a pivotal factor in tourists' destination choices and travel intentions. This image exerts a significant influence on consumers' decisions to visit a country, and it is directly related to that country's overall reputation. The motivations of tourists to select a specific destination are impacted by numerous factors, including the perceived cultural values, populace, and living standards of that nation (Allred et al., 1999; Alvarez & Campo, 2014; Chaulagain et al., 2019; Martínez & Alvarez, 2010; Koçak, 2024; Nadeau et al., 2008; Roth & Diamantopoulos, 2009; Shamsi & Malik, 2023).

For instance, a nation's developmental stage, dependability, and the caliber of experiences it provides can enhance the allure of that destination for tourists. Consequently, the deliberate and strategic creation and management of a nation's image is of paramount importance for countries seeking to gain a competitive advantage in tourism markets. A plethora of studies have previously examined the historical roots and development of CI, seeking to understand how this image is shaped. These studies include those by Kotler & Gertner (2002), Mossberg & Kleppe (2005), Shen et al. (2022), and Zhang et al. (2018). The extant literature on the concept of CI demonstrates a close relationship between this concept and not only the image of the country of origin or product image, but also the image of the destination. However, empirical research on the differences and interactions between CI and destination image (DI) is still limited. This situation arises from an absence of a definitive consensus on the proper definition of both concepts. In this context, the concept of CI encompasses not only the perception of a place evaluated as a holiday destination but also the economic, social, and cultural situation of that country worldwide. Further research is necessary to elucidate the reciprocal influence of CI and DI, as well as the operational dynamics between these constructions.

Considering the intense competition that characterizes the tourism market, it can be posited that a nation's overall image exerts a significant influence on the attraction of international tourists (Yu & Zhang, 2020). Consequently, numerous countries endeavor to enhance their national image with the objective of fostering the growth of their tourism sectors and attracting tourists (Rojas-Méndez & Davies, 2024). Tourism is predominantly an image-driven sector, and perceptions and beliefs about destinations exert considerable influence on numerous travel-related

behaviors (e.g., travel intention, recommendation intention, and purchase intention) (De Nisco et al., 2015; Dedeoğlu, 2019; Lindblom et al., 2018; Nadeau et al., 2008). Given its capacity to influence tourists' perceptions and behaviors, examining the effects of CI on tourism is imperative in contemporary society (Chaulagain et al., 2019).

The development of a positive CI has been demonstrated to exert a favorable influence on tourists' perceptions of the components of a tourism destination (Zhang et al., 2016). In essence, tourists' perceptions of a destination influence their perceptions of the country. Consequently, other tourism destinations within the country stand to benefit from the country's overall image (Dedeoğlu, 2019). For instance, two studies conducted on tourism stakeholders and local people in South America concluded that enhancing Türkiye's current image could result in an increase of tourists from the region choosing to visit Türkiye (Kaya et al., 2022a, 2022b).

The African continent has emerged as a prominent tourist destination, owing to its profound cultural heritage, natural splendor, and biodiversity. As indicated by UNESCO (2022), numerous elements, including historical structures, national parks, and traditional festivals, serve as significant tourist attractions, attracting both international and domestic visitors. A notable increase in the number of domestic tourists on the African continent has been observed, particularly in recent years. This phenomenon has emerged because of countries implementing policies designed to encourage domestic tourism and economic growth (World Bank, 2023). From the pre-colonial era to the present day, the tourism sector in Africa has been influenced by a variety of stereotypes and myths that have been perpetuated through global media. The intricate socio-economic landscape of Africa underscores the imperative for enhancing economic diversification, a pivotal opportunity for which tourism plays a pivotal role in this context. Integral to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is the notion that tourism is gaining importance in terms of climate change and the preservation of cultural assets. However, when tourism is regarded exclusively as an economic instrument, the attainment of responsible and sustainable growth objectives becomes challenging. In North Africa, the World Economic Forum's Global Risks Reports underscore the underutilization of natural and cultural resources and highlight perceptions of security as the primary impediment (WEF, 2022, 2023, 2024). In this context, the tourism potential of Africa necessitates a novel approach that prioritizes the benefits of local communities and the rectification of global perceptions (Novelli et al., 2021).

The primary objective of this study is to ascertain the perceptions held by African tourists regarding Türkiye, with a focus on the factors that contribute to the formation of these perceptions. Additionally, the study seeks to investigate the direct and indirect influences of the destination country's image and Turkish television series and films on the relationship between Africans' perceived image of Türkiye and their conative intentions, such as revisiting Türkiye and recommending it to others. Moreover, two fundamental approaches that underpin

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the theoretical basis of this study are the concepts of "Competitive Identity" (Anholt, 2007) and "Destination Differentiation" (Echtner & Ritchie, 1993). The competitive identity approach posits that a nation should strive to achieve a robust international positioning, encompassing not only its appeal as a tourist destination but also its standing in terms of political, economic, and cultural dimensions. In this context, the country's image becomes a competitive advantage tool in international tourism markets. Conversely, the destination differentiation approach underscores the influence of distinguishing destinations according to their distinctive cultural, natural, and historical attributes on tourist preferences. This differentiation fosters the establishment of a robust destination image in the minds of tourists, thereby exerting a substantial influence on their travel decisions.

## 2. Literature Review

### Image and Country Image (CI)

This phenomenon is particularly salient in contemporary society, where advancements in communication technology have rendered information more readily accessible, thereby contributing to a dynamic and rapidly evolving environment for image representation (Ateşoğlu & Türker, 2014). The concept of image is not yet amenable to a universally accepted definition, as it is regarded as arising from an individual's perception of an institution, object, or person. Consequently, it can be posited that all definitions of image emphasize distinct aspects of image (Özdede, 2023). Personal experiences gained in the past and information obtained from different channels also contribute significantly to the formation of image (Ateşoğlu & Türker, 2014).

The study of CI can be traced back to the 1930s and 1940s, with a predominant focus on national stereotypes and the perception of different nations (Zhang et al., 2018). Since the mid-1960s, scholars in the field of marketing have placed greater emphasis on the concept of "country of origin." This concept has been comprehensively examined in the extant international marketing literature, which clearly demonstrates its significant role in consumers' evaluation of foreign products (Shen et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2018). CI is defined as the aggregate of descriptive, inferential, and informative beliefs concerning a specific nation (Şentürk, 2018). The formation of this image is influenced by a multitude of characteristics, including social, political, cultural, economic, geopolitical, and other factors (Ateşoğlu & Türker, 2014; Kotler & Gertner, 2002; Roth & Diamantopoulos, 2009). The term 'country image' (CI) refers to the general and diversified impression that people have about a particular country (Zhang et al., 2018).

CI refers to the attitudes of consumers in one nation towards another (Maher & Carter, 2011). According to Mossberg & Kleppe (2005), CI encompasses all associations pertaining to a particular nation (Aydın et al., 2021). According to Martin & Eroğlu (1993), the term "CI" is defined as the aggregate of all descriptive, inferential, and informational beliefs held by an individual concerning a specific

nation. Campo & Alvarez (2010) advanced a definition of CI, conceptualizing it as the aggregate of individuals' beliefs and impressions concerning specific locations.

