

Films and television impact on tourists tourism essay



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Film induced tourism is a growing phenomenon worldwide. Films and television can have impact on tourists decision making upon their choices of travel and destination. Films make audience all over the world fall in love with them and attempt to travel to where the films were made, thus enabling the film locations to become tourist destinations. The power of the film and television in promoting destinations and stimulating tourism demand is an international phenomenon. So, film and television series usually have more long-term impacts in tourism. Today, throughout China, over hundreds of TV-Movie towns are built and have turned into theme park, which carries a certain brand name to appeal to potential tourists. It is clear that many cities have a major task to get their sites recognized globally as suitable and fashionable destinations for international and domestic tourism. China West film studio in Ningxia province, as one of the up-and-coming film theme park, is chosen as a case study to explore its development, covering its paths of success and failure.

The impact of film and television for a person, a place even a nation is not despised. Throughout domestic and overseas, a film studio which takes a whole process of making movies and relevant things for film and television as the attractions is becoming more and more popular in tourism industry. China's tourism industry is currently upgraded from sightseeing leading phase to the leisure and cultural experience leading stages. In this context, relying on filming and hitting the drama (and subsequent similar cultural theme film) to create the image and related cultural experience tourism products for the studio has gradually become much favorite of new leisure and experienced products in markets. It is also a tourism consumption

hotspot. Only depend on filming income for a film studio's development is an absolute losing proposition. Especially one movie left a city sights, the limitation of a scenery spot is even bigger. Therefore, many film studios finally forced to turn to tourism aspect, to become a film theme park. China film and TV tourism industry was originated in 1980s. In this process, the film theme park as the inevitable outcome of the film industry development is gradually be known and become a kind of special tourism activity places along with the film tourism development.

The development of film theme park to tourist attractions started in Beijing. In 1984, CCTV developed the famous Chinese Literature "A Dream of Red Mansions" into a TV series. It became the most popular television series of its time (A Dream of Red Mansions, CCTV 2008). In fact, it was the earliest popular series in China (A Dream of Red Mansions, CCTV 2008). Compared with abroad, China's film tourism was started late. Its development stage is relatively backward and the profitability is not pretty good. According to statistics, the film theme park which was through the approval has about more than 110 at present in China, but only 14 or 15 can do the normal business (<http://www.lwcj.com>). Among them, only CCTV WuXi Movie and TV Base, ZhuoZhou TV and Movie Town and China West Film Studio is running well. Most of the film theme park only has few crew and visitors entered.

1. 1. 2 The Film Studio situation in China

The film studio in China is different with the most famous American's film studio. China's film studio can largely called "video production base", the main task is for film and TV production services. But, the American's film <https://assignbuster.com/films-and-television-impact-on-tourists-tourism-essay/>

studio can be really called film theme park. The visitors is god there, they enjoy the wonderful movie experience which doesn't exist in the reality but only exist in the movie.

According to understand, relying on collection the sell rental and developing film tourism are the main profit model in China's film studio, and this single profit model has hidden huge risk. China's film studio always has been the role of movie producers. People build film studio for filming, but the builder often ignore the sustainable development of the film studio. Thus cause once the crew delisted, that film studio will face the waste situation. Data revealed that a film base covers an area of thousands of acres, but the profit is only 10% of crew cost (<http://www.chinavalue.net>).

1. 1. 3 General Information of China West Film Studio

China West Film Studio is a hot location for tourists due to popular movie and television series. It's the national AAAAA class scenic area for tourism and best scenic area for tourism in China (China West Film Studio 2011).

China West Film Studio is located in Yinchuan City, Ningxia Province, China. It has the convenient transportation. It is 38 kilometers from the downtown of Yinchuan city, 25 kilometers from railway station, and 48 kilometers from airport. It is the hot scenic spot for the tourists who visited Ningxia must pass through. (China West Film Studio 2011).


