

STUDENT'S CORNER

FILM-INDUCED TOURISM AMONG STUDENTS – AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

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Abstract

Students and young people travel are a growing market, which is becoming increasingly important for tourism service providers. Film-induced tourism is also a rising form of tourism. However, there is not much research to link students' behavior to film-induced tourism. This research aims at researching two areas of tourism, focusing on students' general awareness of film-induced tourism and their experiences with accidental or intentional encounters with film settings. Furthermore, this paper also includes an analysis of students' interests in various film-related activities, such as visiting places that have become famous as a result of a movie, places where films have been cast, film-theme parks, movie tours or attending film premieres and film festivals.

The study was conducted through an online survey in the form of a questionnaire that included both open and closed-ended questions. A total of 102 answers were collected and evaluated from students at various universities, up to age of 26 years. The interest in film-induced tourism among students is very high (about 88% wanting to participate in film-induced tourism activities), students being particularly keen on visits to places that have become famous as a result of a film (63.7%) and to places where movies were cast (61.5%).

It also emerged that Romania is a little sought-after movie destination, but with a very high potential for growth, especially if the state was involved in promotion.

Keywords:

Film-induced tourism, touristic behavior, travels, film festivals, FIT.

JEL Classification: Z31, Z1

DOI:

Introduction

Student-focused tourism has become one of the fastest growing markets in international tourism, representing over 23% of the annual tourists that travel internationally (WYSE Travel Confederation, n.d.). Research done by the World Youth Student and Educational (WYSE) Confederation and UNWTO has shown that total international market value for tourism among the youth has been almost \$190 billion in 2009. Until 2014, the numbers have risen up to \$286 billion. Based on the UNWTO predictions regarding the global tourism market value, we can estimate that in 2020, almost 370 million young travelers will spend in total over \$400 billion (WYSE Travel Confederation, n.d.).

Young people generally have little money, but they got a lot of time on their hands, and thus stay more than the average tourist on their destination. The research conducted in 2014 by WYSE Travel Confederation Millennial Traveler has shown that millennials spend on average about \$2160 (or 1591 EUR) during their main travel. By comparison, the average per trip for international tourists in 2013 was \$1097 (950 EUR). Because their younger counterparts usually take more trips, they end up spending two thirds more. A more important aspect that ought to be considered is the lifetime value that young travelers deliver to the place they visit, as they tend to come back, as adults, to the attractions they visited.

In a survey on the behavior and motivation to travel of students from eight different countries in Asia, Africa, America and Europe, it was shown that young people are looking for experiences rather than leisure activities. During their journey, they like to engage in a wide range of activities, from sightseeing, to various types of entertainment and sports (Richards and Wilson, 2003). Film-induced tourism is an example of experience-related activity. This relatively new form of tourism involves visits to places where popular movies have been shot or to

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famous places presented in movies, theme-movie parks or attending cinematographic releases and film festivals, due to the fact that a destination is presented in a movie (Beeton, 2005).

Walaiporn has briefly mentioned the reasons why these places connected to movies have such a high success rate among tourists. Watching a movie is an intangible visual experience, but by visiting movie places, some of the intangible cinematic experience can be turned into something more real. It gives to movie-generated tourists a sense of involvement and identification with their favorite movie. In other words, visiting a place featured in a movie or a shooting venue gives people the opportunity to recreate some of the feelings they have experienced while watching a movie and to relive them, that is, a chance to escape a fantastic world for a short period of time (Walaiporn, 2008).

It is also interesting to note that most of the films that generate tourism belong mainly to the genre of fantasy or romance, such as “The Lord of the Rings”, “Star Wars”, “Sound of Music”, “Harry Potter” and “Twilight”, while comedy or action movies do not seem to attract so much movie tourists. This implies that movie-generated tourists are looking for a “fantastic / fictitious” experience in the movie-related place (Roesch, 2009). It can also be seen that most of the films that are of interest to tourists are addressed to a relatively young audience, such as the films mentioned above (O’Connor, 2010).