A substantial body of research has demonstrated that numerous components of CI exert a direct and/or indirect influence. Shamsi & Malik (2023) posited that CI exerts a considerable influence on travel preferences. The perceptions that consumers hold regarding a nation's image can exert a significant influence on their inclination to travel to that country. Ateşoğlu & Türker (2014) posited that the factors that shape CI (e.g., social, political, cultural, economic, geopolitical) influence tourists' decisions when choosing a holiday destination. The concept of CI is a substantial construct that exerts influence on various aspects of decision-making, including destination selection, post-trip evaluation, and the formation of future conative intentions (Zhang et al., 2018). The country's image exerts a significant influence on the intentions to visit, revisit, and recommend a destination (Campo & Alvarez, 2010; Nadeau et al., 2008). The repercussions of a nation's reputation extend beyond the image and intentions regarding the destination country, encompassing various aspects such as destination service quality (Dedeoğlu, 2019), destination loyalty (Chung & Chen, 2018), destination beliefs (Kutlu & Ayyildiz, 2023; Lindblom et al., 2018), destination safety perception (Matiza & Köchling, 2023), perceived risk (Ateşoğlu & Türker, 2013), and education (Cubillo et al., 2006; Gertner, 2010; Ghazarian, 2016; Gregory Ghazarian & Ryan Keller, 2016). These variables are influenced by CI, both directly and indirectly.

CI is influenced by many factors, including an individual's perception of a nation's image. These include the nation's historical and cultural richness, its natural beauty, its culinary traditions, its degree of hospitality, its level of safety, its infrastructure, its economic situation, its political stability, and its representation in the media. These factors have the potential to influence the formation of positive or negative perceptions among tourists, thereby impacting their travel preferences (Matiza, 2022). CI is defined as the aggregate of individuals' cognitive and affective assessments of that nation. Media products, particularly television series and films, serve as instruments that materialize this image at the perceptual level. Cultural products from countries with a strong and positive CI have been shown to attract more interest and be perceived more favorably (Anholt, 2007; Kotler & Gertner, 2002). In this context, the effect of CI on Turkish series is examined.

*H₁: The country image has been demonstrated to exert a positive and significant effect on individuals' perceptions of Turkish series and films (CI ⇒ TV).*

According to Roth & Diamantopoulos (2009), the construction of CI is comprised of three dimensions. The cognitive component is defined as the consumer's beliefs about a particular country. The affective component is defined as the consumer's feelings or emotions towards the country. The conative component is defined as the consumer's behavioral intentions towards the country. According to Zhang et al. (2018), the concept of perceived image encompasses both

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CI and DI. The study was conceived with the objective of encompassing these two images.

### Destination Country Image (DCI)

Numerous studies have demonstrated a robust positive correlation between CI and DI (Chaulagain et al., 2019; Chung & Chen, 2018; Nadeau et al., 2008; Zaman et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2018). CI and the DI are related because tourism destinations are products of a country that can be influenced by that country's image (Campo & Alvarez, 2010). The two concepts are concerned with how consumers' perceptions affect their decisions to purchase a country's products or visit the country (Zhang et al., 2016). Chaulagain et al. (2019) discovered that CI positively impacts DI, and that destination familiarity has a significant moderating effect on the relationship between CI and DI and on visit intention. Zhang et al. (2016) combined the structure of destination country image (DCI) with that of country image (CI) in international marketing and destination image (DI) in tourism. They integrated the common elements of both (e.g., political stability, friendliness of locals) into a macro-DCI consistent with CI in international marketing. They conceptualized the micro-DCI as fundamental destination product elements such as attractiveness and infrastructure.

The concept of DCI pertains to the establishment of a distinct location within a nation, characterized by its distinct brand identity and positioning. In the context of scale development studies, a taxonomy of sub-dimensions has emerged, encompassing cognitive (physical/functional characteristics), affective (feelings, atmosphere), and symbolic dimensions (Beerli & Martín, 2004). A meta-analysis of the extant literature reveals that the average effect of DCI on visit intention is in the medium-high range (Afshardoost & Eshaghi, 2020). The impact of CI on DCI has been a subject of numerous studies, with researchers repeatedly confirming its significance (Chaulagain et al., 2019; Taşçı & Gartner, 2007).

*H₂: Country image has a positive and significant effect on Türkiye's destination image (CI ⇒ DCI).*

*H₃: Türkiye's destination image exerts a positive and significant influence on tourists' conative intentions (DCI ⇒ CON).*
As frequently stated in the extant literature, country image affects DCI, and DCI affects CON (Baloğlu & McCleary, 1999). This chain of relationships offers a theoretical framework to elucidate the indirect effect of country image.

*H₄: The effect of country image on tourists' conative intentions is mediated indirectly through destination country image (CI ⇒ DCI ⇒ CON).*

### Conative Intentions (CON)

The advent of digital technology has rendered tourists' experiences discernible on digital platforms through online reviews and ratings, thus

empowering subsequent tourists to base their decisions on the experiences of others. This development has concomitantly rendered the intention to use electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) and recommendations a more critical factor in the tourism sector. The enhancement of satisfaction and loyalty through personalisation based on visitor data, and the emphasis on the strategic outcome of "attracting repeat visitors," demonstrate the close relationship between the online review ecosystem and the intention to (re)visit (Aksoy et al., 2024). Conative intentions are examined in two critical dimensions: (a) intention to revisit and (b) intention to recommend (word-of-mouth – WOM).

***Intention to visit and revisit:*** As posited by Gertner (2010), the image of a place can positively or negatively influence consumers' choice of holiday destination. It is widely accepted that an image's influence on a consumer's inclination to visit a country is a pivotal factor (Aydın et al., 2021). CI is a critical factor in predicting intentions to travel to a country (Yang et al., 2022) and influencing attitudes towards travel (Abdrakhmanova & Nurpeisova, 2022; Alvarez & Campo, 2014; Campo & Alvarez, 2010; Chaulagain et al., 2019; Firoz et al., 2021; Shen et al., 2022; Zeugner-Roth & Žabkar, 2015). A favorable CI exerts a significant influence on tourists' selection of tourism destinations (Yang et al., 2022). The affective country image, a component of CI, and the perceived level of development associated with it have been shown to influence visitation intentions (Alvarez & Campo, 2014).

***Recommendation intention:*** Tourists utilize the country's image as a benchmark prior to visiting a destination, subsequently comparing their expectations with the tourism experience they acquire upon their arrival. The prevailing assumption is that if the destination has a positive image, it will be evaluated positively and the destination will be recommended to others (Campo & Alvarez, 2010; Kutlu & Ayyildiz, 2023). The country's image is a critical factor in the decision of potential travelers to visit a particular destination (Zeugner-Roth & Žabkar, 2015). Furthermore, this image can influence the behavior of individuals who have already visited, such as their propensity to recommend a particular destination to friends.