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Fig1. 1. 3 The location of China West Film Studio in Yinchuan city, Ningxia province, China

The construction of the China West Film Studio was based on the military camps at the border region in Ming and Qing dynasties. In 1961, the well known writer Zhang Xiang Liang discovered its special value of beauty. In the early 80's in 20 century, Mr. Zhang introduced this place to circle of movies, thereafter, this place began to join the movies and TV plays. Till now, there were near 100 movies and TV plays had been taken here (China West Film Studio 2011). The great directors from the mainland, Hong Kong and Taiwan of China had their talent here. A lot of new stars marched onto the world just from here and they became the international stars thereafter. Still a lot of movies taken here had got different prizes on the prominent, international movies festivals, some of those movies had know as the typical ones in the history of Chinese movies. And the ruins of ancient military camps were changed into the famous movies and TV plays city in China.

This place had got the fine reputation as “ Chinese movies march on the world from here” (China West Film Studio 1993). But just at beginning of the construction of the studio city. Mr. Zhang Xian Liang predicted that the development of movies would make the production of using the techniques of the electronic computer more and more. The future movies will be “ produced” rather than “ taken”. Thus, the function of a studio to provide a place for “ taking” movies will vanish bit by bit as time passes. Therefore, people always call this West Studio an “ image cite” instead of a “ Movies and TV plays city”, the name “ Movie and TV plays city” was a popular speaking. Yet, the “ image city” means an epitome of the ancient towns in

the north China. In the course of Chinese modernization, urban-notation and the construction of new rural areas, a large number of Chinese traditional, material and non-material cultivation is doomed to be diminished gradually. The West Film Studio is doing his best to collect this Chinese traditional, material and non-material cultivation, exhibit it on the desert and ruins in the vast north land, let the old aged filed be able to show some brilliant colors. During the tourists' visiting, they will be just like passing through a "time channel" to return to the past long ancient time. Our ancestor's Glamour was showed there, besides the valuable historical memory was reserved as well. Then, on the base of inheriting the historical culture, China West Film Studio developed their imagination and creation.

Now, besides the stage properties used in the well known movies and great stars, traces of their activities, there are various antiques, furniture, utensils, tools, architecture parts etc. with rich content and Ming Qing dynasties' special features. And the common facilities equipped in the normal tourism places such as restaurant, such as MaYinghua tourist recreation center, Sheqi tea Bar, Baihua tang hall, exhibition hall, supermarkets, tourist souvenirs, etc, all of them can be found here. There still are the movie bills exhibition, artistic photography exhibition, artistic figures, and the "gallery of ruins" which was built for sake of protecting the cultural relics specially. And there are the ancient costume photos, horse riding, arrow shooting and some unique, folk performance such entertainment items here. China West Film Studio also after MTV for the tourists to enjoy the scenes and stage properties with the tourist themselves in the MTV or short films, the tourists can perform in the "mimic show" as a great star or take a photo for your

whole team. All above activities may make tourists feel “ a tourist while arrival, a famous star while departure.”

1. 2 Statement of Problems

Film theme park (FTP) appears to be a new form of tourism in China, yet its business-together with popularity of Chinese movies country-wide and word wide, as well as growth in tourist activities-moves at a high speed in generating significant revenue for China’s tourism. While researches on Chinese films and their impact upon tourism have been extensively produced, little has been done in relations with FTP. As FTP business grows larger, a study on its success and failure factors becomes more important, so that management direction of FTP can be mapped out more solidly to sustain its activity as a viable part of tourism in China.

Like its predecessors-Universal Studio, Paramount Pictures, or Shaw Brothers, CWFS has striven to create another world’s destination of film tourism. However, the success models of the formers may not be blindly copied and be reproduced in China. FTPs in China show different levels of development around China, but some of them have the problems, as a result of short-life cycle, difficulty in operation and return on the investment.

Coupled with study on the operation and management sides of FTP, this research also aims to explore the relationship between CWFS and their impact upon tourism of Ningxia Province. Residents of Ningxia, as host of this up-and-coming destination, must show their interests and cooperation in promoting the business of CWFS, thus stabilizing the FTP of their province with concrete creation.