1. Short introduction in film-induced tourism

Film-induced tourism is a relatively recent phenomenon that has grown over the past 30 years, largely due to the general increase in international travel and the growing influence of the media. Roesch (2009) showed that most tourists met at one point in their travels a place linked to a movie or another, usually unintentional, for example, when a tourist guide indicated a place that was featured in a movie or when the attraction has already been featured on the screen, such as the Empire State Building or the Eiffel Tower. As a result, film-induced tourism is taking place in locations that have attracted tourists for a long time, such as Salzburg in Austria; but for other cinema-related tourist destinations it was originally a movie that triggered tourism in the area, for example Mount Sunday or the Hobbiton shooting locations of “Lord of the Rings” in New Zealand (Roesch, 2009). O’Connor pointed out that film-induced tourism has the potential to reach new and emerging markets, for example, youth travel (O’Connor, 2010).

Nowadays, some countries are aware of the impact of film-induced tourism, and they integrate cinema tourism into marketing by producing a movie or relying on promotional campaigns around themes presented in a popular film, such as the link between “Lord of the Rings” movies and “100% Pure New Zealand” campaign (Roesch, 2009). Some countries, namely Britain, New Zealand and the Bahamas, are actively seeking to attract filmmakers (Walaiporn, 2008).

When comparing box-office successes with less successful films, it should be noted that not only successful projects such as the Lord of the Rings can generate tourism, but even box-office failures as long as they benefit from a lot of advertising during filming (Roesch, 2009). For example, tourism has increased, compared to the previous year, on the Greek island of Kefalonia after shooting “Captain Corelli’s Mandolin”, despite the fact that the film was a box office failure (Walaiporn, 2008). During the filming of this movie, all the hotels on the island were fully booked for the four months of the shooting. Immediately after the launch of the film in 2001, Kefalonia Island had a 15-20% increase in tourism compared to 2000. In 2002, tourism growth was another 6% compared to 2001, after which the number of tourists remained the same until 2004 when it started to fall again (Hudson and Ritchie, 2006).

The examples are numerous. Some of the most analyzed films in terms of the effect on tourism are summarized in Table 1.

Table no 1: Movie effects on destination popularity

Movie	Location	Impact on number of visitors
Braveheart	Wallace Monument, Scotland	300% growth in first year after launch
Captain Corelli’s Mandolin	Kefalonia, Greece	50% growth
Field of Dreams	Iowa	35000 visitors in 1991 and constant growth since then
Four Weddings and a Funeral	The Crown Hotel, Amersham, England	Fully booked for at least 3 years
Harry Potter	Diverse locations in the UK	50% growth or more
Mission Impossible 2	National Park, Sydney	200% growth in 2000
Notting Hill	Kenwood House, England	10% growth in one month
Pride and Prejudice	Lyme Park, England	150% growth
Sense and Sensibility	Saltram House, England	39% growth

The Beach	Thailand	22% growth in youth tourism in 2000
Troy	Canakkale, Turkey	73% growth

Source: Hudson S. and Ritchie, J. R. B. (2006b), Horrigan, D. (2009)

Film and television are major forces in shaping the destination image and encouraging tourism. More and more academic papers show how film and television directly attract tourists or are embedded in marketing campaigns of tourist destinations.

Movies can also generate tourism in urban areas. Some hotels that were used as a movie décor included this in their advertising, such as *The Crown Hotel* in England, where „Four Weddings and a Funeral” was shot, and *Park Hyatt Hotel* in Tokyo, one of the main venues of „Lost in Translation” (Walaiporn, 2008). In Salzburg, Vila von Trapp, which plays a major role in „Sound of Music”, has been transformed into a hotel. Tourists can now stay in the former rooms of the real von Trapp family. The villa also hosts a weekly gourmet show, namely a *Sound of Music dinner*, and has become a popular place for weddings due to the family and marriage theme the film promotes (Roesch, 2009).

Visitor profile varies depending on the locations and themes of the movies. For example, Salzburg, the location of *Sound of Music*, with family and marriage theme, attracted more female visitors, while the *Star Wars* set attracted more male visitors (Roesch, 2009).