The country's image exerts a significant influence on the initial perceptions of the destination. These perceptions can also directly influence individuals' decisions to choose or not choose a destination (Bigné et al., 2001). Consequently, it is hypothesized that a favorable CI exerts a direct influence on CON.

***H₅:*** *The country's image exerts a direct, positive, and significant influence on tourists' conative intentions (CI ⇒ CON).*

**TV Series/Films**

In the contemporary context of destination promotion, visual media products, particularly television series and cinema films, are assuming an

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increasingly prominent role. In this context, the concepts of "set jetting" or "film-induced tourism" indicate that locations featured in the media have become influential in the travel choices of potential tourists (Hudson & Ritchie, 2006). Turkish television series and films have evolved into a multifaceted cultural export, serving as a significant instrument in the global promotion of Türkiye's tourist destinations (Özdemir, 2021). This variable is typically conceptualized in studies under two main sub-dimensions:

1. The following inquiry is posited: To what extent and with what frequency do individuals engage with Turkish series or films?
2. The aspiration to travel, precipitated by the allure of the locations featured in the series or films, is a phenomenon that can be attributed to the profound impact of these audiovisual productions.

Research shows that people are more likely to visit places they've seen in pictures (Connell, 2012; Kim, 2011). This can encourage more people to visit. Specifically, the visual aesthetics, spatial beauty, and cultural elements presented in series have been demonstrated to stimulate curiosity in viewers, thereby fostering the establishment of a cognitive and affective bond with the destination (Beeton, 2016). The pivotal function of television series in shaping destination awareness and motivation has been substantiated in a recent case study from Spain (Araújo Vila et al., 2021). Consistent with these observations, analogous findings have been documented in the Turkish context, demonstrating that a favorable attitude toward series positively impacts the perception of Türkiye as a travel destination (Özdemir, 2021). In his study, Kaya (2021) found that Argentinians engage extensively with Turkish TV series/films, leading to a heightened desire to travel to the regions featured in these productions.

The influence of television series on viewers' desire to travel is a subject of interest. Viewers may demonstrate a propensity to experience the places they observe in the series (Beeton, 2016). In this context, positive perceptions of Turkish series are expected to influence tourists' intentions towards Türkiye.

*H₆: The positive perceptions of Turkish series and films have a positive and significant effect on tourists' conative intentions (TV ⇒ CON).*

*H₇: The effect of country image on tourists' conative intentions is indirectly mediated through perceptions of Turkish series and films (CI ⇒ TV ⇒ CON).*

This hypothesis delineates the indirect effect in the direction of country image → perception of Turkish TV series/films → conative intentions. In essence, the perception of Türkiye as a nation is influenced by its portrayal in Turkish television series, which, according to Hudson et al. (2011), positively impacts individuals' intentions to travel to Türkiye.

***H₈:*** *The total effect of country image on tourists' conative intentions is mediated indirectly through perceptions of Turkish TV series/films, as well as the image of the destination.*

This hypothesis endeavors to elucidate the comprehensive impact of CI on tourists' CON.

**Theoretical Background**

This study has been meticulously designed to ascertain the perceptions held by African tourists regarding Türkiye's image, with a particular focus on the influence of Turkish television series and films in shaping these perceptions. Additionally, the study will examine the relationship between DCI and CON, such as the propensity to recommend a destination to others and the inclination to return to a particular location. The theoretical underpinnings of the model are derived from two distinct literatures: tourism marketing and media psychology. These literatures serve as the foundation for the model's multidimensional theoretical framework.

The Image Theory (Beach, 1990), a seminal work in the field, posits that individuals employ mental images in their decision-making processes. CI refers to a general national representation formed in the individual's mind. This image serves as the cognitive basis of DCI, as posited by Buhmann and Ingenhoff (2014). Consequently, the country's image exerts a substantial influence on how a prospective tourist perceives a destination, their level of interest in it, and their travel-related intentions. When the country image is perceived positively, this favorable perception is also reflected positively in DCI (Anholt, 2007; Buhmann & Ingenhoff, 2014).

According to the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991), CON is derived from an individual's attitudes, perceived behavioral control, and subjective norms. According to this theory, CI and DCI influence an individual's general attitudes, thereby determining intentions such as revisiting the destination and recommending it to others. DCI is a combination of cognitive and affective evaluations that directly influence individuals' CON (Baloğlu & McCleary, 1999). Another significant structure that evaluates CI and DCI together is the Cognitive-Affective-Conative (CAC) Framework (Baloğlu & McCleary, 1999). According to this model, individuals first engage in cognitive evaluations regarding the destination (e.g., the country's safety, cleanliness, infrastructure). These cognitive evaluations trigger an effective response; positive emotions increase behavioral tendencies (conative). The efficacy of CI in the cognitive and affective stages of this tripartite structure has been demonstrated, with the resultant guidance of DCI and, ultimately, CON (Stylidis et al., 2015).

## 3. Methodology

The objective of this study is to examine African tourists' perceptions of Türkiye by testing a parallel mediation model in which destination country image

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(DCI) and engagement with Turkish TV series/films (TV) mediate the relationship between country image (CI) and conative intentions (CON; intentions to revisit and recommend). Accordingly, the study evaluates whether CI affects CON indirectly through DCI and TV, in addition to any direct effect.

### Research design, sampling, and data collection

This study used a quantitative research method and a survey to collect data on tourists from African countries visiting Türkiye. The sample size was determined using non-probability convenience sampling, and 254 participants who had previously visited Türkiye were reached. The data collection process was executed between April and June of 2025, with participants being reached through both online and face-to-face survey forms. The objective and extent of the research were articulated at the commencement of the survey instrument, the voluntariness of participation was underscored, and anonymity was assured. The survey was completed in an average time of 8–10 minutes.

### Measurement instruments

The measures of cognitive and affective country image were adapted from Alvarez and Campo (2014). Destination country image was adapted from Kaya et al. (2022a). Conative intentions were adapted from Alvarez and Campo (2014), Dedeoğlu (2019), and Kaya et al. (2022b). The scale measuring the influence of TV series/films was adapted from Kaya (2021). The questionnaire consisted of three sections. All constructions were measured on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree). An additional section captured demographic and trip-related characteristics (e.g., gender, age, income, education, occupation, and length of stay).

### Data screening and analytical procedure

Responses obtained from online and face-to-face forms were merged and screened for missing values, outliers, and straight-lining patterns; unsuitable cases were removed to improve data quality. The measurement model was initially evaluated via Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) in AMOS 23. Following the establishment of acceptable measurement properties, the hypothesized parallel mediation structural model was tested using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) in AMOS 23. The examination of direct, indirect and total effects was undertaken to assess the hypothesis that country image (CI) influences conative intentions (CON) through destination country image (DCI) and engagement with TV series and films (TV).

In order to reinforce the inference regarding indirect effects, mediation was also examined as a robustness check using SPSS PROCESS Macro. In order to achieve this objective, composite scores (e.g., mean scores) were computed for each construct based on the corresponding scale items. Furthermore, a parallel mediation

specification (PROCESS Model 4, two mediators) was estimated. The evaluation of indirect effects was conducted through the utilisation of bootstrapping, accompanied by the implementation of bias-corrected confidence intervals. The determination of a significant indirect effect was contingent upon the observation that the confidence interval did not encompass zero. The results obtained from the PROCESS analysis were consistent with those from the SEM, thereby supporting the robustness of the mediation conclusions across analytical approaches.

