

The Impact of EXPO 2020 Dubai on the Behavioral Intentions towards Egypt as a Tourist Destination

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Abstract

In spite of the long established effects of mega-events on leveraging destinations, there is a knowledge gap on how mega events, especially the World Expos, affect the participated countries rather than the host ones. One of the main gains predicted to be achieved from the Egyptian participation in Expo 2020 Dubai is promoting Egypt as one of the most important global tourist and archaeological destinations. The current study proposed a model to examine the event experience (EE) of the Egyptian pavilion's visitors during Expo 2020 Dubai utilizing the event experience scale (EES) and how it affects the behavioral intentions (BI) toward the Egyptian Destination through the mediating role of the Customers' satisfaction (CS) with event experience and transferred destination image (DI). Questionnaire was used as a research method and it targets the visitors of the Egyptian pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai. Data analysis of 393 valid forms was done using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). The results revealed that event experience has positive direct impact on tourist satisfaction and destination image, further, tourist satisfaction and destination image have direct impact on behavioral intention. Moreover, it was discovered that the association between event experience (visiting the Egyptian Pavilion) and behavioral intention (intention to visit Egypt and say positive word of mouth about it) is fully mediated by customer satisfaction with their experience after visiting the Egyptian pavilion and the Egyptian destination image transferred through Expo 2020 Dubai.

Keywords: EXPO 2020 Dubai; Egypt; Event Experience; Destination

Image; Customer Satisfaction; Behavioral Intention.

Introduction

Mega-events (such as Olympic Games, FIFA World Cup, and World Expos) can have both tangible and intangible effects on the host countries. The successful manifestation of a country as a brand and the positioning of its distinct image on a global scale can provide significant opportunities for the state's development and progress in various aspects. Events have become an increasingly effective component of destination branding (Klonova, 2012). Many destinations all over the world have developed events portfolios as a strategic initiative for attracting tourists and reinforcing their brand. Consequently, events can play an outstanding role in branding, positioning, and promoting a destination (Wang & Jin, 2018).

Mega events have the potential to increase destination's viability and offer more chances than other tourist attractions to boost off-peak demand (Connell et al., 2015). Further, Mega events can enhance urban amenity for both residents and visitors through their role in destination marketing and compiling new technologies to enhance the visitor's experience (Kotler & Gertner, 2002). Therefore, connection with the visitors' experience is crucial. Brands that offer a link with participants' self-images are those that stand out from alternatives, moreover, product differentiation supported by branding can increase destination competitiveness. (Ghodeswar, 2008). Positive brand experiences eventually become an important factor in determining visitors' out-comes including satisfaction, intention to recommend, intention to revisit a destination, and positive word of mouth (Barnes et al., 2014).

The current study focuses on Expo 2020 Dubai, it is an ongoing World Expo hosted by Dubai in the United Arab Emirates from 1 October 2021 to 31 March 2022. Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, Expo 2020 Dubai was unable to run in 2020 and its dates were changed to 1 October 2021–31 March 2022. Despite the fact of being postponed, the organizers retained

the same name for convenience. Egypt was one of the 191 countries that participate in this event. The Egyptian Pavilion attracts 10,000 visitors on the first day, and it was one of the most visited and recommended pavilions at EXPO 2020. The event's mix and convergence of so many countries and visitors from all over the world, as well as its success despite the challenges posed by the Covid-19 Pandemic, make it particularly worth investigating. The current investigation fills the knowledge gap about the relation between event experience and behavioral intention towards a participant country in the context of mega events especially Expos. This research aims at examining the tourism legacy planning and destination branding attached to the Egyptian participation in EXPO 2020 Dubai. To drive the study towards a successful conclusion, four research objectives are outlined below:

- To shed light on Expo 2020 Dubai and particularly the Egyptian participation in the event.
- To determine the impact of Expo 2020 Dubai in enhancing the Egyptian destination image.
- To analyze the key elements of the event experience, customer satisfaction, destination image, and behavioral intention with regard to visiting the Egyptian Pavilion in Expo 2020.
- To investigate the relation between event experience and behavioral intention towards the Egyptian destination post Expo 2020 Dubai.

1. Literature Review

Expos, festivals and events have recently become important tools for urban development. Because of the competitive drive to put cities on the global map, many of them have adopted event based strategies, including the creation of eventful cities, festival cities and event portfolios. The regular staging of World Expos over the past 170 years in different parts of the world is a reflection of the expanding significance of events in both urban and regional development. Greenhalgh (2011) reviewed the World Expos and created a typology of these events, which are often hosted by nations and located in cities, and which depict how various countries need

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to position themselves in the face of rising global competition. It is noteworthy that despite escalating local competition, communities keep bidding for Expos. Given their ability to attract attention and resources, Expos play a powerful role in changing the image and the physical realities of the cities in which they are held. In this regard, an Expo fits into the category of a ‘pulsar event’ (Richards, 2015), as a happening which changes the place in which it is held. It could be said that Pulsar events are an integral part of eventful city strategies (Richards & Palmer, 2010). Additionally, each host city uses the event in a different way, and gives it a distinct flavor that tempers the consequences in the long run (Richard, 2022). Such models have spread throughout the world, propagated by consultants and policy tourists looking for new approaches to urban development and economic regeneration. The previous Europe and North America dominance in the Expo field is gradually fading, with cities in Asia, Latin America and the Middle East hosting events.

