

THE ATTITUDE OF ROMANIAN TOURISTS TOWARDS FILM-INDUCED TOURISM

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Abstract

The present study aims at identifying the interest of Romanian tourists for film-induced tourism. For this purpose, an online research was carried out between 5 October and 4 November 2017. The data was collected from 463 participants through a self-administrated questionnaire.

In a word, our research has highlighted that 82% of respondents are interested in practicing this type of tourism and the natural landscapes presented in movies seem to be the main reason (44%). Most respondents (83%) believe that such a vacation should last between 3 and 6 days. The interest for practicing film-induced tourism is primarily influenced by the geographic region where respondents are living and by their place of residence (urban/rural).

The main limitation of this study is that the sample was not representative at national level, but nevertheless, some interesting results were obtained. These results could be used, for example, to promote domestic tourism.

Keywords: Film-induced tourism, FIT, film-tourists' behavior, Romanian tourists, reasons for film-induced tourism

JEL Classification: M39, Z39

Introduction

The film-induced tourism (FIT) has lately gained more and more importance. The academic environment is paying a significant attention to this new form of tourism, and tourism operators have already introduced in their offers locations where famous films have been shot. Several countries have outlined tourism strategies around this phenomenon, the UK, Australia and South Korea being among the most popular in this regard.

The present paper aims to investigate the interest of Romanian tourists towards the tourism generated by films. The idea of this research is justified, on the one hand, by the fact that Romania is a country with a tradition in the film industry (in 1911 the first silent film was cast, and in 1912 the first feature film), and the Romanian public is an informed one; on the other hand, cultural tourism, as well as niche tourism, shows significant developments from year to year (UNWTO Report on Tourism and Culture Synergies, 2018). These records gain special value in the context of the international development of the film-induced tourism.

Across many countries, since the publication of Bram Stoker's book in 1897, Transylvania and, by extension, Romania have been associated with Count Dracula's country (here we can talk about "book-induced tourism"). Some voices present the famous count today as Romania's unique selling point (Light, 2012).

However, from the discussions surrounding the interviews, emerged the idea that Romanian tourists do not make this association and many of them have a complex understanding of the phenomenon,

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even without knowing that it is another form of tourism. Many Romanian tourists have visited certain places, as part of a holiday determined by other main motivations, only for their connection with a certain film, without having knowledge of that place beforehand. For example, the holidays in Rome included a visit to Via Margutta 51 or tried to redo the route of the protagonists of the film. As predicted by Schofield in 1996, film-induced tourism seems to have become a fad because people want to live real experiences in the places where the movies they love are cast.

1. Tourist motivation and behaviour

FIT research has focused on several topics: the film's motivating role in choosing vacations (Bolan and Davidson, 2005; Busby and Klug, 2001), the portrait of the film-induced tourist (Macionis, 2004; Singh and Best, 2004), the impact of film-induced tourism on both tourists and residents (Beeton 2005; Kim and Richardson 2003; Mordue, 2009). Other research has targeted a specific segment of consumers. For example, Diaconescu (2018) shows that Romanian students have information about FIT, but only a few have intentionally practiced this form of tourism.

The present research is mainly focused on tourists who have chosen to visit certain destinations as a result of linking those places with the films they loved. Analyzing visitors to literary places, Herbert (1995, p. 34) states that they are "more purposeful and have specific reasons for making their visits". In contrast, Macionis and Sparks (2009) showed that the majority of tourists visiting movie sites fall into three categories: incidental, casual and serendipitous. An important motivation for this type of tourism is the need for tourists to feel emotionally connected to the places they visit (Reijnders, 2010; Beeton, 2015). Other motivators may also be: ego, prestige and status enhancement (Macionis and Sparks, 2009), desire to "experience" fantasy (Beeton, 2015), desire to live someone else's life, or desire for novelty (Macionis and Sparks, 2009).

Bolan et al. (2011, p. 111) group tourists into three categories: scenic/visual tourist, influenced by what they see; emotional/nostalgic tourist, influenced by narrative and characters they identify with; and pure film tourist, influenced by most or all factors in the film.

A synthetic list of the reasons why tourists choose to visit places related to films can be found in Busby and Klug (2001): to follow in the footsteps of favorite actors; to visit certain properties only for their historical significance, after seeing them in the film; to reach places that appear in the film; to visit places that appear in the adaptations according to the classical literature; to see "live" enchanting landscapes (especially in the case of foreign tourists) or high fidelity from the followers of some very popular TV series.