### Research Model

Within the proposed model, country image (CI) is specified as the independent variable, destination country image (DCI) and engagement with Turkish TV series/films (TV) are modeled as parallel mediators, and conative intentions (CON) are treated as the dependent variable. The hypotheses are presented in the Conceptual Framework section, where each construct and its theoretical linkage are discussed.

**Figure 1.** Research model
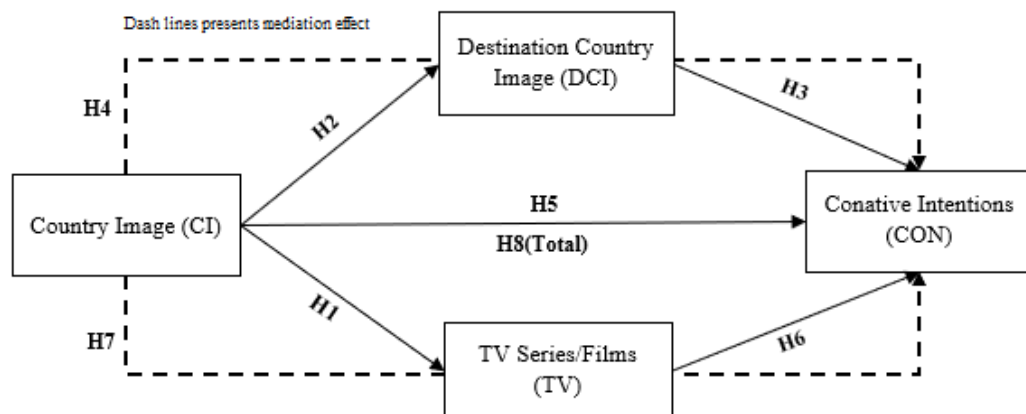


**Source:** Authors' calculations

## 4. Findings

The initial phase of the study involves the presentation of the frequency and percentage distributions of participants' demographic information and the information sources that influenced their travel decisions. Statements regarding perceptions of Türkiye's image were also evaluated using descriptive statistics. To assess the scale's validity and reliability, a series of statistical analyses were conducted. These analyses included exploratory factor analysis (EFA), confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), item-total correlations, Cronbach's Alpha, composite reliability (CR), and average explained variance (AVE). Following the confirmation of the psychometric adequacy of the measurement tool, a structural equation model was constructed for the purpose of testing the research hypotheses.

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Table 1 presents the findings obtained from the frequency analysis of the participants' demographic data.

**Table 1.** Frequency values of Participants' demographic information

|  |  | N | f |  |  | N | f |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Age** | 18-25 | 186 | 73,2 | **Income** | High income | 26 | 10,2 |
|  | 26-39 | 57 | 22,4 |  | Middle income | 148 | 58,3 |
|  | 40-54 | 2 | 0,8 |  | Low income | 64 | 25,2 |
| **Education Status** | Primary education | 3 | 1,2 | **Gender** | Woman | 76 | 29,9 |
|  | High School | 8 | 3,1 |  | Male | 170 | 66,9 |
|  | University | 175 | 68,9 | **Marital Status** | Single | 232 | 91,3 |
|  | Master's Degree/Doctorate | 62 | 24,4 |  | Married | 16 | 6,3 |

**Source:** Authors' calculations

A subsequent examination of the demographic distribution of the research sample reveals that the predominant proportion of participants are between the ages of 18 and 25 (73.2%), male (66.9%), unmarried (91.3%) and university graduates (68.9%). This distribution suggests that the sample is predominantly composed of young, educated individuals who have not yet fully integrated into the labor market. The predominant rationale for this phenomenon is that the data was predominantly collected through online sources. The heightened inclination towards internet utilization among younger demographics could be a contributing factor to this phenomenon. While this demographic structure limits the generalizability of the study's findings, it may provide an advantage in terms of examining the perceptions of a specific target audience in depth. The heightened exposure to media content among young and educated individuals (Akello, 2024; Callejo, 2013) and the distinct dynamics influencing their travel motivations (Richards & Wilson, 2004) substantiate the appropriateness of this sample in the research context. The frequency values of the participants' responses to the statements, as well as the skewness and kurtosis values of the statements, are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Descriptive statistics of African Tourists' attitudes towards Türkiye

|  | Mean | | Std. Deviation | Skewness | Kurtosis |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | Statistic | Std. Error |  |  |  |
| CCI1 | 4,9840 | 0,10256 | 1,63453 | -0,844 | 0,246 |
| CCI2 | 5,0198 | 0,10126 | 1,61380 | -0,669 | -0,204 |
| CCI3 | 4,7708 | 0,10531 | 1,67840 | -0,685 | -0,321 |
| CCI4 | 4,7984 | 0,10823 | 1,72487 | -0,695 | -0,308 |
| CCI5 | 5,0119 | 0,10294 | 1,64060 | -0,809 | 0,090 |
| CCI8 | 5,0984 | 0,10471 | 1,66875 | -0,898 | 0,182 |
| CCI9 | 5,0474 | 0,09545 | 1,52117 | -0,746 | 0,199 |
| ACI1 | 4,8367 | 0,11470 | 1,82805 | -0,440 | -0,766 |
| ACI2 | 4,7016 | 0,10540 | 1,67983 | -0,372 | -0,533 |
| ACI3 | 4,4257 | 0,10095 | 1,60886 | -0,109 | -0,626 |
| ACI4 | 4,5984 | 0,09994 | 1,59277 | -0,225 | -0,674 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ACI5 | 4,7551 | 0,09896 | 1,57714 | -0,295 | -0,453 |
| ACI6 | 4,7791 | 0,10353 | 1,65007 | -0,333 | -0,717 |
| DCI1 | 4,8425 | 0,11225 | 1,78897 | -0,621 | -0,432 |
| DCI2 | 5,2913 | 0,10749 | 1,71305 | -0,870 | -0,089 |
| DCI3 | 4,8268 | 0,10558 | 1,68272 | -0,532 | -0,493 |
| DCI4 | 4,8661 | 0,09928 | 1,58232 | -0,622 | -0,155 |
| DCI5 | 4,8858 | 0,10685 | 1,70293 | -0,866 | -0,069 |
| DCI7 | 5,3701 | 0,11194 | 1,78400 | -1,004 | 0,090 |
| DCI8 | 5,6339 | 0,10896 | 1,73655 | -1,405 | 1,138 |
| DCI9 | 5,3425 | 0,10490 | 1,67190 | -1,066 | 0,522 |
| DCI10 | 4,9262 | 0,10531 | 1,67836 | -0,676 | -0,129 |
| TV2 | 4,0121 | 0,13172 | 2,09928 | -0,094 | -1,261 |
| TV3 | 3,6802 | 0,13720 | 2,18668 | 0,127 | -1,378 |
| TV4 | 4,4656 | 0,13021 | 2,07513 | -0,379 | -1,105 |
| TV5 | 4,4534 | 0,12887 | 2,05384 | -0,301 | -1,170 |
| TV6 | 4,2771 | 0,11323 | 1,80456 | -0,234 | -0,808 |
| TV7 | 4,0806 | 0,11968 | 1,90733 | -0,213 | -0,952 |
| TV8 | 4,3266 | 0,12552 | 2,00054 | -0,305 | -1,034 |
| CON1 | 5,3241 | 0,11524 | 1,83663 | -1,007 | 0,040 |
| CON2 | 5,0079 | 0,12107 | 1,92957 | -0,820 | -0,431 |
| CON6 | 5,2441 | 0,10995 | 1,75232 | -0,964 | 0,141 |

