

# Film industry and films as a tool in a touristic image formation process

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## **Is it possible to use film industry and films as a tool in a touristic image formation process?**

As per statement of foreign researchers of cinema and tourism, this is not only affordable, but also highly necessary. Some part of researchers argue that the awareness of places is growing by certain motion pictures (Busby & Klug, 2001, p. 330). Films, as a rule, are not made with the mission of attracting tourists to their destination, but, as a rule, influence the audience indirectly as the background of the message of the film. The study of film tourism is comparatively new in the field of tourism. Movie tourism is defined here as visiting tourists destinations or attractions as a result of the fact that the destination is displayed on television, in video or on the screen of a movie theater. Falling freely under the cultural tourism, the film tourism is a growing phenomenon throughout the world, facilitated by both the growth of the entertainment industry and the growth of international travel.

According to Morgan & Pritchard (1998) the benefits of film tourism are becoming increasingly apparent. Turning to a wide and diverse markets, the film industry offers something for everyone and travel agencies can use films as a springboard for marketing campaigns if the films are viewed as suitable for the purpose. Marketing opportunities are generated when the film is being premiered and distributed as well as during each release window. Extra ventures and enterprises can be made through a film tourism, which, in turn, can add some benefits to the expansion and strengthening of the guest season. It does not come as a surprise, because postmodern and especially western tourism, as well as postmodern tourists are highly

influenced by film industry or popular culture. “ Harry Potter”, “ The Lord of the rings”, “ Game of thrones” are not the only prominent cases in the field of film induced tourism. Nowadays tourists’ organic images of destinations are formed through subsidiary intake of films and television without the alleged dislocation of promotional materials (Schofield, 1996). This means that filmmakers, cultural policy makers and other interested parties can use films as a promotion of a specific destination image, without forcing the audience to think that it is an advertisement of a particular place.

### **Definitions Of Film Induced Tourism**

Terminology of film induced tourism may vary. Horrigan (2009) highlights, that: “ Film tourism discourse in the international bibliography might be referred with the terms “ film induced tourism”, or “ media induced tourism”, or “ movie induced tourism”, or “ cinematographic tourism”, or even “ media pilgrim” seen as a media pilgrimage.” All of these terms represent a niche and alternative form of tourisms, however it has a potential for development and mass audience. Tourism itself has many characteristics and types (from business, politics to recreation and relaxation). There are six types of tourism according to research of Tureac & Anca (2008): Relaxing tourism; Relaxing and health care tourism; Visiting tourism; Transit tourism; Reduced distance tourism; Professional tourism.

Film actuated tourism can either drop into professional tourism, or just in general visiting tourism category. Nevertheless films and TV shows are a segment of media culture and creative businesses. Exploiting creative arts and culture for tourism has therefore been an established destination

marketing tool which has included the familiar and the emergent, from literary tourism and trails; film and television locations; architecture tours and branding (Evans, 2007). McKercher & Cros (2002) are stating that movies are the part of art expression and local tradition's culture, at the same time they are segment of entertainment industry, so film tourism can be called a part of the cultural tourism branch. It is also a form of tourism that can fit under the umbrella term of cultural tourism and it is encouraged by the growth of entertainment industry and international travel. Cultural tourism is another research case, however it shares some similarities with film tourism – knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society. (Tylor, 1871). While the definitions and discourses of culture are complex and interpreted, the idea of cinematographic tourism is simple.

To summarize: tourism, induced by film, is a visit to sites where films and television programs were made, as well as tours to production studios, including theme parks related to films. In addition to mapping the location of films and creating new routes for tourists, this form of tourism can be used as an effective marketing tool. Studies of cinema induced tourism helps to understand the relationships between, the audience, the film industry, the image of destination and tourism itself. In order to understand these links, we need to determine the characteristics of the movie tourism.

