

Film-induced Tourism: Inventing a Vacation to a Location

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ABSTRACT

Tourists today are more experienced and looking for new destinations and new experience. Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) have been competitively cater the tourists' needs to increase their market share although their resources are very limited. In the tourism industry, there has been a growing phenomenon that tourists visit destinations featured through films which are not directly related to DMOs' tourism promotion. This is a new form of cultural tourism called film-induced tourism which still receives little attention from both academia and practitioners due to the lack of knowledge and understanding on the benefits of film on tourism. Recent research suggests that films can have strong influence on tourist decision-making and films do not only provide short-term tourism revenue but long-term prosperity to the destination. Several DMOs have quickly taken these advantages and have successfully increased the number of tourists through the magic of films. This paper investigates the phenomenon by reviewing previous research and practices for two major aims. The first aim is to call for more empirical studies for film-induced tourism to advance the theory on tourist decision-making. The second aim is to highlight the benefits of film in creating a new vacation to a new location. Future research directions and practical implications are discussed.

บทคัดย่อ

นักท่องเที่ยวในยุคปัจจุบันมีประสบการณ์การเดินทางท่องเที่ยวที่เพิ่มมากขึ้นและสนใจที่จะเดินทางไปท่องเที่ยวในแหล่งท่องเที่ยวใหม่ๆ เพื่อหาประสบการณ์ที่แปลกใหม่จากเดิม องค์กรส่งเสริมการท่องเที่ยวของแต่ละประเทศจึงต้องแข่งขันกันมากขึ้นเพื่อพยายามตอบสนองความต้องการของนักท่องเที่ยวด้วยทรัพยากรที่มีอยู่อย่างค่อนข้างจำกัด ปรากฏการณ์ที่ได้รับความนิยมในอุตสาหกรรมท่องเที่ยวในขณะนี้คือการที่นักท่องเที่ยวนิยมเดินทางไปท่องเที่ยวในแหล่งท่องเที่ยวที่เป็นสถานที่ที่ถ่ายทำภาพยนตร์ซึ่งไม่ได้เกี่ยวข้องกับการส่งเสริมการท่องเที่ยว การท่องเที่ยวในลักษณะนี้จัดว่าเป็นรูปแบบหนึ่งของการท่องเที่ยวเชิงวัฒนธรรม ซึ่งเรียกว่า 'การท่องเที่ยวเพื่อเยี่ยมชมสถานที่ถ่ายทำภาพยนตร์' การท่องเที่ยวในรูปแบบนี้ยังได้รับความนิยมจากนักวิจัยและองค์กรส่งเสริมการท่องเที่ยวค่อนข้างน้อย เนื่องจากการขาดความรู้และความเข้าใจประโยชน์ของภาพยนตร์ในการส่งเสริมการท่องเที่ยว ผลการวิจัยล่าสุดได้ให้ข้อเสนอแนะว่าภาพยนตร์มีอิทธิพลต่อการตัดสินใจของนักท่องเที่ยวเป็นอย่างมาก และภาพยนตร์สามารถสร้างรายได้ให้แก่แหล่งท่องเที่ยวได้ในระยะยาว องค์กรส่งเสริมการท่องเที่ยวบางแห่งได้เริ่มเห็นประโยชน์ดังกล่าวและได้นำภาพยนตร์มาช่วยกระตุ้นจำนวนนักท่องเที่ยวในแหล่งท่องเที่ยวอย่างประสบความสำเร็จมาแล้ว บทความนี้จึงเป็นการวิเคราะห์ปรากฏการณ์การท่องเที่ยวเพื่อเยี่ยมชมสถานที่ถ่ายทำภาพยนตร์นี้ โดยการทบทวนวรรณกรรมที่เกี่ยวข้องและการรวบรวมรูปแบบของการใช้ภาพยนตร์มาช่วยส่งเสริมการท่องเที่ยวในอุตสาหกรรมท่องเที่ยวเพื่อจุดประสงค์หลักสองประการ ประการแรก คือ การกระตุ้นให้นักวิจัยเกิดความสนใจในการทำวิจัยในสาขานี้เพิ่มมากขึ้น เพื่อช่วยพัฒนาทฤษฎีที่เกี่ยวข้องกับการตัดสินใจท่องเที่ยว ประการที่สอง คือ การชี้ให้เห็นถึงประโยชน์ของภาพยนตร์ในการช่วยดึงดูดนักท่องเที่ยวสำหรับแหล่งท่องเที่ยวใหม่ที่ต้องการส่งเสริม ซึ่งบทความนี้ได้มีการนำเสนอทิศทางการวิจัยในอนาคตและแนวทางการนำภาพยนตร์มาช่วยส่งเสริมการท่องเที่ยวไว้ด้วย