**Source:** Authors' calculations

The study's findings, based on an examination of the descriptive statistics of scale items applied to understand African tourists' cognitive, affective, and behavioral assessments of Türkiye, revealed that the averages related to the CCI dimension are generally high. The participants demonstrated a high degree of consensus with the assertions "Türkiye is a nation that respects international laws", "Türkiye is a technologically advanced country", and "Türkiye is an industrialized country". Conversely, affirmations such as "Türkiye is a country with a good reputation" and "Türkiye is a peaceful country" suggest that participants cultivated favorable cognitive perceptions of Türkiye. The means of the statements in the ACI dimension range from 4.42 to 4.83, generally remaining at a moderate level. For instance, affective components such as "Türkiye inspires confidence", "Türkiye is a well-liked country", and "Türkiye inspires self-confidence" indicate that the affective bond participants establish with Türkiye is weaker than their cognitive perceptions. The findings regarding the DCI dimension are quite robust. Statements such as "There is a plethora of attractions and activities to explore in Türkiye", "Turkish cuisine is diverse and exquisite", and "Travelling to Türkiye is a worthwhile endeavor" received high ratings on average, indicating that Türkiye is perceived as a destination with considerable tourist appeal and value by the study participants. Regarding the influence of television series and media on the public (TV), mean values persisted at a moderate level. While the statements "I watch Turkish series/films" and "Turkish series changed my views about Türkiye" are slightly above average, items such as "I have visited the locations where films and/or series were shot" and "Turkish series made me want to travel to Türkiye" indicate a more limited effect. This finding indicates that, despite the relatively high viewership of Turkish series, they do not exert a directly decisive influence on travel

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behavior. The means for the CON dimension are notably elevated. Statements such as "I want to visit Türkiye again in the near future", "I would recommend Türkiye to people planning a holiday", and "I would say positive things about Türkiye to other people" indicate that participants have strong intentions to revisit Türkiye and engage in positive word-of-mouth communication behavior. The distribution of skewness and kurtosis values for all items is normally distributed, with a range of -2 to +2, indicating that parametric analyses are appropriate for the data (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). This finding lends credence to the hypothesis that the data is suitable for parametric analyses.

Prior to the implementation of the study, each scale was subjected to Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA). Items excluded from the reliability analyses were omitted from the scales, and the remaining items were included in the analysis. The eigenvalues of the factor structures, the variance ratios they explain, and the factor loadings are presented collectively in Table 3 and Table 4.

**Table 3.** Exploratory Factor Analysis

| | Factor Load | Eigenvalue | E. Variance (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Cognitive country image (CCI)** (Cronbach's Alpha= ,903) | | **4,708** | **20,470** |
| CC3 Türkiye is a country that respects freedoms. | 0,862 | | |
| CC4 Türkiye is a country that respects human rights. | 0,839 | | |
| CC5 Türkiye is a country that respects international laws. | 0,78 | | |
| CC2 Türkiye is a peaceful country. | 0,779 | | |
| CC1 Türkiye has a good reputation. | 0,772 | | |
| CC8 Türkiye is an industrialized country. | 0,610 | | |
| CC9 Türkiye is a technologically advanced country. | 0,548 | | |
| **Affective country image (ACI)** (Cronbach's Alpha= ,898) | | **4,009** | **17,430** |
| AC6 Arouses good emotions - Arouses bad emotions | 0,879 | | |
| AC1 Like-Dislike | 0,826 | | |
| AC4 To admire - not to admire | 0,824 | | |
| AC5 Doesn't bother me - bothers me | 0,791 | | |
| AC2 Trust-Distrust | 0,778 | | |
| AC3 gives me self-confidence - it doesn't give me self-confidence | 0,762 | | |
| **Turkish TV Series/Film (TV_TR)** (Cronbach's Alpha= 0,877) | | **3,500** | **15,217** |
| TV5 I love Turkish TV series/films | 0,837 | | |
| TV4 I watch Turkish TV series/films | 0,786 | | |
| TV8 Turkish TV series made me want to travel to Türkiye. | 0,783 | | |
| TV7 Turkish TV series changed my opinion about Türkiye. | 0,749 | | |
| TV6 Turkish TV series reflect the reality of Türkiye. | 0,677 | | |
| **TV Series/Films and Travel Intention (TV_Trav)** (Cronbach's Alpha= 0,793) | | **1,688** | **7,341** |
| TV3 I have been to places where films and/or TV series are shot. | 0,861 | | |
| TV2 I have travelled to a place where I was influenced by television series. | 0,826 | | |
| **Conative Intentions (CON)** (Cronbach's Alpha= 0,889) | | **2,284** | **9,931** |
| CON2 I plan to visit Türkiye again in the near future. | 0,841 | | |
| CON1 I would like to visit Türkiye again in the near future. | 0,778 | | |
| CON6 I recommend Türkiye to those planning a holiday | 0,622 | | |

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*Principal Component Analysis with Varimax Rotation: Total Variance Explained: %70,390 Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Sampling Adequacy: 0,877; Barlett's Test of Sphericity: p<0,001; Chi-Square: 3748,208; Sig. 0,000; df: 253 Cronbach's Alpha= 0,863*

**Source:** Authors' calculations

The EFA results show the CI variable's sub-dimensions are valid and reliable. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) sample adequacy was 0.877, indicating suitability for factor analysis. Bartlett's Sphericity Test yielded a significant result ($\chi^2$=3748.208; p<.001), indicating sufficient correlation. The analysis identified five factors with eigenvalues above 1, explaining 70.39% of the total variance. This ratio, which exceeds the 60% variance explanation threshold in social sciences, indicates the model's satisfactory exploration power. The first factor, "Cognitive Country Image (CCI)," accounted for 20.47% of the total variance. The factor loadings ranged from 0.548 to 0.862, with all items exceeding the acceptable threshold. Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was determined to be 0.903, suggesting high internal consistency. The second factor, "Affective Country Image (ACI)," accounted for 17.43% of the total variance. The factor loadings of items in this dimension ranged from 0.762 to 0.879. The reliability of this factor, encompassing positive affective responses toward Türkiye, such as appreciation, admiration, and trust, is also quite high (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.898).