The age range was surprisingly wide, stretching from young travelers to retirees. Here, Roesch (2009) identified three large age groups: the first group, called *Gappies*, consists of 'backpackers' who took a year off before or after the college. They are around 20 years old, traveling on a tight budget, and have more time available than other groups. The second group, *Revivals*, includes people aged 40-50, who frequently travel with their partner or children to see the locations of the films; they have less time, but more money. The third group, *Initials*, consists of people aged 60 and over (Roesch, 2009).

2. Research methodology

This paper focuses on research into student behavior in travel and film-induced tourism. The main objectives are: a) identification of elements of tourism behavior of students, in general; b) identifying students' interest in films; c) identifying the interest in practicing forms of tourism generated by the film; d) identifying interest in film tourism in Romania (places and festivals). This paper is based on a quantitative analysis. The questionnaire used in this research is based on a questionnaire inspired by the studies of Wang (2007) on tourists attracted to film locations in Great Britain. It contained 23 questions in four sections, corresponding to the four abovementioned objectives.

The first section deals with the behavior of tourists and aims to find out what activities students perform at their destination, how often they travel and with whom. The options for responding to the question about the activities that the participants have taken during the last trips are a brief description of those popular activities among the tourist students that were listed in Richards and Wilson's 2003 report on student traveling behavior.

The second part of the questionnaire refers to student habits about watching movies. There is a short section containing two questions. The first question is how many movies watch on average per week, and the second question is about their favorite film genre. The gender question was chosen because, as is apparent from the literature, Roesch (2009) has found that most of the films that generated tourism belong to genres fantasy, science fiction or romance.

The third section of the questionnaire is about film-induced tourism. The purpose of the research is to find out whether students are aware of the existence of tourism generated by the film and whether they have ever been involved in this activity. This section includes questions to find out if those students who are involved in film-generated tourism are spontaneous or dedicated movie tourists.

The last section of the questionnaire seeks to find the degree of knowledge of film-generated tourism in Romania and if students believe that Romania could promote itself as a tourist destination on this niche. This aspect is still very little researched in the studies of Romanian researchers.

Data collection was conducted online using a questionnaire uploaded on Google Docs. The link hosting the questionnaire was distributed by e-mail, Facebook and WhatsApp to students from the Faculty of Business and Tourism in the 2nd year, but also to students from the *Politehnica* University of Bucharest, Bucharest University or from the „Carol Davila” University of Medicine and Pharmacy. The message that accompanied the link presented the conditions for participation in the study (filters): the respondents were students and were at the maximum age of 26 years (according to Richards and Wilson).

The link was shared on the 13th of March 2018, and responses were collected by March 17, 2018, when 102 responses were registered. Responses have been taken from the Google Form and processed in Excel.

3. Results

Of the 102 respondents, 77.5% were female and the remaining male, which means 79 women and 23 men, which can be explained by the large number of respondents from the Faculty of Business and Tourism, where it is known to predominate the female gender. Of the respondents, 81 were living in the urban area (79.4%), the remaining 21 (20.6%) having the residence on the rural one.

Other socio-demographic variables have not been investigated, this research being based on previous studies showing that there are no significant differences in the tourist behavior of students aged up to 26.

Section 1: Touristic behavior of students

In terms of student touristic behavior, the findings of this study were consistent with the results of previous studies on the behavior of students in trips mentioned in the literature, namely The Power of Youth Travel report (n.d.) and the conclusions of Richards and Wilson (2003). Over 97% of respondents believe that traveling is either very important or important, while no participant has chosen the "not at all" option.

Regarding the number of trips (longer than one day) taken in the last 12 months, 52% took 4 or more trips and 48% took between 1-3 trips. Therefore, all students interviewed have taken at least one trip in the last 12 months. Students travel mainly for holiday and pleasure (92.2%) and to visit family or friends (4.9%). In terms of travel style, most prefer to travel with friends (70.6%) or family (26.5%).

In accordance with the conclusions of Richards and Wilson (2003), it was found that students undertook a wide range of activities during their journeys. The most popular activities related to the destination were: visiting tourist attractions (74.5%), entertainment (club, pub, café, etc.) (54.9%), nature activities (hiking, horse riding, climbing, etc.) (46.1%), relaxation (spa, beach) (45.1%). Similarly, shopping (42.2%) and cultural activities (30.4%) can be regarded as popular among students traveling, and participation in events at destination has raised the interest of 17.6% of respondents. More than 90% of the interviewed students have done these activities on their own and only 9.8%, during a guided tour.