Despite the challenges posed by the Covid-19 Pandemic, the most recent World Expo in Dubai was deemed a success. The event attracted more than 24 million visitors, very close to the expected total of 25 million; additionally, reflecting the effect of the Covid-19 Pandemic, more than 200 million virtual visits were made to the Expo website. (Halligan, 2022). It is worth noting that such a result did not occur by chance, however, the infrastructure cost alone was \$7 billion, and the event required the combined efforts of 30,000 volunteers to keep things running (Richards, 2022). The Dubai Expo site will soon be transformed into District 2020, a smart and sustainable city focused on the needs of its urban community. It will offer a curated innovation-driven business ecosystem that brings together global minds and embraces technology and digital innovation to support industry growth (Expo City Dubai, n.d).

3.1 EXPO 2020 Dubai Overview

In November 2013, the United Arab Emirates won the right to host the 2020 World Expo in Dubai. Expo 2020 Dubai, the first World Expo in the (MEASA) area, welcomed guests from all over the world to participate in



the creation of a new world. More than 200 participants, including governments, international organizations, educational institutions, and enterprises, formed the largest and the most diversified World Expo throughout the 182 days of Expo 2020 Dubai, giving visitors a visually stunning and emotionally moving experience. Ancient civilizations were linked by the UAE, which is still a global hub today. An archaeological ring discovered at Saroug Al Hadeed site served as the inspiration for Expo 2020 Dubai logo (Expo 2020 Dubai, 2022).

With regard to the theme, Expo 2020 Dubai's theme, "Connecting Minds, Creating the Future," is based on the idea that bringing the world together can spark an exchange of innovative ideas and motivate action to provide solutions to current global challenges. The three subthemes of Expo 2020 Dubai's were Opportunity, Mobility, and Sustainability. Moreover, a number of initiatives were launched before the event's opening to encourage widespread participation and to promote the development of Expo's theme.

Considering the location, Expo 2020 with several superior architectural achievements, constructed by Expo 2020 and its participants as well, in addition to displays of cutting-edge technology and environmentally friendly materials. The structure of the site intended to imitate three petals that are joined to Al-Wasl Plaza, that bears the name of Dubai's historic name, which means "connection." The plaza featured the world's largest 360-degree immersive projection surface and a huge domed trellis that connects to the UAE Pavilion, which is designed in the shape of a falcon.

The petals represent the three thematic districts of Expo 2020 Dubai (Opportunity, Mobility, and Sustainability), each anchored by its own thematic pavilion. Mission Possible (the Opportunity Pavilion) demonstrates to visitors how can they contribute to humanity's future, instilling renewed great confidence that everyone can make a difference and demonstrating that collaboration can lead to long-term beneficial changes. Alif (the Mobility Pavilion) offers the possibility of interacting

with famous historical explorers and discover how human progress can develop in the future. Terra (the Sustainability Pavilion) aims at inspiring visitors to recognize their influence on the environment and advocate for change by telling the enthralling tale of humankind's interaction with nature. For the first time in the history of the World Expo, each participating nation got its own pavilion set-up in accordance with the subtheme it selected rather than its geographic location (Expo 2020 Dubai, 2022).

Additionally, the site featured multiple stages, open areas, parks and stores, including more than 200 food and beverage outlets. Moreover, facilities and supporting services such as participant and staff accommodation, logistics, warehousing, transport nodes, retails, a public park, and hotels were provided outside the guarded area.

Expo 2020 Dubai served as the most influential global incubator for new ideas in the world. Collaborative solutions to global challenges including climate change, health and wellness, inequality, and environmental degradation were explored throughout thematic weeks at Expo. Expo 2020 site is transformed into District 2020 - a model global community- that will remind future cities with a significant and tangible long-term legacy (Expo 2020 Dubai, 2022).

3.2 The Egyptian Pavilion at Expo 2020

Egypt was represented at Expo 2020 Dubai by a prestigious pavilion that reflected its regional and international stature. The pavilion shed light on Egyptian civilization, the most distinctive aspects of the Egyptian personality throughout history, as well as Egypt's future and the most available crucial opportunities to investors among all sectors. It was designed by architect Hazem Hamada and was located in the Opportunity District (the Egyptian Participation in Expo 2020, n.d.). The Egyptian pavilion received 1.5 million visitors over six months and was ranked third among medium-sized pavilions by the International Bureau of



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Exhibitions for its interior design. Egypt also came in second place in a public vote organized by Exhibitor magazine for its creative work, missing out only to Peru (Abuzaid, 2022).

Depicting aspects of ancient Pharaonic civilization, such as hieroglyphic symbols on the pavilion walls and an embodying statue of Tutankhamun figure. The pavilion's main entrance to the pavilion is a triangular gate designed to resemble the pyramids (figure No. 1). Within the Egyptian pavilion, more than 14 different zones were designed to represent different periods of the ancient Egyptian civilization. Furthermore, the Egyptian pavilion also featured replicas of King Tutankhamun, his own golden mask and sarcophagus, his Ka-guard statue, the king's golden throne chair, and the special occasion's chair. Ancient archaeological sites, the Grand Egyptian Museum, as well as soaring skyscrapers, were all promoted in a series of photos and videos that portrayed Egypt as a place where ancient treasures and contemporary technologies and innovation coexisted. Additionally, a selection of promotional paintings, patterns, and drawings that incorporate images from ancient Egypt, high-definition screens, as well as an impressive 3D time machine experience.

The Egyptian government has developed a strategy to maximize Expo 2020 Dubai's benefits by screening promotional films for Egypt's tourist attractions and broadening guests' information about the historical significance of the



Figure (1) The Egyptian Pavilion's Design in EXPO 2020 Dubai

Egyptian antiquities. Furthermore, the pavilion held 103 activities throughout Expo 2020 Dubai, such as workshops, business meetings, discussion sessions, and cultural salons. Women and youth issues were also covered, in addition to topics related to cities and urban development, sustainable development, tourism, agriculture, health, and improving living standards. In line with this, 9 workshops in the fields of real estate investment, education, antiquities, and the exhibition 'Our Heritage' were held.