Therefore, this research seeks the following questions:

RQ1. What describes the tourist business of China West Film Studio?

RQ2. What constitutes strength and weakness of the tourist business of CWFS?

RQ3. What impact does CWFS has on Ningxia province tourism?

1. 3 Research Objectives

This research aims:

To identify the tourist business being conduct in CWFS;

To explore rooms of success of tourist business of CWFS;

To explore rooms for improvement of tourist business of CWFS; and,

To identify the impact from tourist business that CWFS has upon Ningxia province tourism

1. 4 Scope of the Research

China West Film Studio is an “ external window” of Ning Xia civilization. It is China’s ancient northern town and national intangible cultural heritage protection and development project integrated experimental base. There is a hot location for tourists due to popular movie and television series. It is very important to the tourism economy and environment of Ning Xia province.

The primary goal of this research is through analyze the current management approaches of China West film studio so as to development in understanding film-induced tourism, assess the implications of the theme

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park sustainability and the significance in tourism destinations. This research will use a case study of China West Film Studio in Ningxia Province to investigate the important issues regarding the management vision of the studio, and to assess the existing policies of sustainable tourism development in Chinese theme parks. Using quantitative approach, a survey with questionnaire in the field at CWFS will be conducted. Qualitative approach is also used by conducting in-depth interview with representatives of the China West Film Studio's managers and visitors, including participant observation on the visitors. Reviews of official documents, statistics and printed materials will also be counted.

1. 5 Limitations of the study

The following were basic limitations of this study:

1. 5. 1 There is relatively few of research on the level of film theme park in China, especially for a successful or failure business model of film theme park management system is a question which has not been looked into adequately to date.

1. 5. 2 The research case study will limit the results of the study to other TV and Movie Town theme parks.

1. 5. 3 The in-depth interviews and questionnaire survey may have been compromised by subjective answers.

1. 6 Significance of the Study

Now, using movies as a theme to set up theme parks has become a trend. So, it is necessary for theme park operators to start planning strategically

and organizing marketing and promotion activities in their film theme parks. The significance of this research is through analyze the current management approaches of China West film studio so as to development in understanding film-induced tourism, assess the implications of the theme park sustainability and the significance in tourism destinations.

1. 7 Definition of Terms

Theme park: theme park refers to a tract of land on which a developer has created a series of exhibits, rides, and other elements that tend to be designed around some unifying idea (Dittmer, 2002)

China West Film Studio (CWFS): China West Film Studio is China's ancient northern town and national intangible cultural heritage protection and development project integrated experimental base. There is a hot location for tourists due to popular movie and television series. It's the national AAAA class scenic area for tourism and best scenic area for tourism in China.

Film Theme Park (FTP): Usually adjacent to a studio, specifically built for tourism with no actual filming or production taking place.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter is a detailed review of film tourism and theme park management and development in China. These will be conducted to provide a better understanding of the background study. The review will include a documentary research of journals and books on tourism and theme parks in China, including printed materials from the China West Film Studio Board. It

will provide a comprehensive overview of the basic concepts being studied on the topic.

2. 1 Theme park

In the past 25 years, parks have increasingly appropriated historic “ themes” as a medium for entertainment and communication with the travel markets. A theme park offers a controlled, clean environment. The theme itself is a critical factor determining the popularity of the park. (Gordon W. McClung, 1991). Wong & Cheung (1999) pointed out that the movie theme, a popular theme found in the West with successful cases including Universal Studios and Warner Brother’s Movie World, was the least preferred theme in Hong Kong. This pointed out the need for the consideration of cultural influence on theme preference (Wong & Cheung 1999). In contrast to the abundance of previous research on theme park and tourism demand, relatively little has been done on the specific topic – TV and Movie Town development in China.

Scheurer (2003) defined that theme parks aim to create an atmosphere of another place and time and they usually concentrate on one dominant theme, around which architecture, landscaping, costumed personnel, and different facilities for entertainment, distraction, recreation, or physical activity, such as rides, shows, food service, and merchandise, are coordinated. Everything is coordinated to create an overall experience – a special setting for the visitors.