The most used source of information to design the holidays was the internet (for 61.8% of respondents). The following sources of information were: friends / relatives (23.5%) and previous visits (13.7%). Classic tourist guides are not a source of information for students.

Section 2: Student habits about watching movies

Regarding the students' watching movies habits, 65.7% of them watch on average about 1-2 movies per week and 20.6% watch between 3-4 movies per week. Only 5 participants surveyed said they were watching between 5 and 6 films a week, and nine of them did not regularly watch a movie. As for the students' favorite genres, the most popular (32.4%) were the romance / drama, followed by action / thriller films (28.4%). The percentage of students who love fantasy and SF films is 12.8%. A similar percentage was recorded for the mystery / horror films (12.7%). The comedies accounted for a percentage of around 6%. The last notable category is that of historical films, with a 3.9 percent.

It is noticed that romantic / drama movies along with fantasy and SF, cinematic genres that Roesch claims to inspire most of the film-generated tourism, amounted to 45.2%, an important percentage in the context investigated.

Section 3: Students and film-induced tourism

Reaching the questions about film tourism, study participants were asked if they ever heard of this type of tourism, to learn about their awareness of this type of tourism. Thus, 50 out of 102 respondents (49%) have heard about film-induced tourism before completing this study.

Of the respondents, 16 (15.7%) said they had encountered one or more of the occasional films in their travels. When asked to indicate where they arrived, all 16 respondents detailed their responses, most of them indicating Peleş Castle (most likely referring to the 2017 film, *A Prince for Christmas*), Dubrovnik (*Games of Thrones*) and Petra (*Indiana Jones*).

Figures 1 and 2 show the percentage of respondents who accidentally and intentionally visited a film-related place.

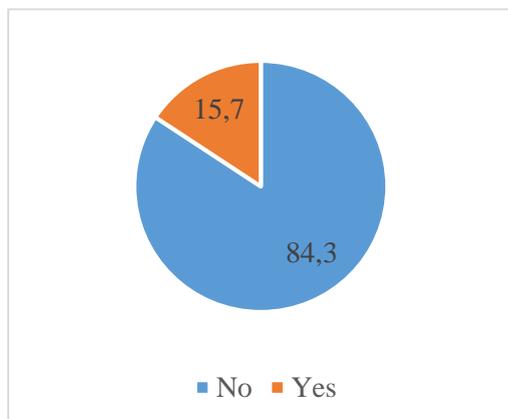


Figure no.1: Percentage of students who have accidentally visited a film-related place

Source: by author, based on research results

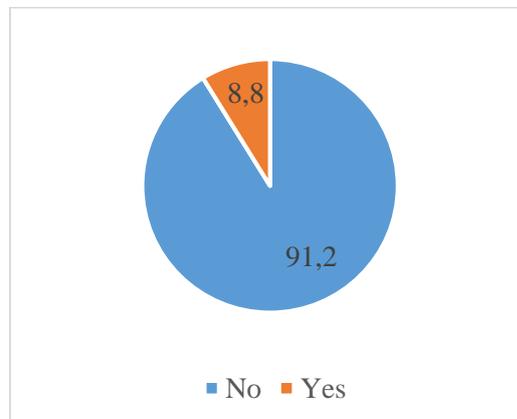


Figure no. 2: Percentage of students who deliberately visited a film-related place

Source: by author, based on research results

It can be seen that the percentage of tourists dedicated to the cinematographic phenomenon is quite low. In fact, only 9 respondents (8.8%) traveled to a certain place because they have seen it in a movie. The places mentioned were: Ait Benhaddou (*Game of Thrones*), Jerusalem and Nazareth, tour at the *Castel film* Studio in Romania (*Ghost Rider 2*), and New York.

By comparing the number of tourists who have visited a place related to a movie with the number of tourists who intentionally arrived at such destinations, it can be seen that the percentages are quite small in both situations, but for tourists who have intentionally visited, the percentage is just over half the percentage of those who have reached a movie destination by accident. This result is somewhat close to Roesch's statement (2009), which has shown that there are far more chances for passionate tourists to reach a film destination by chance rather than deliberately.