Entertainment and cultural events were held to attract the largest possible visitors to the pavilion. Expo 2020 provided a unique chance for Egypt to highlight its contributions to the global development system and to look ahead to a bright future with potential for long-term investment and growth within the framework of Egypt's Vision 2030 (Egypt's participation in Expo 2020, 2021).

1.3 Relation between Event Experience and Behavioral Intention

On the one hand, experiences are becoming crucial in events and festivals, which are prime manifestations of the experience economy (Robertson et al., 2008). The concept of using events to create

experiences that customers will value, has been gradually embraced in the tourism industry. By offering stimulating events, tourism providers aim to sensitively, emotionally, and cognitively affect tourists' internal psychologies in order to elicit future behavioral intentions from them (Brakus et al, 2009). However, because experiences have many facets and people have unique perspectives, it is more difficult to define what events are like or how different individuals experience them. Therefore, previous studies tend to consider the event experience itself as a black box (Richards, 2019). Consequently, it is important to focus on the outcomes of experiences, such as satisfaction and intention to return, which may in turn produce emotions or attachments towards the wider destination brand.

On the other hand, the tendency of a person to act in a manner that is consistent with their feelings, knowledge, or evaluations of prior experiences is known as behavioral intention (Spears & Singh, 2004). It can be categorized as either favorable or unfavorable (Ladhari, 2009). Future purchases, positive word-of-mouth, premium pricing, increased spending with the company, and loyalty are all indicators of favorable behavioral intention (Ladhari, 2009). Researchers (Morrison & Crane, 2007; Chiou & Shen, 2006) after examining the effect of brand experiences on travel decisions have found that visitors' brand experiences are significant indicators of satisfaction, decision-making, and future behaviors. Therefore, the following hypothesis is developed.

H1: EE has direct positive influence on BI.

2.4 Relation between Event Experience and Customer Satisfaction

Different levels of cognitive, conative, and affective aspects can be used to describe event experiences. Experiences differ in their levels of physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual activity (O'Sullivan and Spangler, 1998). According to Lazarus (1991), positive emotional experiences improve the likelihood that people would see their life as

positive and desirable. Furthermore, Christou et al. (2018), as well as Wood and Kenyon (2018), discovered a connection between emotions and satisfaction. Understanding consumers' experiences and their perceived value of products or services is more important than ever in the tourism and hospitality contexts, because satisfaction is viewed as the consumer's overall judgement of the complete consumer experience (Lee et al. 2017). Additionally, some researchers have empirically investigated the relationships between experiences and satisfaction. Barnes et al., (2014) and Milman & Tasci (2018), for example, proved that affective experiences can have a direct influence on satisfaction. Moreover, Chen et al., (2020) confirmed that tourist experience has direct influence on satisfaction and loyalty. Accordingly, the following hypothesis could be proposed:

H2: EE has direct positive influence on CS.

2.5 Relation between Customer Satisfaction and Behavioral Intention

Understanding how customer satisfaction and behavioral intention are related has piqued the interest of academics in the tourism industry (Jeong et al., 2019; Hultman et al., 2015; Chen and Chen, 2010; Yoon & Uysal, 2005; Yoo et al., 2003). Tourists who enjoyed their visit are more inclined to suggest the destination to others (Jeong et al., 2019; Chen & Tsai 2007). However, dissatisfied tourists are unlikely to return to the destination and will certainly spread negative word of mouth (Alegre & Garau, 2010; Chen & Chen, 2010). Moreover, previous studies (Sohn et al., 2016; Grappi & Montanari 2011; Žabkar et al., 2010) confirmed positive association between satisfactory tourist experiences and intention to recommend. Hence, the following hypothesis is formed:

H3: CS has positive direct influence on BI.

2.6 Relation between Event Experience and Destination Image

Destination image is the sum of people's knowledge, experiences, and impressions about a destination. Therefore, tourism experiences are quite valuable. The destination image becomes even more significant if tourists' experiences support it. If potential customers develop positive attitudes

and expectations, the image that forms in their minds will contribute to a positive destination evaluation outcome (Hughes, 2008). Because tourism services and experiences are intangible, images take precedence over reality (Gallarza et al., 2002). Destination image must be clear and experiences delivered at the destinations must be positive and memorable, accordingly, positive and memorable experiences will reinforce the destination's image. A destination with strong image is more likely to be considered and chosen over alternatives (Echtner & Riche, 1991; Alhemoud & Armstrong, 1996). According to the previous studies, the following hypothesis could be proposed:

H4: EE has direct positive influence on DI.

2.7 Relation between Destination Image and Behavioral Intention

Destination image is the sum of a customer's beliefs, impressions, and thoughts about a destination, or it is the general notion formed in the consumers' minds about the significant attributes of a destination (Jin et al., 2013). Tan (2016) claimed that a destination's image is a complex fusion of its products, services, and features combined to create a comprehensive perception of the place. Destination image impacts have been investigated in several tourism literature. According to researchers (e.g., Lin, 2007; Pike & Ryan, 2004), The acquisition of knowledge (cognitive) about relevant attributes assists individuals in developing an emotional attachment to the object (affective), which drives them to carry out a pertinent behavior (conative).