The third factor, designated as the 'Turkish TV Series/Film' dimension, accounted for 15.22% of the total variance. This dimension encompasses participants' interest in Turkish series and the impact of these productions on Türkiye's image. The factor loadings ranged from 0.677 to 0.837, and the reliability coefficient was found to be 0.877. The fourth factor, which was labeled "TV Series/Film and Travel Intention," accounted for 7.34% of the total variance. This factor is designed to assess the extent to which participants engage in travel to relevant destinations after being influenced by the series. The factor loadings ranged from 0.826 to 0.861, and Cronbach's Alpha value was 0.793, which is considered acceptable. The fifth factor, which was identified as CON dimension, accounted for 9.93% of the total variance. The factor loadings ranged from 0.622 to 0.841, and the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was calculated to be 0.889. These findings indicate a pronounced propensity among participants to revisit Türkiye and recommend it to others.

**Table 4.** Exploratory Factor Analysis of Destination Country Image Scale

| | Factor Load | Eigenvalue | A. Variance (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Destination Country Image (DCI)** (Cronbach's Alpha= 0,904) | | **5,109** | **56,767** |
| DCI9 Travelling to Türkiye is worth paying for. | ,819 | | |
| DCI8 There are many things to see and do in Türkiye. | ,812 | | |
| DCI2 Shopping options in Türkiye are good. | ,796 | | |
| DCI3 Accommodation in Türkiye is good. | ,767 | | |
| DCI4 Service quality in Türkiye is high. | ,746 | | |
| DCI1 Night and entertainment life in Türkiye is good. | ,744 | | |

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| | |
|---|---|
| DCI7 Turkish cuisine is rich. | ,730 |
| DCI10 I have information about touristic places in Türkiye. | ,686 |
| DCI5 Hygiene conditions are good in Türkiye | ,665 |

*Principal Component Analysis with Varimax Rotation: Total Variance Explained: 56,767%; Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Sampling Adequacy: 0,923; Barlett's Test of Sphericity: p<0,001; Chi-Square: 1082,155; Sig. 0,000; df: 36*

**Source:** Authors' calculations

The factor analysis conducted on the items belonging to the Destination Country Image (DCI) dimension, the objective of which is to measure how Türkiye is perceived as a tourism destination, revealed a single-factor structure. The findings of the analysis indicate that this dimension accounts for 56.77% of the total variance. Given the broadly accepted 50% threshold in the social sciences, the exploratory power obtained is deemed to be quite sufficient. The factor loadings range from 0.665 to 0.819. The highest loading is attributed to the item "Travelling to Türkiye is worth the cost," while the lowest loading is associated with the statement "Hygiene conditions in Türkiye are good." The fact that all items have factor loadings above 0.60 indicates that the scale items have a high representativeness of this factor.

The factor structure is valid, as shown by the high degree of sample adequacy. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value was 0.923, suggesting that the sample is adequate. The Bartlett's Sphericity Test yielded a significant result, indicating a sufficient level of correlation between the items. Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was 0.904, suggesting a high degree of reliability. The findings indicate the validity and reliability of the scale items concerning Türkiye as a destination.

The total internal consistency coefficient calculated for the general scale ($\alpha$=0.866) indicates high reliability. Additionally, the KMO test, which was conducted to ascertain the adequacy of the sample for factor analysis, yielded a result of 0.821, indicating 'very good' suitability. Bartlett's Sphericity Test yielded a significant result ($\chi^2$ (21) =907.922; p<.001), indicating that the data is suitable for factor analysis.

**Table 5.** Reliability and validity indicators

| Variable | n | Cronbach's Alpha ($\alpha$) | Composite Reliability (CR) | Average Variance Extracted (AVE) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cognitive Country Image (CCI) | 7 | 0.903 | 0.898 | 0.562 |
| Affective Country Image (ACI) | 6 | 0.898 | 0.920 | 0.658 |
| Destination Country Image (DCI) | 9 | 0.904 | 0.925 | 0.582 |
| Conative Intention (CON) | 3 | 0.889 | 0.794 | 0.566 |
| Turkish TV Series/Film (TV_TR) | 5 | 0.877 | 0.878 | 0.590 |
| TV Series/Film & Travel Request (TV_Trav) | 2 | 0.793 | 0.832 | 0.712 |
| Country Image (CI) | 13 | 0,788 | 0.952 | 0.606 |
| TV Series/Film (TV) | 7 | 0,866 | 0.921 | 0.625 |

**Source:** Authors' calculations

As demonstrated in Table 5, the Composite Reliability (CR) values ranged from 0.794 to 0.952, which is well above the recommended threshold value of 0.70 for all constructions. This finding suggests that the measurements are satisfactory in terms of composite reliability. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values ranged from 0.562 to 0.712, and the fact that all of them were above 0.50 confirms that each construct has convergent validity. A comprehensive evaluation of the constructs in the table reveals that they collectively meet the established criteria for reliability and validity.

**Table 6.** Model fit indices

| Index of Fit | Value | Acceptable Limit |
|---|---|---|
| $\chi^2$/df | 1,791 | < 3 is acceptable (Kline, 2016) |
| GFI | 0,836 | ≥ 0.90 recommended (Hu & Bentler, 1999), ≥ 0.80 acceptable (Marsh et al., 2004) |
| RMSEA | 0,056 | ≤ 0.05 good fit, ≤ 0.08 acceptable (Hair et al., 2019) |
| CFI | 0,933 | ≥ 0.90 acceptable, ≥ 0.95 good agreement (Hu & Bentler, 1999) |
| TLI | 0,926 | ≥ 0.90 is acceptable (Bentler & Bonett, 1980) |
| NFI | 0,861 | ≥ 0.90 is recommended but ≥ 0.80 is acceptable (Hu & Bentler, 1999) |

**Source:** Authors' calculations

The fit indices for the structural equation model are in Table 6. The chi-square fit ratio ($\chi^2$/df = 1.791) is less than 3, suggesting an adequate model fit (Kline, 2016). The GFI (Goodness of Fit Index) value is 0.836, below the ideal threshold of 0.90 but acceptable given its value above 0.80 (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Marsh et al., 2004). The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) value was calculated to be 0.056. This value is acceptable (Hair et al., 2019). The indices CFI (0.933) and TLI (0.926) exceed the 0.90 threshold, indicating a satisfactory degree of fitness. This suggests an optimal fit, as indicated by Hu and Bentler (1999) and Bentler and Bonett (1980). The NFI value is 0.861, falling below 0.90 but above 0.80, indicating an acceptable level of fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999). A thorough evaluation of the fit indices reveals that they are within acceptable limits. These findings suggest that the developed model is consistent with the data and is suitable for producing meaningful results within the framework of structural equation modeling.

The research model was tested using AMOS, SPSS PROCESS (v5.0), and the Jamovi GLM Mediation Model to ensure methodological robustness and cross-software consistency. The model fit indices (Table 6), derived from AMOS, indicated an acceptable fit across all parameters. A subsequent comparison of path analysis results revealed only negligible variations among the three analytical tools, none of which affected the substantive conclusions. Given that all models yielded consistent coefficient estimates and significance levels, the mediation results

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reported in Table 7 are based on the Jamovi output, which presented the results in a more concise and interpretable format.