In general, it has been found that film destinations are not a major factor in student travel decisions. Some students, however, have been sufficiently influenced by a movie to travel to their favorite destination, suggesting a potential to take into account this form of tourism among young people in general.

Figure 3 shows respondents' answers to the fact that they have carried out cinematographic activities classified by Beeton (2005), such as visiting places that have become famous as a result of a movie, places where movies have been shot, theme-related parks movies, movie themed tours, or cinematographic premieres and film festivals.

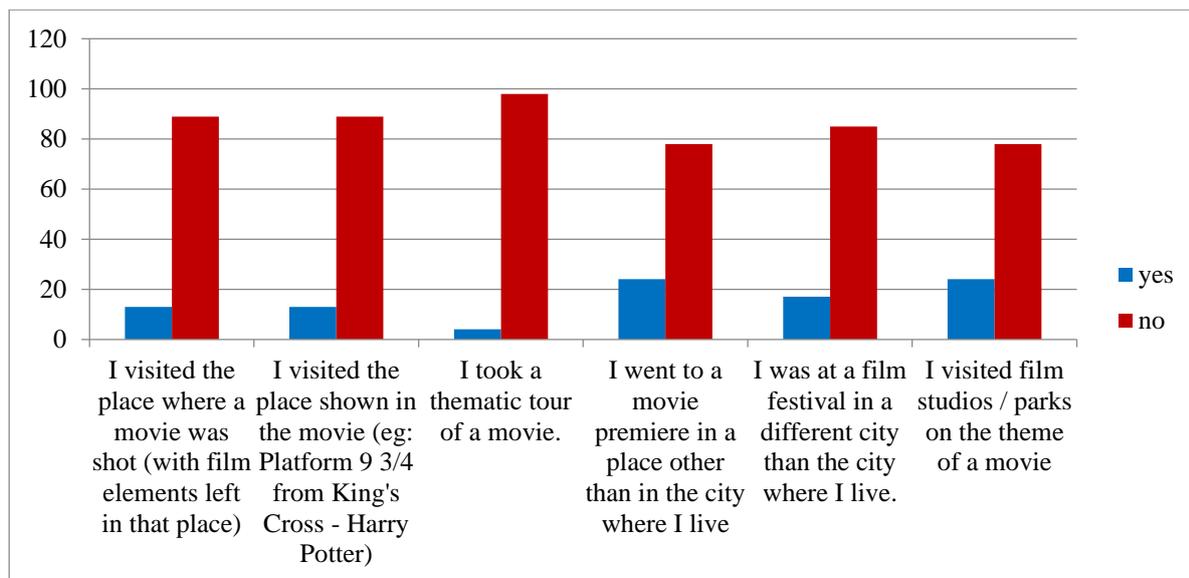


Figure no. 3: Activities already carried out, related to cinematographic tourism

Source: by author, based on research results

The purpose of this question was to find out what film-induced tourism activities were carried out by the students. Taking into account the fact that several answers could be chosen, if we sum up the answers (95, i.e. below the number of respondents) it can be noticed that there are students who did not carry out any of these activities. However, among those who did some of these activities, taking part in the premiere of a movie, in a place other than in the city they live in, and visits to film studios / parks on the theme of a movie, each, a score of 23.53 %. Participating in a film festival in a different city than the city where they live is a practice of 16.67% of respondents. Visiting places where movies were shot and places presented in films recorded 12.7 percent. The smallest percentage was registered related to a thematic movie-tour (3.9%).

The situation changes significantly as regards the willingness of the respondents to carry out the activities they were interviewed above. Thus, 88.2% of them would like to do such activities if they could. In order of preferences, activities would be as can be seen in Figure 4.