2. 2 Types of Theme Park

From the chart below listed out the four major theme park types. The types are classified by the target tourists, theme, and facility provided.

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Types

Tourist

Theme

Facility

Example

Super Park

Global Market

Combined by different theme

Various travel experience with accommodation provided

Disneyworld,

Universal Studio

Landmark Theme Park

The whole city & nearby city

Specific Theme and Shows e. g. Ethnic themes

Focus on the static travel experience, provide educational purpose

Splendid China, The window of the world, Hong Kong Ocean Park

Amusement Park

Local market

Single Theme

Rides and Games

Lotte Garden

Local Scale Theme park

Local market

Single Theme

Static View

China West Film Studio

Table 2. 1 Four Major types of Theme Park Sources: (CNTA 2007)

According to the theme park can provide the type of travel experience (product form) to its classification, the current theme park in China, mainly in the following categories:

Scenario simulation model: a variety of movie types of theme parks, such as the three movies (Wuxi).

Pleasure type: for example, Suzhou park, Jinjiang Amusement park (East China), Dream Watertown (Zhuhai).

Tourism type: Splendid China, Window of the world (Shenzhen) and so on.

Theme type: Kiev aircraft carrier (Tianjin), Minsk aircraft carrier (Shenzhen), a variety of aquarium.

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Style experience type: all kinds of ethnic villages, folk village, such as China Folk Culture village (Shenzhen).

The above classification is only a simple analysis, if the strict sense of the theme park classification, the theme park's "theme" in itself implies a proposition about the culture can be derived from many types of theme parks. (Management Theory Papers, 2008)

2.3 China's theme park development

Since 1955, the United States since the birth of Walt Disney World, Theme parks has gone through half a century of development. The theme park industry is relatively new in China, with some of the early parks developed only in the mid-1980s (Ap, 2003). Thirty years, China's theme park industry is surging, in the dark out of the simple imitation of the past, and now the comprehensive development.

Song (2011) mentioned that, in fact, the first Theme Park-Journey to the West Temple which appeared in the late 80's cannot be called the strict sense of the theme park in China. It is actually a props exhibition for the large series drama -" Journey to the West". Because it is satisfied the domestic tourists' curiosity of shooting and the demand of pursue new tourism product, it recouped the capital outlay soon after input market. Then, the United States, Netherlands, Japan and Hong Kong's theme park developers began to entry into the Chinese market in joint venture way with their rich experience and financial strength. Then China officially emerged a group of large scale theme park.

China's first large-scale theme park in Shenzhen - "Splendid China" gained sensational success through its national character. It presented China's famous mountains and rivers as well as cultural heritage through miniature models, hosting over three million visitors in the first year of establishment (Global times, 2009) Within the first three years after the opening of ' Splendid China', there were about sixteen large-scale theme parks and hundreds of small-scale parks built in mainland China (Oakes, 1998). Because of the technology monetization, the economy globalization, the culture diversification, and the different needs of market, the change of the forms of theme park is critical to the innovation and development of contemporary theme park. By 1998, there were an estimated two thousand amusement or theme park attractions in China. But many of them were not successful from a financial and operational perspective and most of them were in a deficit (Ap, 2003).

2. 4 The profit model of Theme Park

Generally speaking, the profit model of traveling scenic area (theme park) basically has the following kinds, and its profit model is a mixture of these types of revenue streams:

To provide primary experience chance to sell one's own things, such as: selling tickets.

To provide help to enrich experience and the corresponding service, such as: providing catering and accommodation services.

To sell possible income opportunities around the consumption power of tourists and potential tourists, such as: commercial sponsorship of festival activities and investment promotion in scenic spot.

To gain capital investment in tourism project site after earning premium to other commercial development, such as scenic area, the real estate development in tourism destinations.

To sale or transfer the commodities with the intellectual property characteristics, such as: toys, tourism souvenirs, handicrafts and so on.