As a consequence of image transfer, reviews and ratings of the destination have positive impact on tourists' intentions to visit (Xing & Chalip, 2006). Moreover, according to the literature on event sponsorship, brand image transferred from sponsored events results in better attitudes toward the destination, raise customer attention, and the intention to purchase the brand's products (Chiu & Pyun, 2019; Santos et al., 2016; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010). The effects of image transfer are quite comparable to those of the destination image. Furthermore, the image effect of mega events is a major manifestation of their influence (e.g., Kobierecki & Stroek, 2021; Walker et al., 2013; Lai & Li 2014), because destination image affects

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tourist behaviors before, during, and after their visit (e.g. Pike, 2007; Gallarza et al., 2002). Additionally, earlier studies confirmed that positive overall image resulted in higher tendency to recommend (e.g. Papadimitriou et al., 2018; Assaker et al. 2011; Qu et al. 2011; Prayag, 2009). On this basis, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H5. DI has direct positive influence on BI.

2.8 The mediating role of Customer Satisfaction and Destination Image between Event Experience and Behavioral Intention

Prior research demonstrated that behavioral intentions are well predicted by satisfaction, quality performance, image, emotions, and motivation (Prayag et al., 2013; Vareiro et al., 2019). According to Wirtz & Chew's 2002 argument, fostering positive behaviors requires more than just satisfaction. Moreover, Han et al. (2009) claimed that satisfaction fully mediated the relationship between affective experiences and behaviors. However, Barnes et al. (2014) revealed that satisfaction only partially mediated the relationship of experience and visitors behaviors. In addition, an empirical support for the mediating role of satisfaction (Gohary et al., 2020; Sharma & Nayak, 2019; Kim, 2018) and post-visit destination image (Sharma & Nayak, 2019; Kim, 2018) within the relationship between the memorable tourist experience and behavioral intentions. In light of the prior literature, the following hypotheses could be suggested:

H6: CS mediates the relationship between EE and BI.

H7: DI mediates the relationship between EE and BI.

Considering the literature and the proposed hypotheses, a conceptual framework model (see Figure 2) was established to illustrate the structural relationships between event experience, customer satisfaction, destination image and behavioral intention, with an emphasis on the mediating effect of tourist satisfaction and destination image on the relation between event experience and behavioral intention in the context of a participant country in the mega event Expo 2020 Dubai.

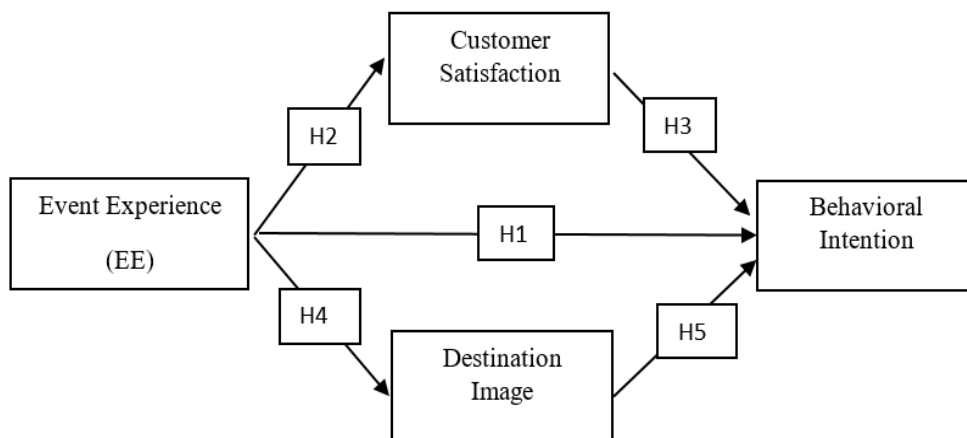


Figure (2) conceptual framework of the study

3. Methodology

3.1. Sample and Data Collection

The questionnaire targeted the Egyptian pavilion's visitors at Expo 2020 Dubai. The researcher chose the Egyptian pavilion after conducting a pilot study, which revealed that the Egyptian pavilion was one of the most visited pavilions from the beginning of Expo2020, and it was one of the pavilions that people intended to visit. Moreover, the majority of the respondents showed a strong addiction to Egypt in some way as they show their great interest in the Egyptian culture and history. Additionally, the long waiting queue outside the Egyptian pavilion demonstrated the Egyptian pavilion's popularity among Expo 2020 Dubai visitors.

This study opted for a non-probability sampling and employed convenience and purposeful sampling technique, where the targeted population was the visitors of the Egyptian pavilion in Expo 2020 Dubai excluding the Egyptian visitors. The respondents are all foreign tourists from various countries. A sample of 450 visitors' information was gathered after the manager of the Egyptian pavilion at Expo 2020 gave

his assent, and the study ultimately produced 393 fully usable forms. The data was gathered by the researcher during six separate visits to the site between December 2021 and March 2022.

3.2. Measurement items

The questionnaire is divided into five main sections, which are as follows: First, questions were asking about demographic information (age, gender, and nationality), as well as whether or not they had previously visited Egypt. The second section, however, includes Event experience, the third section includes customer satisfaction, the fourth section includes destination image, and the fifth section includes behavioral intention.

All of the items for measuring the four variables were adapted from previous studies and modified to fit the theme of the current study. After being reviewed by some professors and experts in the event management field, some items were removed from the event experience scale, while others were added to the customer satisfaction scale. The destination Image scale was condensed to avoid being too long. Finally, the behavioral intention scale was altered to match the theme.