Hudson and Ritchie (2006) showed that 8 out of 10 tourists planned a vacation related to the places seen in the movies, but only 1 out of 5 did it. Research has also shown that the desire to visit a particular place seen in the film increases as the tourist watches the film several times (Roesch, 2009). In other cases, tourists decide on visiting a certain country – the place where the action of a film takes place – but they do not visit the places where the film was shot (Iwashita, 2008).

As a result, tourists' behavior is difficult to decipher, but it is a certainty that the film has become an important motivation for tourism activities around the world. Also, it is difficult to accurately quantify the economic impact of films on the tourism industry, but the results obtained so far are encouraging.

2. Research methodology

This paper is based on an exploratory research aimed at identifying the interest of Romanian tourists for spending holidays in places where famous movies were filmed. To analyze the research results, the software program SPSS v.20 from IBM was used. The chi-square test of independence was applied, and the Phi and Cramer's V tests were applied to measure the strength of the relationship between variables. The main objectives of the research were: a) identifying the interest of Romanian tourists towards this type of vacation; b) finding out the average length of stay and the reasons for choosing such a vacation; c) discovering the average amount Romanian tourists would be willing to spend during such a vacation; d) identification of destinations related to Romanian and foreign films, which Romanian tourists would like to visit.

To achieve these goals an onlineself-administrated questionnaire were used, via www.isondaje.ro. Data was collected between 5 October and 4 November 2017. The total number of respondents was 463 and the sample structure is presented in Table no.1.

Table no. 1 The sample structure

Age			
18-34 years	35-49 years	50-64 years	
82%	12%	6%	
Education			
High school	University		
21%	79%		
Place of residence			
Urban area		Rural area	
91%		9%	
Region			
Moldova	Muntenia and Dobrogea	Transilvania and Banat	Bucharest
15%	25%	31%	29%
The average net monthly income			
Less than 1500 lei	Between 1500-3000 lei	Between 3001-4000 lei	Over 4000 lei
66 %	24%	5%	5%

Source: Author's own calculations

As can be seen in the table above, the sample is not representative in terms of population structure at national level, most of the respondents being young, highly educated people from the urban area. This may also explain the lower level of income they declare.

3. Findings and Discussion

In this section we are going to present and analyze the main results, according to research objectives.

Thus, the results show that 82% of respondents are interested in practicing this type of tourism, and only 18% of them don't know or don't want to be film-induced tourists.

Figure no. 1 is emphasizing the reasons for choosing a film-induced vacation. The natural landscapes presented in movies seem to be the main reason (44%), the famous places being the second (29%). Other reasons could be: the original movie set in the places where movies were filmed, the presence of famous movie stars in different places.

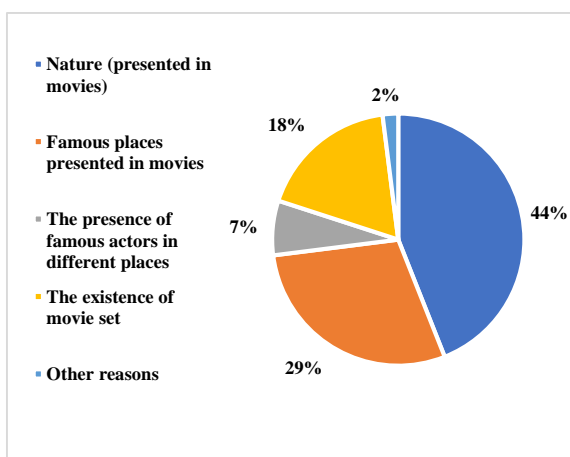


Figure no. 1: Reasons for practicing film-induced tourism

Source: Author's research

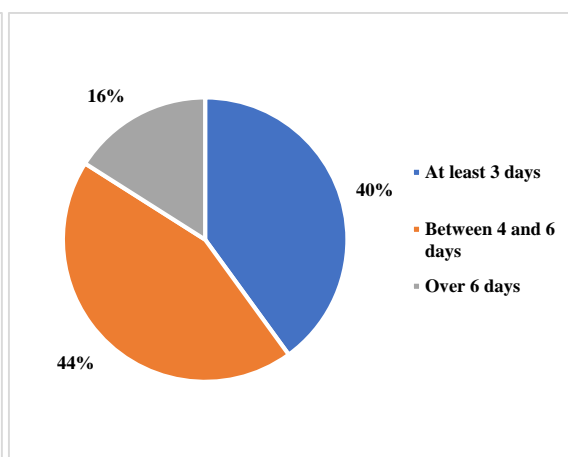


Figure no. 2: Average length of stay

Source: Author's research

Figure no. 2 is showing the average length of stay. According to this research results, 84% of the respondents consider that such a vacation needs between 3 and 6 days.