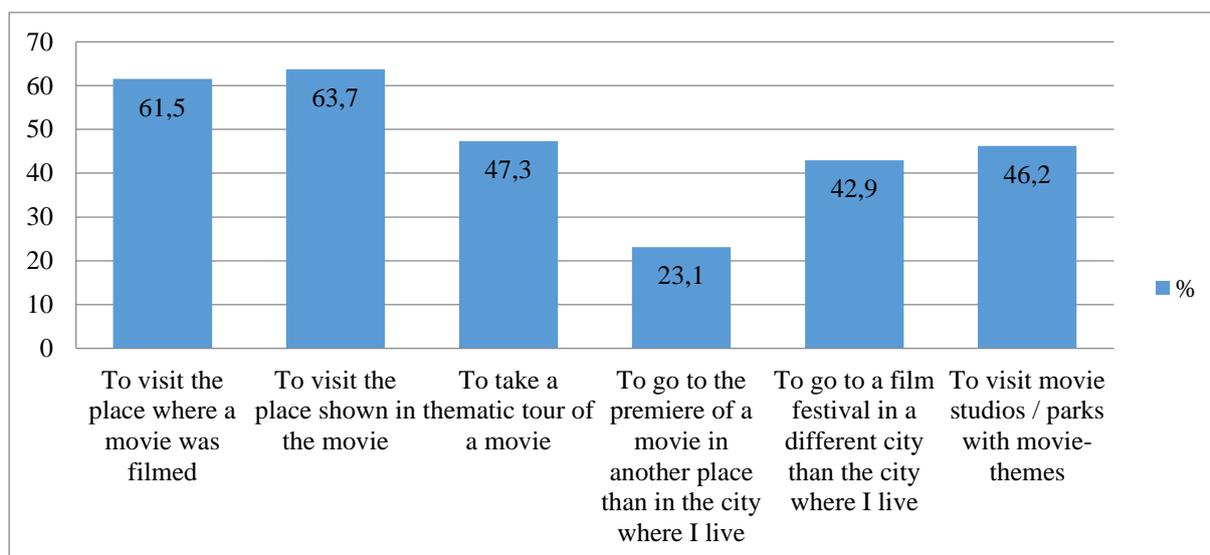


Figure no. 4: Activities related to film-induced tourism that students would perform

Source: by author, based on research results

Note that most students showed interest in visiting places presented in films (63.7%) and places where movies were set (61.5%). These are activities that most of them have never done before. Therefore, it can be said that most students have never visited famous film sites, but would be interested in doing so. The same applies to a thematic

tour of a movie: only 3.9% did so, as shown previously in Figure 3, but 47.3% would be interested in this activity. A similar situation is also encountered with visits to film studios / parks with the theme of a film, 46.2% desiring such activities, although only 23.53% of them have already visited such places. A similar analysis can be made in connection with participation in film festivals (42.9% would like to participate, while 16.67% have already participated). It should be noted that participation in cinematographic premieres would remain about the same share of interest, around 23% of respondents.

Asked if they had a foreign film in their minds to visit certain places related to that film, the respondents indicated mainly the following three films: *Game of Thrones* (14 responses), *Harry Potter* (14 responses) and *Lord of the Rings* (8 answers). It can be seen that these three films are primarily fantasy, which supports Roesch's thesis (2009). Moreover, these choices correspond to students' wishes to visit places presented in films and places where films were shot, as shown in Figure 4.

Section 4: Student interest in film-induced tourism in Romania

Asked if they had in mind a Romanian film because of which they wish to visit a certain location, the interviewed students responded for the most part that they did not have such an example (78.43%). Of the few examples of Romanian films that would motivate travelers in certain places, most of them are historical or vintage films (*The Moromete Family*, *The Dacians*, *Păcală*, *Mircea*, *Drumul oaselor - Road of Bones*) and some newer productions (*Aferim*, *Selfie 69* and *Lie me beautiful!*).

A possible conclusion is that Romanian films are not attractive enough from the point of view of the motivation to travel, since the situation is very different for foreign films, as shown at the end of the previous section.

Regarding the two Romanian film festivals they were asked about, 42.15% of the students indicated that they had information about the Transylvania International Film Festival (TIFF), while about the *Alpin Film Festival*, only 16.67%. One possible explanation may be that *Alpin* is a younger and specific festival on film and mountain culture, which is a niche even narrower than film tourism in general. However, the interest in such events can be appreciated as high, as nearly 65% of respondents participated or would like to participate in these festivals.