### **Influence Of Film On Tourism Demand**

It has been broadly recognized in studies related to tourism that destination image enormously impacts traveler's choice on whereas he or she should

travel. A significant role in influencing tourist decision making process play an image of destination in a moment when tourist choose to whereas he or she should travel (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991). Attractiveness of destination image directly affects on the chances of place to be chosen as travel goal (Chon, 1990). There is a suggestion by Butler (1990) in which he states that travel preferences of those who likes to evaluate destination attributes can be influenced by films and create desired picture of a place through representation. A movie can provide public with certain knowledge about the different aspects of the country: nature, culture, people. This is ends up with a new construction of the attitudes towards the country.

An interest in the nation and its positive representation can eventually lead to an actual visit to the country (Iwashita, 2006). Travelling and watching movies are both activities for recreation. They provide a way to escape from a real world. Films can encourage spectators to travel through physical properties such as landscape and scenery and related topics, storylines, events and actors, forming the audience feelings, emotion and their attitude to places. The place and experience of the film are strengthened in memory and linked with actors, events and production (Riley & Van Doren, 1992). The world of connections and sentiments lies in the minds of the audience as memories and obsessions that give meaning to any film related location. Such locations, events and characters become a cultic entertainment due to obtaining strong meanings by the narratives of films. People usually visit certain places by certain images, memories, associations and emotional attachments to places and meanings (Schama, 1996).

Film named ' Stairway to Heaven' (produced in Korea), one of the popular television series in Asia, was shot in many cliché places, but one of them became really special to viewers: it is the sentimental location, merry-go-round at the Lotte World. After the premiere of the movie, the carousel at Lotte World has become one of the most popular attraction among Asian tourists. Film induced tourist started to recreate the affecting scene at the filmed locations and it is the clear evidence of attachment based on emotions. In the " Winter Sonata" an impressive scene that the audience has - this is when lovers hold hands, walking through the log. Since many visitors tried to copy the scene from their favorite movie, the famous log was broken and removed from the location, as it cannot cope with a large number of visitors.

Some films are likely to be more successful than others in attracting a large number of tourists to designated destinations. Such success includes various critical factors influencing the tourism induced by the film industry (Hudson & Ritchie, 2006). Cinema allures people with an emotional experience that goes perfectly with the location, so the place and storyline should be closely tied (Tooke & Baker, 1996). Repeated exposure will guarantee greater familiarity, attachment and identification. The elements mentioned above will be the impetus for the viewers to spot the site, people, experience and fantasies depicted in the film. The prosperity of the film can be a satisfactory predictor of film-induced tourism (Grihault, 2003).

### **Cultural Geography, Film Geography and Tourism**

Academic researches of cross-cutting themes in film and tourism have a comparatively short history starting from the early 1990s. Nevertheless, it should be emphasized that there were several foregoers that played significant role in the development of scientific interests in a wider geographical literature. Notably, the thread of studies that guided to the adoption of cultural geography as a sub-discipline, 13 stimulated by Wright (1947) and later developed by Lowenthal (1961) and others, can make a great contribution to the understanding of the film industry as a cultural and spatial application in a world dominated by image and iconography. Wright (1947) indicated the terra incognitae in geography in relation to the contribution of books, magazines, literature and arts. From this point of view, cultural geography is evolved partially, with a tendency to the geography of cinema, developing relatively recently, in parallels with the film tourism.

Lukinbeal & Zimmerman (2006) review the development of film geography and note: “ Film geography is a new and growing interdisciplinary research arena that links the spatiality of cinema with the social and cultural geographies of everyday life”. Moreover, Jewell and McKinnon (2008, p. 153) argue that: “ Film tourism creates new cultural landscapes, not simply just generating a desire to travel but forming part of place identity”. Such a cause is not recent and profoundly rooted in pre-film media in the form of literary tourism. Therefore, bearing this in mind, it is helpful to consider cultural geography as an approach within the framework of the social science paradigm and the relationship with how tourism is in this broader context.

