

How film and television programs can promote tourism and increase the competitiveness of tourist destinations

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ABSTRACT

This paper outlines the correlation between the power of film (both movies and television series) as a motivational and image-making tool and the attractiveness of tourism destinations. In the light of this relationship, our research analyses the phenomenon of film-induced tourism. Even this phenomenon has been recognized and reported, very few comprehensively studies of it have been published. The evidence that has been put forward to date has mostly been anecdotal, pointing towards the capacity of popular films and television series to attract tourists, in the form of enthusiastic fans and interested audience members.

Despite the fact that statistics concerning directly the impact that films have had on tourism are limited, there are still some remarkable figures. Countries like UK, Australia, and New Zealand have an increasingly interest in studying and developing the film-induced tourism. Given the existence of this type of tourism and the potentially significant economic value of this strand of tourism to the economy, understanding the drivers of film-induced tourism and exploiting its effect are crucial issues to comprehend. This paper evaluates a number of key questions and provides a stronger insight into the nature of productions which can induce tourism and recommends ways in which this relation can be strategically maximized from the economic and cultural point of view. In the current context of decreasing the Romanian tourism and film industry development, approaching together their augmentation can represents a valid solution for both industries.

KEYWORDS

film-induced tourism, tourism imaging, tourist destination competitiveness, economic impact of filmmaking tourists

JEL Classification

L83, M39

Introduction

This paper has as a main objective the attempt to identify the dimension of academic interest in this new type of tourism and to be aware of the consequences of this kind of touristic activities. The research method is mainly based on secondary sources, given being the fact that Romania doesn't collect such statistics.

Film and television tourism (or "screen tourism") is a phenomenon which has long been acknowledged and reported, but few in-depth studies of it have been published. Within the last decade film-induced tourism has gained increasing attention from academics and the industry alike. While most research has focused on the tourism-inducing effects of film productions, not much has been written about the film location tourists themselves.

The evidence that has been put forward to date has mostly been anecdotal, pointing towards the ability of popular films and television programs to attract tourists, in the form of fervent fans and interested audience members.

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Some of these anecdotes relate to major blockbusters, at the same time as others are specific to smaller “cult” screen products. But despite the anecdotes and certainty that screen tourism does indeed exist, a number of questions about the nature of this effect remain to be adequately answered. These include:

- What kinds of film/television programs successfully convert audiences into tourists?
- How long does this effect last – only as long as the film/program is popular, or does it have a more permanent impact on tourism?
- Which locations benefit from the tourism effect? The shooting locations or associated sites?
- How can screen tourism be effectively encouraged and managed in a strategic, joined-up manner?
- What should be considered best practice for film and tourism professionals working together?

Given the existence of screen tourism and the potentially significant economic value of this strand of tourism to the economy, understanding the drivers of screen tourism and harnessing its effect are crucial issues to understand.

Why does the tourism effect of film and television need to be studied? Films and television programs are made for a variety of purposes which rarely include attracting tourists to a particular area. However, understanding how audiovisual content draws audiences as tourists can help us to understand the position of film and television in the broader landscape of cultural attraction.

Literature Review

While there is a substantial amount of literature on screen-induced tourism, there has been very few, if any, comprehensive and national-level reviews of the economic impact of screen-induced tourism to date. The existing literature typically falls into one of four main categories. These are as follows:

- **journalistic material**, which tends to be promotional in nature, and whose assessment of a location shoot's impact on local tourism is frequently anecdotal. This type of material includes articles such as “The Miss Potter Effect”, published in *The Guardian* in December 2006 (Wainwright, Martin, “The Miss Potter effect: Visitors head for the Lakes on the trail of Beatrix; Economic boom expected as landscape stars alongside actors on the big screen”, in *The Guardian*, 4 December 2006, available from: <http://books.guardian.co.uk/news/articles/0,,1963604,00.html>) or “Brazil fears for tourism in wake of latest Hollywood horror”, in *The Guardian*, December 2006 (Phillips, Tom, “Brazil fears for tourism in wake of latest Hollywood horror”, in *The Guardian*, 4 December 2006, available at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/brazil/story/0,,1963335,00.html>)
- **local reports**, which typically include surveys and statistics for individual cases, rather than providing an overview of the larger phenomenon of screen-induced tourism. An example of this type of literature is the “Economic Impact Assessment for the Filming of the Last Samurai in Taranaki”, commissioned by Venture Taranaki and partners following the conclusion of filming in the region (2004.)
- **other reports**, which benchmark predominantly large and high-visibility international productions, as in the case of Mintel’s October 2003 report on “The Beach” for instance (“Film Tourism International: Case Study of the Beach”, Mintel International Group Ltd, October 2003.)
- **academic papers and publications**, typically in the form of theoretical papers based on ongoing research into drivers of tourism. While these might include surveys, these are typically geared towards supporting or disproving a particular theoretical perspective, rather than providing concrete assessments of tourism’s economic impacts on a broad scale. Examples of such academic material include “Material Geographies of Filmmaking and the Rural” (Pratt, Andy C., “Material geographies of filmmaking and the rural”, in *Cinematic Countrysides*, Fish, R. (Ed), (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005).) “Re-Imaging Australia: Crocodile Dundee Overseas,”(Crofts, S., “Re-imagining Australia: Crocodile Dundee Overseas”, in *Continuum: The Australian Journal of Media and Culture*; 2(2) 1989.) *Film-Induced Tourism* (Beeton, Sue, “Film Induced Tourism”, of the *Aspects of Tourism* 25 series, Chris Cooper, Michael Hall, & Dallen Timothy (Eds.), (Clevedon; Buffalo; Toronto: Channel View Publications, 2005).) or “What’s the Story in Balamory?”: The Impacts of a Children’s TV Program on Small Tourism Enterprises on the Isle of Mull, Scotland” (Connell, Joanne,

“‘What’s the Story in Balamory?’: The Impacts of a Children’s TV Programme on Small Tourism Enterprises on the Isle of Mull, Scotland”, in *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 13(3) 2005) for instance.

Nowadays, the interest in film-induced tourism is increasing and this trend is shown by the number of different researches done by now. For example, Bolan and Davidson (2005); Busby and Klug (2001); Riley and van Doren (1992); Tooke and Baker (1996); Urry (1990) have studied the film-induced tourism as a destination motivator. Macionis, Singh and Best (2004) have focused their attention on film-induced tourist while Beeton (2005); Bordelon and Dimanche (2003); Connell (2005); Croy and Walker (2003); Kim and Richardson (2003); Mordue (2001, 2009) have been concentrated on the impact of film induced tourism on both tourists and residents. Connell (2005); Frost (2004); Grihault (2003); Hudson and Ritchie (2006); Morgan and Pritchard (1998, 2004) have been preoccupied by film-induced destination marketing activities.

Findings

The main ideas interesting for us are the following:

- It has been widely recognized in tourism literature that destination image greatly influences tourist destination choice.
- The more favourable the image of the destination, the greater the likelihood of being selected as a destination choice.
- Film can provide knowledge of certain aspects of the country such as nature, culture and people which result in the construction of the attitudes towards the country.

One of the major economic benefits of film induced tourism is that it can bring higher revenues of the local community. Film-induced tourism has the potential to revitalize rural communities and increase tourism in urban centers. The visitors of film locations wish on-site experience which can tell them an emotional story.

Recent researches suggest that films can have a strong influence not only on decision making for short-term holiday, but affect tourism revenues and long-term prosperity of destinations.

The film-induced tourism’s growing popularity is mainly due to increasing international travel and to entertainment industry development.

Schofield (1996) stated that film-induced tourism will quickly become a fashion, because the public is very interested to have real experiences where movies are made. When people seek for touristic objective seen on screen, it means that we are dealing with film-induced tourism (Busby & Klug, 2001).

Forms and features of film-induced tourism

The researching of scientific studies made on this new type of tourism emphasizes many forms of film-induced tourism as follows (adapted from Busby & Klug, 2001):

1. Film-induced tourism - as part of a larger holiday – the tourist visit a film location or take part in a video tour without having previous knowledge about the destination.
2. Film-induced tourism – as a main purpose of a special interest - the location and holiday booking is made as a result of its image in film.
3. Film-induced tourism – as strength of the holiday – the beauty of natural landscapes, historical sites, and actors can serve as points of maximum interest.
4. Film-induced tourism –as a place where it is assumed that the shooting took place- the filming sites are visited, even if the film presents a different reality.
5. Film-induced tourism - as part of a romantic holiday - tourists visit places shown in movies as special, warm, full of love.