A similar percentage (63.7%) can also be seen in relation to the respondents' opinion regarding the international promotion of Romania as a tourist destination generated by the film. This may suggest the confidence that students have in the natural, cultural and historical potential that Romania could capitalize on in films, as a result of relatively few international films set in Romania as well.

In terms of promoting Romania as a film-induced tourism destination, only 50 respondents have tried to provide an answer. Of these, 10% believed that the state should assume this responsibility, 8% believed that the Ministry of Culture and 6% the Ministry of Tourism. If we consider that the two ministries mentioned are also state institutions, it follows that the main choice made by the respondents is related to the role of the state.

Conclusions and suggestions

Analyzing the results of the research, it can be said that almost half of the interviewed students knew, before participating in this study, the concept of film-induced tourism. However, while these students have shown an awareness of this form of tourism, only a few of them have deliberately engaged in this type of tourism (8.8%). However, a nearly double percentage of students became film tourists during at least one of their travels, all respondents succeeding in remembering their exact places and films. A first conclusion is that the incidental film tourism is more frequent among student travelers, being the starting point for awareness-raising campaigns which should combine in an inspired way youth tourism and the cinematographic industry.

Incidental film tourism refers to both rural and urban areas. However, the chance to encounter a film spot happens to be particularly high in large cities where many movies are filmed every year, such as New York, London, Rome, and Venice.

As for the various activities associated with film-induced tourism, the participation in the premiere of a film in a place other than the city where they live and visits to film studios / parks on the theme of a movie were the most preferred of the activities already carried out. They were followed by a film festival in a different city than the city where they lived, visiting places where movies were filmed and places featured in movies, and the lowest percentage was registered for participation in a thematic tour related to a film.

However, when asked about their interest in film-induced tourism, 88.2% of students responded that they would be interested in pursuing a cinematic tourism activity in the future. Most students showed interest in visiting places featured in movies and places where movies were filmed. These are activities that most of them have never done before. Therefore, it can be said that most students have never visited famous film sites, but would be interested

in doing so. A comparison of the number of students who have already pursued cinematographic activity and the number of those who would like to engage in such activities can be analyzed in table no. 2.

Table no. 2: Comparison between the activities already carried out by the students and those desired in the future (number of answers)

Activity	Carried out	Desired	Growth (how many times)
I have visited a place where a movie was shot (with film elements left in that place).	13	56	4.31
I have visited the place shown in the movie (e.g. 9 ¾ Platform from King's Cross Train Station - Harry Potter).	13	58	4.46
I have taken a thematic tour of a movie.	4	43	10.75
I went to a movie premiere in a place other than in the city where I live.	24	21	0.875
I was at a film festival in a different city than the city where I live.	17	39	2.29
I visited film studios / film-theme parks.	24	42	1.75
TOTAL ANSWERS	95	259	2.73

Source: by author, based on research results

It is noted that the number of responses to the activities that they would like to carry out if they had the opportunity is much higher than the number of responses to the activities already carried out, totaling 2.73 times. The only exception is participation in the premiere of a movie, in a place other than in the city where they live. It may have been an activity that has been accessible so far, to which the students have already gone unimpeded.

This comparison can be very useful in promoting film-related places, so as to increase the awareness of the tourist attractions that can be visited in different tourist areas or potential tourist areas. Considering that students are primarily informed through the internet, the existence of dedicated blogs could be a valuable source of information to get (for example, *Aventurescu* blog model).

The results of this research, however, have to be considered taking into account certain limits, since any type of research is subject to limitations. The main limits were the short data collection, sampling method and sample size, to which may be added the need for more detailed processing of collected data. I want to investigate more the influence of the socio-demographic factors on the students' tourist behavior and, in particular, on the link with the film-induced tourism. That is why I want to continue this research in the years to come. I also appreciate that a qualitative research is needed to understand why students have a particular interest in film tourism activities and to analyze the explanations for which most students did not do these activities, even if they claim to be interested in these. It would also be interesting to find out if the incidental visit to a movie-related place has an impact on the global vacation experience for student tourists.

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