### **Destination Promoting Challenges**

There are some kind of sights like natural, historical and man-made which are considered as the main types of attractions for tourists. Destination Marketing Organization's have done everything to promote them in all kind of advertising. Some of these are limited in quantity, and DMOs may find it difficult to attract tourists who visited the sights to re-visit them again. 'Hall marks events' are another type of attraction which were promoted by DMOs as enticement tool or tourists to the destination. There is definition by Richie (1984, p. 3) as "major one-time or recurring events of limited duration developed to primarily enhance the awareness, appeal and profitability of a destination in the short and long term". Unique cultural events, festivals, sport and musical events, trade fairs are the part of hall-mark events.

Though movies can be useful for promoting new directions, only some of them have taken or received such advantages. Suggestion by Riley (1995) shows that cinemas he suggests can be used as a showcase of tourist attractions within the frame of a story that allows potential tourists to develop a complete image of the destination. Viewers can re-watch the movie or watch it several times, and with each encounter there is a chance to grab attention to the filmed locations. Promotion of tourist attractions through radio, newspapers, magazines and television are very expensive advertisement types. As example, Europe, the leading continent in terms of the number of international tourists, in 2007 spent €600 million on its advertising campaigns. Though Thailand is trying to reduce advertisement budget for tourism, Tourism Authority of Thailand spent approximately 1.2 billion baht in general for promotion (Risse, 2008). With the help of the



promotion, DMOs hopes that potential vacationers will be pleasantly impressed by destinations through advertising of commercials and print media, and such efforts can trigger public to visit a destination.

Nevertheless, modern tourism promotion lacks the resource to prolong destination exposure to capture awareness and support the interest of potential vacationers.

In addition, consumers are exposed to hundreds of print and broadcast ads that confuse their consumption every day. It is assumed that promotion to destination through films is one of the effective solutions to the problems that DMOs can use. Films can cope with the shortcomings of prolonged exposure, as well as maintain the interest of the audience. Promotion of films would be even more powerful for unknown tourist destinations at a lower cost than traditional advertising campaigns.

### **The Social Psychology of Film Viewing and Tourism**

It's clear that the experience of emotions is the central aspect in cinema. In literature, the theory of cinema explores the links between film, psychology and emotions. This literature can help in understanding the ways of studying the links between watching a movie and an emotional response. Early studies focused on several obscure psychoanalytic concepts, although they found that viewing the movie in the context of dark cinema and focusing all attention on the visual and audio cues offered by film production can stimulate a strong emotional response of the viewer.

Eberwein (1984) argues that film viewing in cinema stimulates “ a type of psychological regression, what he terms as a dream-screen hypothesis in

that the viewer falls into a dream-like state which turns to a state of reality". Eisenstein (1991) investigates the concept of feelings in movies, whereby a series of actions in scenes of cinema touch the soul. More recent studies by Grodal (1997) show more real-world understanding of the emotion system in relation to film have adopted both cognitive and neurological approaches to explore emotional response to movie and the mood-cue approaches which are create viewers' curiosity and sympathy with certain characters and places. Smith (2003) emphasizes the range of attributes that create an emotional response, and not just an interesting story and / or characters, but based on a complex layout and organization of special effects, soundtracks and narration. Cohen (2001) he argues that music greatly affects the emotional experience of the film, and that now there is enough data to conclude that music yields a significant viewer response. Much of this depends on a highly skilled musical composition that emphasizes the sharp, disturbing, exciting or moving scenes that affect and attract the viewer.

### **Conclusion**

In the leading cinema destinations such as UK, Korea and New Zealand film tourism strategies have been successfully employed. Positive experience from these countries can bring benefit to many new or existing destinations that intend to use movies to promote existing or new destinations. Despite the fact that films can bring to tourism destinations lots of benefits and the lessons learned from many DMOs, many tourism organizations and agencies have been very slow to employ marketing opportunities through films.