6. Film-induced tourism - as a reason to escape - tourists want to temporarily escape from the reality of everyday life.

Identifying these forms of tourism induced by film and their features can be the starting point in designing the touristic supply dedicated to the tourists potentially interested in visiting film locations.

Benefits of film tourism

The previous international studies have indicated that film induced tourism could have different types of positive impacts.

For instance, one of the major economic benefits that film-induced tourism can bring to the local community is constant tourism revenue. Film locations can be all-year, all-weather attractions which improves problems of seasonality in the tourism industry.

There are a number of studies that reveal the increasing visitation numbers at film locations.

The Impact of Film on Visitor Number

Table 1

Film	Location	Impact of visitor number
Braveheart	Wallace Monument, Scotland	300% increase a year after release
Captain Corelli's Mandolin	Cephalonia, Greece	50% increase
Field of Dreams	Iowa	35,000 visits in 1991 and steady increase every year
Four Weddings and a Funeral	The Crown Hotel, Amersham, England	Fully booked for at least 3 years
Harry Potter	Various locations in UK	Increase of 50% or more in all filmed locations
Mission Impossible 2	National Park, Sydney	200% increase in 2000
Notting Hill	Kenwood House, England	10% increase in one month
Pride and Prejudice	Lyme Park, England	150% increase
Sense and Sensibility	Saltram House, England	39% increase
The Beach	Thailand	22% increase in youth market in 2000
Troy	Canakkale, Turkey	73% increase

Source: Hudson & Ritchie (2006)

Another significant benefit of the film tourism is that it increases the cultural value for the film location. Many heritage sites that serve as film locations gain fame after the film release because these places obtain specific meaning through film narration. Without film storylines, a castle or a stately home may not be distinguishable from others.

Film can augment the destination image and increase the awareness of the host city. Previous research (Kim & Richardson, 2003) suggests that those who are exposed to the film have more favorable destination image towards destinations featured through films than those who are not exposed to films.

Television series are even more influential since they can constantly emphasize the appeal of the destination that builds top-of-the-mind awareness.

But the impact of film-induced tourism is not only positive. There are several consequences that have to be carefully analyzed and, as it could be possible, reduced. For instance, crowding and

environmental impact are, maybe, the most undesirable negative impact of film-induced tourism. Other negative consequences could be exploitation of local population and increased prices.

Film-induced Tourism in Practice

One of the effective strategies to induce film tourists is joint campaigns with the film industry. England is a good example in this sense. Approximately 28 million visitors visit Britain each year after viewing the country on the screen (Kim et al., 2008).

The Australian Tourism Commission (ATC) worked in partnership with Disney on 'Finding Nemo', being the first organisation who promotes a destination through an animated film.

Movie maps have also been widely used to promote film locations of the destination. VisitBritain produced a movie map highlighting over 200 filmed locations across Britain which presented film-related places. These materials have rapidly become very successful.

Conclusion

This paper tries to provide a view of film-induced tourism and calling for more empirical studies into this area.

Also, it tries to reveal the benefits of film-induced tourism in promoting locations to the wider audience than traditional targeted tourism promotional campaigns.

Film tourism marketing strategies have been successfully employed in the leading film destinations such as United Kingdom, United States, New Zealand and Australia. Lessons learned from these countries can benefit many destinations that intend to use films to promote existing or new attractions.

The success of film locations rely on the success of films. Some film locations are much more successful than others in terms of the number of tourist arrivals.

Although films provide many positive impacts for the destination in terms of economic, cultural values and destination awareness and image, drawbacks of the film should also be carefully considered. This could be undesirable consequences such as loss of privacy and the difficulty of accessing local facilities for local people, traffic congestion and the destruction of the natural environment (Hudson & Ritchie, 2006). Another important issue includes the residents' attitudes towards the influx of film producing crews and the large number of tourists to the film locations.

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