Items for measuring the event experience adapted from the Event Experience Scale (EES) proposed by the ATLAS Events Group comprised of four dimensions, which are (cognitive engagement, affective engagement, physical engagement and experiencing novelty) (De Geus et al., 2016). The modified event experience scale consists of twelve items (see Appendix A). Further, Items to assess the customers' satisfaction were drawn from (Dado et al., 2020 & Yoon et al., 2010). The modified customers' satisfaction scale consists of six items (see Appendix B). Regarding the destination image measuring items, they were adapted from (Qu et al., 2011). The modified destination image scale consists of seven items (see Appendix C). Finally, behavioral intention measures were adapted and modified from (Zeithmal et al., 1996). The modified behavioral intention scale consists of seven items (see Appendix D). A total of thirty-two items of the scale were then anchored using a 5-point Likert scale.

3.3 Data analysis

This study employed the Smart-PLS software version (3.0) to estimate the outer loadings, construct validity and reliability, discriminant validity, SEM results in terms of total effect, specific indirect effects and indirect effects. Further, to determine the significance of the association between variables, bootstrapping procedure was used.

4. Results

4.1 Profile of Respondents

Table (1) explores shows that responders were mostly females (55.7%), however, (44.3%) were males. In terms of age, (71.5%) of the respondents ranged between 26 to 45 years. In terms of nationalities, the results (see Figure 3) revealed that (18.2%) were Emarati, (15.1%) Indian, (9.1%) German, (6.3%) Pakistani, and (5.3%) Puerto Ricans, among many others. Furthermore, the vast majority of respondents (80.7%) had never visited Egypt.

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Table (1) Respondents' Profile

		Number (393)	(%)
Gender	Male	174	44.3
	Female	219	55.7
Age	18 - 25	24	6.1
	26 - 35	114	28.9
	36 - 45	168	42.6
	46 - 55	42	10.7
	56+	45	11.4
Number of visits to Egypt before	1 time	12	3.0
	2 Times	15	3.8
	3 Times	3	0.8
	More than 3 times	48	11.4
	Never	318	80.7

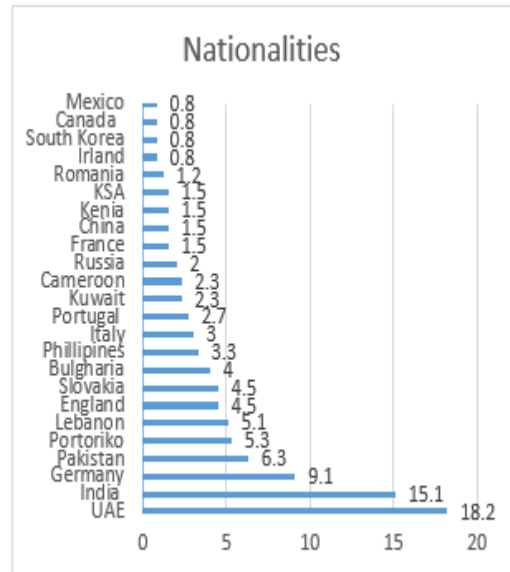


Figure (3) Respondents' Nationalities

4.2 Assessment of Measurement Model

When evaluating the measurement model, the indicators used to measure the associated constructs had loadings (> 0.7) (Hair et al., 2017), and items that did not meet the requirements were removed (EE1, EE11, EE12, DI3). Convergent validity was confirmed based on the results in (Table 2).

According to Hair et al. (2017), Cronbach's alpha of (≥ 0.70) considered good, (≥ 0.80) considered better, and (≥ 0.90) considered best. Furthermore, if the composite reliability is (> 0.7), the indicator variables loading on the latent variable share variance. These results meet Fornell & Larcker's standard, which states that composite reliability should be (> 0.7) (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). In addition, the average variance extracted (AVE) values were (> 0.50). (Hair et al., 2017). As a result, all items were appropriate for further statistical analysis.

Additionally, the approach of heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlation

(HTMT) was used to determine discriminant validity. As displayed in (Table 3), some latent variables' HTMT values exceed (0.90), such as BI-DI, CS-DI, and CS-BI (0.955, 0.936, and 0.939, respectively), but remain significantly less than 1.0, as stated by (Henseler, 2015). As a result, discriminant validity has been established.

Table (2) Convergent Validity

	Items	Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Destination Image	DI1	0.923	0.939	0.953	0.772
	DI2	0.885			
	DI4	0.826			
	DI5	0.714			
	DI6	0.955			
	DI7	0.945			
Behavioral Intentions	BI1	0.949	0.967	0.972	0.834
	BI2	0.875			
	BI3	0.901			
	BI4	0.935			
	BI5	0.887			
	BI6	0.927			
	BI7	0.917			
Event Experience	EE10	0.902	0.971	0.975	0.814
	EE2	0.904			
	EE3	0.897			
	EE4	0.971			
	EE5	0.857			
	EE6	0.873			
	EE7	0.822			
	EE8	0.969			
	EE9	0.913			
Customer Satisfaction	CS1	0.975	0.977	0.981	0.898
	CS2	0.909			
	CS3	0.966			
	CS4	0.968			
	CS5	0.98			
	CS6	0.883			

Table (3) Discriminant Validity (HTMT ratio)

	Customer Satisfaction	Destination Image	Behavioral Intentions	Event Experience
Customer Satisfaction				
Destination Image	0.936			
Behavioral Intentions	0.939	0.955		
Event Experience	0.887	0.897	0.836	

4.3. Structural Model and Hypotheses Testing

The hypothesized relationships were evaluated using standardized path examination, which examined the effects of independent constructs on dependent variables. The structural model results (see table 4, figure 4) revealed that EE has direct positive impact on CS ($\beta = 0.878$, $P = 0.000$). EE has direct positive impact on DI ($\beta = 0.87$, $P = 0.000$). DI has direct positive impact on BI ($\beta = 0.537$, $P = 0.000$). CS has direct positive impact on BI ($\beta = 0.506$, $P = 0.000$). Thus, H2, H3, H4, and H5 were supported; however, H1 (EE has positive direct impact on BI) ($\beta = -0.09$, $P = 0.179$) was not.