To provide public service for guaranteeing market-oriented of residents in tourism scenic spot, such as: water and electricity supply. (Management theory papers, 2008)

The profitability of this six major ways are building upon the basic fact about the arrival of tourists, even the profitable way which established on the base of local resident's consumption power also needs to realize the relative economies of scale through the arrival of tourists.

Using these six profitability methods to analyze the profitability of theme park model is not too hard to find the current domestic theme park's problem is single model profits. Most of the theme park only depends on ticket sales to structure their profit model.

2. 5 General Problems in China's Theme Park Development

Nowadays, the scales of domestic theme parks are extending, and the investment is rising. Many industry experts have identified, redundant

construction and similar topics, in the inherent failure of the theme park has been foreshadowed. This leads to many problems in China's theme park development and cause many difficulties for theme park investors. A report released at the last China Tourism Resort and Attraction Summit said 2500 theme parks had sprung up in the country in the past two decades. But 70 percent of them are losing money-only 10 percent make some profit (China Daily, 2009). More than 2/3 of the theme parks cannot earn enough money to cover the investment, and are facing great difficulties.

Table 2. 2 showed the profit of theme park in China.

Table 2. 2 The profit of them park in China

Ap John (1999) offered some observations about the general problems in China's theme park.

They were supply-led; build the park and they will come.

There is widespread copying of successful theme parks.

There is an oversupply of theme parks.

Little consideration is given to new or innovative facilities to give parks individuality and distinctiveness.

Consideration of guest expectations is insufficient.

A lack of value for money leads to one-time visits.

2. 6 The significance of Theme Park

Theme also creates a powerful visual and spatial reorganization of public space and shapes consumption spaces. Theme park visitors are able to ' see the world' and recall their experience by purchasing souvenirs and merchandising, with thematic motifs continued throughout the entire experience, even into nearby hotels(Teo&Yeo, 2001). Theme park plays an important role in the development process of world tourism. Song (2011) express theme park is an important supplement for resources and products in the tourism resources abundant region. In lack of tourism resources region, theme park can make up for lack of resources, break through the obstacles of tourism development. In the experience economy, the needs of tourists are increasingly sophisticated. Theme park itself is a specialized form of tourism destinations which constructed for meeting diversity of tourists and individual needs. Compared with natural tourist attractions and cultural tourism attractions, theme park can provide more personalized, user-friendly, and value-oriented products and services.

Therefore, as a new form of tourism attractions, theme park has not only added to the tourism resources and products, but also provided a wealth of experience. It is reflecting a trend for the future of tourism development.

2. 7 Film induced tourism

The study of film tourism is relatively new in tourism research. Hudson and Ritchie (2006) define film tourism as " tourist visits to a destination or attraction as a result of the destination being featured on television, video, DVD or the cinema screen". Tetley (1997) indicated that film-induced

tourism - a form related to films and television - is widely known as a <https://assignbuster.com/films-and-television-impact-on-tourists-tourism-essay/>

lucrative and rapidly growing sector of the tourism industry with increasing economic importance.

Films do clearly have an important contribution in influencing people's travel decisions. According to Grihault (2003), "successful films have a direct and powerful role in creating and sustaining tourism to a location, be it a hotel or a continent." Filming not only provides short-term employment and publicity for the chosen location but also long-term tourism opportunities (Couldry, 1998). Film productions create significant economic benefits for host regions. Film production can also have a positive impact on tourism as viewers seek to visit locations they have seen on the big screen (Hudson and Ritchie, 2006). The media has become a major vehicle of awareness and style leadership, bringing the wonders of the world and the excitement of remote natural environments to millions of people (Tooke, N. 1996). There is no doubt that films and television programs have created an increase in visitor numbers at their respective locations (Riley, 1992).