CFA was also conducted using AMOS to validate the factor structure obtained from EFA. The results of the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) indicated that the measurement model demonstrated adequate fit and that no alterations to the items identified in the exploratory factor analysis (EFA) were required. Consequently, the detailed CFA tables are not included here to maintain conciseness.

**Table 7.** Summary of direct and indirect impacts

| | Effect | β | Std. β | SE | 95% C.I. (BC Boostrap) Lower | Upper | z | p | Result |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| $H_1$ | CI ⇒ TV | 0.4024 | 0.2352 | 0.1043 | 0.1961 | 0.619 | 3.86 | <.001 | Supported |
| $H_2$ | CI ⇒ DCI | 0.8608 | 0.5874 | 0.0744 | 0.7616 | 1.018 | 11.57 | <.001 | Supported |
| $H_3$ | DCI ⇒ CON | 0.8539 | 0.6580 | 0.0672 | 0.7346 | 0.987 | 12.70 | <.001 | Supported |
| $H_4$ | CI ⇒ DCI ⇒ CON | 0.7350 | 0.3865 | 0.0859 | 0.5363 | 0.924 | 8.55 | <.001 | Supported |
| $H_5$ | CI ⇒ CON (Direct) | 0.1210 | 0.0636 | 0.0908 | -0.0651 | 0.297 | 1.33 | 0.183 | Not Supported |
| $H_6$ | TV ⇒ CON | 0.1908 | 0.1717 | 0.0479 | 0.0968 | 0.301 | 3.98 | <.001 | Supported |
| $H_7$ | CI ⇒ TV ⇒ CON | 0.0768 | 0.0404 | 0.0277 | 0.0322 | 0.151 | 2.77 | 0.006 | Supported |
| $H_8$ | CI ⇒ CON (Total) | 0.9328 | 0.4905 | 0.1042 | 0.7705 | 1.131 | 8.95 | <.001 | Supported |

**Source:** Authors' calculations

The results of the hypothesis test demonstrate that all direct and indirect paths in the model, except for the proposed H5, are statistically significant. These findings indicate that the theoretical structure is robustly substantiated and that the relationships between the structures are significant from both theoretical and practical standpoints.

As illustrated in Table 7, the fundamental pattern within the model is distinctly discernible. The hypothesis is supported: Conversely, CI modestly enhances TV variable (0.2352; p<.001). The H2 model has received significant support: Consequently, the present study has demonstrated that CI can serve as a reliable predictor of DCI (0.5874; p<.001). Additionally, H3 demonstrates notable strength. DCI model offers a robust explanation of CON, with a standardized factor loading of 0.6580 and a p-value less than 0.001. According to H6, television exerts an independent and small-to-moderate significant effect on CON (0.1717; p<.001). With respect to indirect effects, H4 (CI→DCI→CON) is significant and of medium-large magnitude (0.3865; p<.001), and H7 (CI→TV→CON) is also significant (0.0404; p=.006). Conversely, H5 does not receive support: the direct effect of CI on CON remains negligible and non-significant (0.0636; p=.183). In accordance with H8, the aggregate impact of CI on CON is classified as medium-large (0.4905; p<.001). A substantial proportion, amounting to approximately 87% of the total effect, is mediated, with around 79% of this mediation occurring through DCI and the remaining 8% through TV. This pattern indicates that CI→CON

relationship is predominantly mediated by DCI, while TV serves as both an independent predictor and a complementary indirect channel of limited magnitude. The model resulting from the analyses is presented below.

**Figure 2.** Research model
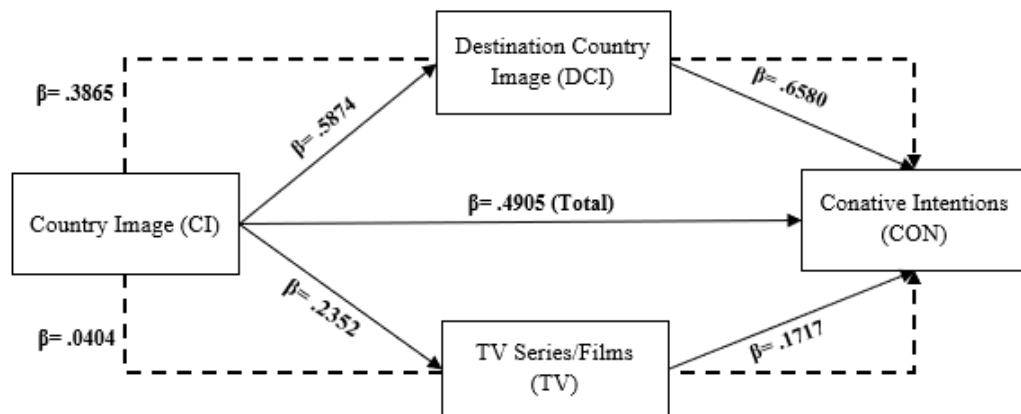


**Source:** Authors' calculations

The findings indicate that CI exerts a primary influence on conative intension (CON) through indirect channels. The most prominent channel through which this phenomenon transpires is via DCI. The relationship between CI and DCI is strong, and the effect of DCI on CON is also high; correspondingly, the indirect effect of CI on CON via DCI is moderate to large and significant. Given that CI's direct impact on CON remains negligible, approximately 87% of the total effect emanates from indirect channels, the majority of which is transmitted through DCI. The role of television (TV) in this context manifests in two distinct ways. Firstly, it exerts an independent and substantial influence on CON. Secondly, the indirect path CI→TV→CON, though modest in size, is nevertheless noteworthy in its statistical significance. This pattern reveals that DCI occupies a central position through both its direct effect and its mediating role. It is therefore recommended that aligning CI with DCI should be considered a strategic priority. Furthermore, it is suggested that media content should be regarded as a complementary element in this framework.

## 5. Conclusions

This study aims to reveal the image of Türkiye as perceived by African tourists who have visited Türkiye and the image of Türkiye as a destination. Additionally, the study aims to ascertain the probability of converting their sentiments regarding Türkiye into tangible CON and to discern the mediating influence of Turkish television series and films. This study examines the structural relationships between CI, DCI, and CON, particularly in the context of destination interest generated through TV series and films. The findings indicate that media-supported destination promotion exerts a significant influence on the image-

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intention relationship through mediating roles. A multitude of studies have previously demonstrated that CI influences CON (De Nisco et al., 2015; Dedeoğlu, 2019; Kotler & Gertner, 2002; Lindblom et al., 2018; Nadeau et al., 2008). Moreover, the mediating effect of DCI on these intentions has also been demonstrated. The extent to which a tourist perceives a country's image to be positive, as well as DCI, directly correlates with their intention to visit the destination again and recommend it to others.