Table (4) Summary of hypotheses and results for direct relationships

Hypothesis	β	SD	T Value	P Value	Study Results	F2
H1: EE -> BI	-0.09	0.067	1.346	0.179	Not supported	0.013
H2: EE -> CS	0.878	0.012	73.244	0.000	supported	3.373
H4: EE -> DI	0.87	0.014	61.252	0.000	supported	3.119
H5: DI -> BI	0.537	0.048	11.151	0.000	supported	0.385
H7: CS -> BI	0.506	0.034	14.723	0.000	supported	0.322

Further, the effect size (f^2) of path coefficients we evaluated. According to Manley et al. (2020), ($F2 \geq 0.35$) has a large effect size; ($F2 0.15: 0.35$) has medium effect size; ($F2 0.02: 0.15$) has small effect size; and ($F2 \geq 0.02$) has no effect. Considering the findings in (Table 5), large effect size was discovered between DI and BI, medium effect sizes were discovered between CS and BI, and no effect size was discovered between EE and BI. Following that, Q2 was evaluated to determine the

predictive relevance of the proposed model, Q2 values should be more than zero in order to be relevant, ($Q2 \geq 0.25$) should be regarded as medium, while ($Q2 \geq 0.50$) is large (Hair et al., 2020). All Q2 values are positive and greater than (0.50) (as shown in Table 5), indicating that the model has acceptable predictive relevance (Peng & Lai, 2012).

Table (5) Blindfolding process Q2 and F2

Constructs	F2	Q2
Customer Satisfaction	0.322	0.687
Destination Image	0.385	0.580
Behavioral Intentions		0.731
Event Experience	0.013	

PLS-SEM evaluates the structural model's predictive capability by evaluating the coefficient value (R^2) of constructs (Hair, et al., 2020). As

Table (6) R^2 and goodness of fit indices

CONSTRUCTS	AVE		R^2
DESTINATION IMAGE	0.772		0.757
BEHAVIORAL INTENTIONS	0.834		0.881
EVENT EXPERIENCE	0.814		
CUSTOMER SATISFACTION	0.898		0.771
AVERAGE SCORES	0.829		0.803
AVE* R^2		0.665	
$\sqrt{AVE * R^2}$ (GOF)		0.815	

shown in (Table 6), the findings, DI ($R^2 = 0.757$); CS ($R^2 = 0.71$); and BI ($R^2 = 0.881$) meet the required level. Since the values are greater than 60%, it demonstrates a very high level of predictability. Furthermore, the goodness of fit (GoF) indices were computed using the adjusted (R^2) values of constructs. The value of (0.815) indicates GoF.

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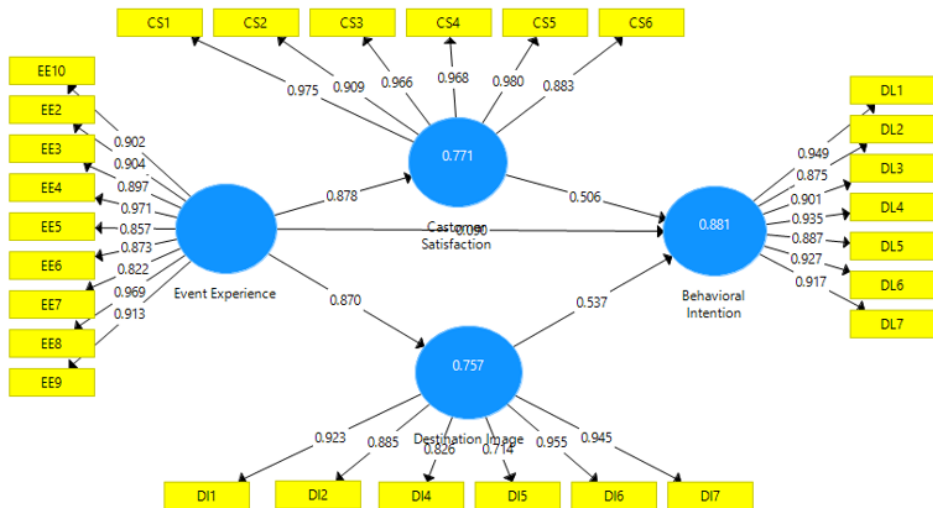


Figure (4) Structural model depicting the item loadings, path co-efficient, and variance of indigenous variables

4.4 Mediation Analysis

A mediation analysis was created to evaluate the role of CS and DI in mediating the relationship between EE and BI. The findings (see table 4) show that the total direct effect of EE on BI is not significant ($\beta = -0.912$, $P = 0.275$), however the total indirect effect is ($\beta = 0.840$, $p = 0.000$). With the inclusion of the mediating variables (CS and DI), the effect of EE on BI is significant (H3, H6, $\beta = 0.445$, 0.468 , $t = 14.966$, 10.757 , $P = 0.000$, 0.000 , respectively) (see table 7). Consequently, H6 and H7 are supported. According to (zhao et al., 2010) mediation analysis procedure, these classifications are determined by looking at both the significance and directions of direct and indirect effects. There is an indirect only effect of EE on BI, thus, CS and ID fully mediate the relationship between EE and BI.