Throughout the development of domestic and foreign film tourism, we can divide the development of film tourism into 3 stages. The feature of each stage is as this table: (Liu, 2004)

Stage

Time

Tourist

objects

The content of tourism activities

Tourism destination

Tourism characters

Budding stage

1896~

1986

Studio

Visit studio

Sightseeing,

Entertainment

Mainly by static view

Development stage

1987~

now

Filming base,

Film theme park

Visit,

Entertainment

Comprehensive entertainment experience,

Pleasurable mind and increase knowledge

Pay attention to participate, interaction, and experience

Mature stage

Filming base,

The whole process of film and TV production,

Film related activity

Experience,

Rise

Improve personal development,

Enhance

spiritual

Fully

exert subjectivity

Table 2. 3 Development of film tourism stage

2. 8 The Film tourism constructed location-TV and film studio

Universal Studios and Disneyworld-MGM have added to the extensive attraction of Orlando, Florida, by placing visitors within “ real” movie scenes such as ET, Star Wars (Riley, 1998). Movie world of Queensland, Australia, cashes in on the allure of movies by advertising itself as “ the only movie theme park outside of the United States” (Castaway Travel 1997). Those successful films and major motion pictures enhanced the awareness, appeal and profitability of locations and they were of limited duration in terms of viewing times and days at cinematic venues (Riley 1998). It aroused the interests for tourists to visit the real places.

The artificial constructed location, China West Film Studio, has common characteristics in the development. It built up from the ruins of town, but now it covers an area of 1100 acres. The investment of China West Film Studio which is from more than 700, 000 Yuan in the first place until now has more than 20 million Yuan (China West Film Studio, 2010). Those investments were fuelled to develop the sites and supporting facilities. On the other hand, the popularity of the films strongly has an influence on the tourist’s interest in visiting the TV and movie studio. The TV and Movie Studio is highly dependent on the success of the films. One of the factors which has caused the success of China West film Studio was the high popularity of the TV series and film shot and made in the Town. Because of these reasons, China West Film Studio is regarded as “ low input and high

output” example in China’s tourism industry. Ningxia province has become an important cultural landscape and favorite tourism attractions.

2.9 Definition of Film Theme Park in China

Guo & Wang (2008) mentioned that foreign people generally believed the Hollywood and Kyoto movie village are the typical representative of the combination of film culture and tourism industry. Hollywood takes filming as the main task, but Kyoto movie village is focus on the culture of film. Both of them don’t have independent filming base. China’s film theme park is the classic work of the combination of tourism product and filming. Its specific characteristic is the complementary relationship between filming function and tourism development (Guo & Wang, 2008). On account of this demarcation, China’s film theme park has its specific features which are not only differing from aboard film base, but also different from domestic scenic spots. The specific features of China’s theme park are as follows:

The design for the theme is taking film culture as a feature. It has distinct theme and descendible culture connotation.

The item design of theme park is taking imitate and reappear scene as a feature. It has reality carrier of film culture.

China’s theme park has double functions of film and TV outdoor scene base and tourism. Film and tourism can cooperate to each other. (Guo & Wang, 2008)

3. 0 Classification of Film Theme Park in China

On the basis of different partition standard, Shao & Yang (2010) divided China's Film Theme Park into the following form:

According to the theme of Film Theme Park, China's Film Theme Park can be divided into three categories, namely natural scenery based Film Park, folk culture based Film Park, and historical theme based Film Park.

Natural scenery based Film Park:

This type of film theme park is crafted by the main advantage of local unique natural scenery, generally concentrated in the scenic, natural resource-rich region.

Folk culture based Film Park:

This type of film theme park is mainly to show up the local customs and culture. Typical of this type of film theme park is China West Film Studio.

Historical theme based Film Park:

This type of film theme park is based on the classics, to reproduce the historic buildings, ancient style and so on. Currently, most of China's film theme park is belong to this category.

According to the Film Theme Park's formation of causal relationship, China's Film Theme Park can be divided into two categories, namely built for the filming needs of film and built for landscape.

According to different investors of Film Theme Park, China's Film Park can be divided into three types, namely public capital investment, private capital investment and joint venture model.

2. 9 The significance of China West Film Studio in Ningxia tourism development

China West Film Studio is a cradle of the China's movie industry. It is the unique theme park, which combine the movie industry with the tourism. Chinese movie industry was encountered a serious challenge at the end of las