The analysis revealed no substantial direct impact of CI on CON. However, an indirect effect was observed in CI's influence on CON via DCI. This finding suggests that the positive impact of CI on the perception of Türkiye as a tourist destination is significantly associated with tourists' CON. This outcome corroborates the pivotal function of DCI on travel intention, as highlighted in seminal studies such as Beerli & Martín (2004) and Pike & Ryan (2004). The indirect effect of CI on CON via TV was also found to be significant. This finding suggests that the impact of a nation's image on its citizens of other countries through cultural products (e.g., television series) is reflected in CON. Research conducted by Kim & Richardson (2003) has demonstrated the efficacy of media influence on destination selection. This finding aligns with the extant literature suggesting that Turkish series and films can cultivate interest in Türkiye among international audiences. This finding aligns with the extant literature, as evidenced by the works of Araújo Vila et al. (2021), Dela Cruz & Lacap (2023), Hudson et al. (2011), Hudson & Ritchie (2006), Kaya (2021), Kim (2011), and Pham & Hwang (2022).

The extant findings provide substantiation for, and serve to augment, the cognitive-affective image model that was proposed by Baloğlu and McCleary (1999). In this context, CI triggers not only cognitive perceptions about the destination but also affective closeness and curiosity through the television content being watched. Moreover, the mediating role of DCI in CON corroborates the image-attitude link proposed by Chon (1990). Therefore, this model demonstrates that image components operate within a holistic and hierarchical order, a conclusion that is validated by structural equivalence modeling. Research has demonstrated that television series and films exert a significant influence on destination perception and the mechanisms by which tourists make decisions, both in a direct and indirect manner. This phenomenon underscores the potential of local content production as a strategic instrument in the realm of country marketing, particularly within the paradigm of "film/series tourism" (Beeton, 2016; Kim & Richardson, 2003). Türkiye's preeminence in international series exports signifies a substantial opportunity for the nation to enhance its global image and augment its appeal as a tourist destination.

**Managerial Contributions and Implementation Recommendations**

This research contributes to tourism literature by offering a multi-level model with theoretical and practical insights. It shows that, in addition to the direct effects of CI, TV and DCI can also indirectly influence tourists' intentions. This multi-level structure goes beyond conventional image-attitude-intention models,

showing the role of media representations in shaping images at a structural level. This contributes to the image formation model developed by Baloğlu & McCleary (1999) and the multidimensional structure of DCI proposed by Echtner & Ritchie (1993).

The findings of the research suggest a substantial impact of television and DCI on CI. In this context, it is imperative to consider Turkish TV series as a tool of cultural diplomacy in international markets. It is imperative that priority be given to the distribution and accessibility of these series, especially in emerging markets such as Africa. It is recommended that public institutions (e.g., the Ministry of Culture and Tourism) and the media sector collaborate to ensure that Türkiye's tourist attractions are more visible in the content of TV series. The participants in the study comprised individuals of African descent who had previously visited Türkiye. The findings indicate that these visitors exhibit a high degree of sensitivity to cultural attractions and media content. In this context, it is recommended that market segmentation be carried out for the African continent, and that customized promotional campaigns be developed, considering religious, cultural, and socio-economic sensitivities. It is imperative that series and media content be prioritized within these campaigns, with the objective of ensuring the effective targeting of the target audience through the utilization of digital platforms such as social media.

The structural equation model of the study shows that a country's image exerts a strong indirect influence on DCI. This suggests that DCI plays a key role in shaping tourists' perceptions of the country. Therefore, it is crucial for Turkey to enhance its DCI, especially in the African market. These strategies should include infrastructure investments, improving accommodation services, supporting cultural events, highlighting local hospitality, and emphasizing destination safety.

In practical terms, these findings offer important insights in terms of tourism marketing strategies and destination branding. It is imperative that public institutions, such as the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, evaluate TV series exports not only as a cultural but also as an economic diplomacy tool. In a similar manner, private tour operators and destination management organizations have the capacity to transform the filming locations of popular television series into tourism products. The integration of television content with tourism destinations is conducive to a sustainable and effective destination management approach.

**Theoretical Contributions**

This study offers substantial theoretical contributions to three major frameworks-Image Theory, the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), and the Cognitive-Affective-Conative (CAC) Framework-by clarifying and extending their interconnections within the context of media-influenced destination perception.

First, in relation to Image Theory (Beach, 1990), the findings enhance our understanding of how broad national images (CI) evolve into more specific

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destination evaluations (Destination Country Image, DCI). While previous research has tended to view these constructions as parallel or loosely associated, the present study empirically verifies that DCI functions as a translational mechanism through which abstract country image become meaningful in tourism decision-making. This deepens the theoretical premise of Image Theory by showing that the transformation from national to destination-level images is not automatic but mediated by cognitive and affective processes that can be shaped by cultural and media influences.

Second, regarding the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), this research refines the understanding of how attitudes and behavioral intentions in tourism are formed under mediated and symbolic influences. By positioning DCI as an antecedent of conative intentions (CON) and incorporating media exposure as an external force shaping attitudes, the study extends TPB to include mediated attitudinal formation as a determinant of behavioral intention. This refinement highlights that perceived behavioral control and subjective norms are not only socially constructed but also media-shaped, especially in cross-cultural and tourism contexts.

Third, the study advances the Cognitive-Affective-Conative (CAC) Framework (Baloğlu & McCleary, 1999) by empirically validating the sequential progression of image formation and demonstrating that media stimuli-particularly television series and films-activate both cognitive and affective processes that ultimately shape conative responses. By integrating media psychology with the CAC model, the study proposes an extended framework in which mediated imagery operates simultaneously as a cognitive input and an affective amplifier. This enriched conceptualization provides a more dynamic explanation of how individuals move from perception to intention, bridging emotional resonance with behavioral inclination in destination marketing.

Collectively, these insights advance theoretical understanding by integrating tourism marketing and media psychology into a unified explanatory model. The study positions destination image not merely as a perceptual outcome but as a mediating cognitive–affective structure that channels the effects of country image and media effect into tangible behavioral intentions.

**Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Future Studies**

The present study is subject to several limitations. Initially, the sample was obtained via non-probability convenience sampling from African tourists who had previously visited Türkiye. This may introduce self-selection bias and limits statistical generalizability. Furthermore, the specific countries of origin of the respondents within the African continent were not recorded. Consequently, the national composition of the sample cannot be reported. The sample also appears to be skewed towards younger participants, which may constrain the generalizability of findings to older and socioeconomically different segments.

Secondly, the design is cross-sectional and based on self-reported measures, which restrict causal inference and precludes assessing how images and media effects evolve over time. Thirdly, the TV construct captured a general perceived influence of TV series/films rather than detailed exposure indicators (e.g. frequency, genre, platform, or specific content), potentially masking differentiated media effects.

It is recommended that future research address these limitations in a more systematic manner. This can be achieved by the following means: (i) Recording the country or sub-region of origin and applying quota or stratified sampling to enable multi-group comparisons. (ii) Using longitudinal or panel designs to test temporal ordering and change. (iii) Refining media measures by modelling exposure intensity and content characteristics. Furthermore, model extensions may also test the cognitive versus affective dimensions of destination country image separately as mediators and examine boundary conditions via moderators such as market origin, travel purpose, and exposure frequency.

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