Table (7) Mediation Analysis (specific indirect effects)

Hypothesis	β	SD	T statistics	P value	LL	UL	Effect
H3: EE->CS -> BI	0.445	0.030	14.966	0.000	0.386	0.504	Full Mediation
H6: EE -> DI -> BI	0.468	0.043	10.757	0.000	0.384	0.552	full Mediation

6. Discussion

Tourist destinations and events are inextricably linked. Event experience can influence the improvement of destination image or the building of its brand by transferring elements of event brand to destination or vice-versa. The current study aimed at investigating the structural relationships between the events experience, destination image, tourist satisfaction, and behavioral intention, with an emphasis on the mediating effect of tourist satisfaction and destination image on the relation between event experience and behavioral intentions in the context of the mega event (Expo 2020 Dubai) for a participant country (Egypt) rather than a host one. Except for (H1), all hypotheses proposed in this study were confirmed empirically.

Using the example of Expo 2020 Dubai, this study investigated key aspects of the tourist event experience. Unlike the findings of other studies (e.g., Zarantenello & Schmitt, 2010; Brakus et al., 2009), the empirical findings of this study indicate that there is no direct relationship between event experience and behavioral intention (H1). Although there is no direct effect of event experience on behavioral intention, the total effect is quite pronounced, indicating the relevance of event experience in explaining behavioral intention via the mediating effect of customer satisfaction and destination image. In other words, the relation exists indirectly through the mediating effect of customer satisfaction and destination image. In other words, the relationship exists indirectly as a result of the mediating effects of customer satisfaction and destination image. One possible explanation is that the current study's framework is in the context of a participant country (Egypt) rather than the hosting country (Dubai), where tourists judge and evaluate the destination based on their satisfaction and the image transferred through the event

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experience. Worthwhile, respondents confirmed that their experience was excellent in all aspects, allowing them to sense, feel, think, act, and relate to the Egyptian brand.

The results related to (H2), proposing that event experience has direct positive influence on customer satisfaction. The findings of this study corroborate the results of studies conducted by (Brakus et al, 2009; Morrison & Crane, 2007; Chiou & Shen, 2006). The majority of respondents in this study expressed high levels of satisfaction with all aspects of their experience (the Egyptian pavilion's set up, decorations, shows, services, and activities provided there), the extent that the majority of them concurred that they received a good value worth the considerable time spent in line. Consequently, this reflects Egypt's professionalism and efficiency in organizing and hosting such events.

Regarding (H3), Customer satisfaction has positive direct influence on behavioral intention, the results of this study supported those of earlier research (Rivera, 2022; Grappi & Montanari, 2011; abkar et al., 2010) that found positive correlation between positive tourist experiences and intentions to recommend as well as future intentions to return to and recommend travel destinations to others (Perovic, 2018; Yoon & Uysal, 2005; Kozak & Rimmington, 2000).

With regard to (H4) which asserts a direct positive relationship between event experience and destination image. After engaging the event experience in the model, results of the current study are consistent with and supportive of other investigations (e.g. Walker et al., 2013; Lai & Li, 2012; Chen, 2007; Lee et al., 2005). The investigation of the current study proved that the transferred image about Egypt after experiencing Expo 2020 Dubai has a positive effect on enhancing the Egyptian destination image. Noteworthy that specific statements have been repeated from some respondents (e.g. "Egypt is the mother of the whole world", "Egypt is a well-known country", "I'm in love with Egypt", "Egypt is always in my mind"), yet, the only thing that surprised almost all the respondents was

the modern Egypt and the country's rapid development.

According to (H5): Destination image has direct positive impact on behavioral intention. The findings support those of several studies (e.g. Jin et al., 2015; Moon et al., 2013; Kaplanidou & Gibson, 2010). The majority of the respondents of this study confirmed their willingness to spread a positive word of mouth about Egypt; recommending it as a tourist destination to friends, family and relatives; and finally their intention to visit Egypt soon.

Ultimately, concurring with (Sharma & Nayak, 2019; Kim, 2018) studies, the findings of the current study provided empirical support for the mediating role of customer satisfaction and destination image in the relation between event experience and behavioral intention (H6, H7). More specifically, customer satisfaction and destination image represent a mechanism that underlies the relationship between event experience and behavioral intention. Customer satisfaction is a direct result of a successful event, which in turn causes favorable behavioral intentions. Additionally, a great event experience improves the image of the destination, which in turn results in positive behavioral intention.

7. Conclusion and Implications

Event experience has no direct impact on behavioral intentions in the context of a participant country in a mega event such as Expos; however, it influences the behavioral intentions through the mediating role of customer satisfaction with their experience and the image that was transferred through the event. Particularly, the Egyptian participation in Expo 2020 Dubai was very successful. According to Expo 2020 Dubai's visitors, the Egyptian pavilion was one of the most favorable visited pavilions. Further, it enhanced the visitors' perception about Egypt as it succeeded to restore the traditional image of Egypt in a contemporary context. The investigation of the current study proved that the transferred image about Egypt after experiencing Expo 2020 Dubai has a positive effect on enhancing the Egyptian destination image, where the majority of

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the respondents were not only fascinated with Egypt's great history, but they were surprised by the modern Egypt and the country's rapid development as well. Moreover, they expressed high levels of satisfaction with all aspects of their visit to the Egyptian pavilion. Consequently, most of the tourists from different nationalities were excited and willing to visit Egypt soon specially after the end of Covid-19 Pandemic, say positive word of mouth about Egypt, and recommend it as a pleasant tourist destination to others.