Regarding the average amount that Romanian tourists would be willing to spend during a film-induced vacation, 79% of the respondents consider that it would be necessary the same amount as it needed in a „regular” trip (see Table no. 2), and 14% appreciate that it would be necessary to spend more money than in a „regular” vacation. The rest of 7% say that they would spend less than usual.

Table no. 2 Tourists’ expenditure for FIT

The average amount of money that tourists are willing to spend		
The same amount as for a normal trip	More than for a normal trip	Less than for a normal trip
79 %	14%	7%

Source: Author's own calculations

As for the films that would have the potential to motivate a vacation, 73% of the respondents indicated a foreign film, and 43% a Romanian film. Among the foreign movies were mentioned: “Lord of the Rings”, “Blue Lagoon”, “Pirates of the Caribbean”, “Cold Mountain”, “Casablanca”, “Gladiator”, and “Troy”. Some of the Romanian films mentioned were: “Nea Mărin Miliardar”, “Mihai Viteazul”, “Moromeții”, “Operațiunea Monstrul”.

It is worth noting that 74% of the respondents consider that Romania could be a film-induced tourist destination.

Trying to analyze whether socio-demographic factors influence the FIT, the main correlations are summarized in Table no. 3.

Table no. 3 The main factors influencing the film-induced tourism

Variable	Variables	Pearson Chi-Square /Likelihood Ratio (Asymp. Sig (2-sided))	Phi/ Cramer’sV
Income	Main reasons for FIT	L – 0.049	C – 0.126
Region	Interest for FIT	P – 0.047	C – 0.166
	Main reasons for FIT	P – 0.005	C – 0.137
Place of residence	Interest for FIT	L – 0.045	C – 0.128

Source: Author's own calculations

According to these results, the interest for practicing film-induced tourism is primarily influenced by the geographic region where respondents are living and by their place of residence (urban/rural). Residents of Transylvania and Banat are the most attracted to this type of tourism, 84.8% of them being interested in FIT. Residents from Muntenia and Dobrogea have a slightly lower interest in FIT (76.3%). Depending on the area of residence, urban respondents are more interested in FIT (83.5%), while rural respondents are very little interested in this form of tourism, only 67.5% of them declaring themselves interested. Regarding the reasons why they would visit places related to films, the main factors of influence turned out to be: income level and geographical region.

In relation to the income of the respondents, tourists with incomes between 3001 - 4000 lei are attracted by the natural landscapes that appear in the films. The celebrity of the places arouses curiosity (in a percentage of 36.4%) both for those with low incomes (under 1500 lei) and for those with higher income (3001 - 4000 lei). The presence of famous actors in different places is of interest for the respondents with incomes over 4000 lei - 13.6%, while for the respondents with low incomes (under 1500 lei) the interest is very low - 2.2%. The existence of the original movie set is rather attractive for people with incomes greater than 4000 lei, 27.3% of them declaring this.

Taking into account the region of living, the respondents from Moldavia prefer – in the largest proportion (52.2%) – the nature but also the presence of the famous actors in the respective locations

(14.9%). The respondents from Transylvania and Banat would consider FIT as an option only for famous places (38.5%), while 26.4% of the Bucharest respondents appreciate the existence of the original filming set.

Conclusions

The present research is one of the few researches that have been carried out in Romania on the theme of tourism generated by films. The practical and theoretical implications of the present research are given by a better understanding of the film-induced tourism in Romania, using quantitative methods.

The main conclusions of this research show that this form of tourism is of interest to Romanians, who would be willing to spend similar amounts to those used for ordinary trips, to reach places related, in one form or another, to the films they love.

Although the number of potential tourists who would visit places related to films is higher in the case of foreign films, however Romanian films can have a good potential. The potential could also be harnessed by involving local central authorities in supporting advertising campaigns, which will significantly increase the number of tourists, as shown in the study of Li et al. (2017).

The main limitation of this study is that the sample was not representative at national level, but even so, some interesting results were obtained. These results could be used, for example, to promote domestic tourism, especially in the context of recent television series produced at cinematographic standards, with a large audience (for example, “Vlad”, broadcasted by ProTV).

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