This study addressed the knowledge gap about the relation between the event experience and the behavioral intention towards a participant country in the context of mega events especially Expos. Further, it investigated whether the relationships found in the earlier studies still valid when the event experience was included in the model. It also shed light on Expo 2020 Dubai and particularly the Egyptian participation in the event. Additionally, it explored the role of EXPO 2020 Dubai in predicting the future behavioral intentions towards Egypt as a tourist destination. This study proposed some implications in addition to theoretical contributions. First, Egypt's Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities should seek to host such mega events due to their enormous legacies to the host destination. Second, the Egyptian authorities should pay more attention to MICE tourism because of its potential to significantly influence the development of Egypt's tourism destination and the enhancement of its image in a rapidly changing and developing world. Third, adoption of the critical factors to help in hosting events such as the availability of appropriate infrastructure, safety and security, economic stability, advanced technology, tourism awareness and the limitless governmental support. Fourth, marketers in the tourism authorities in Egypt should try to work on maximizing the positive impacts of the Expo 2020 Dubai and its legacies. Fifth, marketers should also look forward to emerging in new markets (e.g. India, Puerto-Rico) where tourists show good behavioral intentions towards Egypt as a tourist destination.

8. Limitations and Future Research Trends

There are some limitations on this study that ought to be taken into account for future research plans. First, the study adopted quantitative method (questionnaire) to explore the impacts of EXPO 2020 Dubai on the Egyptian tourism and targeted the Egyptian pavilion visitors, future tourism researches can employ qualitative approach targeting people who are in charge in the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities to further determine how EXPO 2020 Dubai affects the Egyptian tourism sector. Second, while this study was conducted to investigate the tourism legacy planning and destination branding associated with Egypt's participation in EXPO 2020 Dubai, similar research can be conducted in other tourist destinations. Third, others can carry out a Google Trends Analysis using a Key Word Search such as “Tourism in Egypt” to determine the past and present use and popularity of Egypt as a tourist destination.

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Appendix A

- EE1 I used my intellect.
- EE2 I acquired new knowledge about Egypt.
- EE3 I was thinking about visiting Egypt.
- EE4 I was excited.
- EE5 I got emotionally recharged.
- EE6 I experienced intimacy.
- EE7 I want to relive this later (talk about it/show pictures).
- EE8 The Egyptian pavilion was different.
- EE9 I was outside my normal life.
- EE10 I thought this was unique.
- EE11 I was active.
- EE12 I did not actively participate.

Appendix B

- CS1 I am very satisfied and happy with visiting the Egyptian Pavilion.
- CS2 Visiting the Egyptian Pavilion did a good job in satisfying my needs.
- CS3 I am very satisfied with the service provided by the Egyptian Pavilion.
- CS4 The shows and the activities provided by the Egyptian Pavilion were very satisfactory.
- CS5 I made the right decision when I decided to visit the Egyptian Pavilion.
- CS6 I got a good value worth the long waiting time.

Appendix C

- DI1 The Egyptian Pavilion in Expo 2020 represents Egypt well.
- DI2 Egypt has a lot of modern attractions in addition to the ancient ones.
- DI3 Egypt has good environment and infrastructure.
- DI4 Egypt has a lot of entertainment and outdoor activities.
- DI5 Egypt is an appealing and pleasant destination.
- DI6 Egypt seems to be a relaxing destination.

DI7 I get surprised with the modern Egypt.

Appendix D

BI1 I intend to visit Egypt soon.

BI2 I consider Egypt one of the first destinations I will visit after Covid-19 Pandemic ends.

BI3 I am willing to pay to travel and visit Egypt.

BI4 Advertising campaigns and offers related to competing destinations are not able to reduce my interest in visiting Egypt.

BI5 I will say positive things about Egypt to other people.

BI6 I will recommend traveling to Egypt to anyone who seeks my advice.

BI7 I intend to recommend visiting the Egyptian Pavilion to other people.

تأثير إكسبو 2020 دبي على النوايا السلوكية تجاه مصر كمقصد سياحي

المستخلص

على الرغم من الآثار المعترف بها منذ فترة طويلة للأحداث الضخمة وقدرتها على تنمية المقاصد السياحية، إلا أن هناك فجوة في المعرفة حول المظاهر الأساسية لتأثيرات هذه الأحداث وخاصة المعارض العالمية للبلدان المشاركة وليس الدول المضيفة. أحد أهم المكاسب الرئيسية المتوقع تحقيقها من المشاركة المصرية في إكسبو 2020 دبي هو الترويج لمصر كواحدة من أهم الوجهات السياحية والأثرية العالمية. وقد اقترحت الدراسة الحالية نموذجًا لفحص تجربة الحدث (EE) لزوار الجناح المصري خلال معرض إكسبو 2020 دبي باستخدام مقياس تجربة الحدث (EES) وقياس مدى تأثيرها على النوايا السلوكية (BI) تجاه الوجهة المصرية من خلال الدور الوسيط لرضاء العملاء (CS) والصورة الذهنية (DI). اعتمدت هذه الدراسة الاستبيان كأسلوب بحث وقد استهدف زوار الجناح المصري في إكسبو 2020 دبي. وتم استخدام نمذجة المعادلات الهيكلية بالمربعات الصغرى الجزئي (PLS-SEM) لتحليل بيانات 393 استمارة صالحة. أظهرت النتائج أن تجربة الحدث لها تأثير إيجابي مباشر على رضاء السائح وصورة المقصد السياحي، وأن رضاء السائحين وصورة المقصد السياحي لهما تأثير مباشر على النية السلوكية. علاوة على ذلك، أثبتت الدراسة أن رضاء العملاء وصورة المقصد السياحي يتوسطان بشكل كامل العلاقة بين تجربة الحدث والنية السلوكية.

الكلمات الدالة: إكسبو 2020 دبي، مصر، تجربة الحدث، صورة المقصد السياحي، رضا العملاء، النية السلوكية.