INTRODUCTION

The tourism industry has reached the stage of maturity. Tourists today are more experienced and become selective in their choice of holidays, in terms of destination and activities. The tourism industry itself is very competitive with many new destinations trying to attract the tourists to their destinations. The days that Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) just simply promote the destinations and then wait for the tourists to visit the destinations are gone. Today tourists need to be enticed in which destinations have to be marketed effectively to maintain the market share and attract new market segment (Ashworth & Goodall, 1990). DMOs have to shift the conventional concept of 'selling existing places' to 'inventing new destinations to be sold'. The emphasis should therefore be on destination positioning and differentiation.

There has been an increasing number of tourists visiting destinations featured through films and television series which are not directly related to tourism promotion campaigns. This phenomenon is called film-induced tourism or movie-induced tourism. Film-induced tourism is defined as tourist visits to the destination featured on television, video, or cinema screen (Hudson & Ritchie, 2006a). Film-induced tourism is one of the fast growing sectors of the tourism industry. The increasing popularity of film-induced tourism owes to the rise of international travel and the growth of entertainment industry (Hudson & Ritchie, 2006b). Schofield (1996) believes that film-induced tourism to rapidly become fashionable since more audience are interested in cinematographic history through actual visiting experience. When people are seeking sights seen on the screen, they are film-induced tourists (Busby & Klug, 2001). For destinations, films do not only provide short-term tourism revenue to the destination but also long-term prosperity. Despite the growing interest of film-induced tourism, it has received little attention from researchers and practitioners.

This paper examines the phenomenon by reviewing previous research and practices to call for more research attention into this particular area and to outline the benefits of film in creating new attractions for a destination. This paper is divided into five main sections. First, the influence of film on tourism demand is discussed. Second, literature related to tourist decision-making and the rise of

film-induced tourism is reviewed to identify the research gap. Third, the benefits of film tourism for the destination in various aspects are elaborated. Fourth, the challenges facing the destination promotion are highlighted and the final section presents the findings on the film-induced tourism practices of leading film tourism destinations.

INFLUENCE OF FILM ON TOURISM DEMAND

It has been widely recognized in tourism literature that destination image greatly influences tourist destination choice. Images of destinations play a significant role in influencing tourist decision-making process as the basis for tourists to make choice about where to visit (Gartner 1989; Echtner & Ritchie 1991). The more favourable the image of the destination, the greater the likelihood of being selected as a destination choice (Chon 1990; Um 1993). Butler (1990) suggests that films can influence the travel preference of those who expose to the destination attributes and create a favorable destination image through their representation. 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. An interest in the nation and its positive image can eventually lead to an actual visit to the country (Iwashita, 2006).

Leisure activities such as watching films as well as traveling are ways to escape. Both provide temporary relief from the real world (Carl et al., 2007). Films can induce viewers to travel by the physical properties (scenery and landscape) and their associated theme, storylines, events and actors, shaping the audience' feelings, emotion and attitudes towards places. Location and film experiences are enhanced in memories by associating them with the actors, events and setting (Iwashita 2006; Riley & Van Doren, 1992). The world of associations and sentiments are enclosed in the viewers' minds as memories and obsessions which give meaning to the locations. Locations, events and characters become iconic attractions as a result of being given powerful meanings in film narrations. People tend to visit particular places by specific images, memories, associations and emotional attachments to places and meanings (Schama, 1996). A summary of different forms and characteristics of film tourism is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Forms and Characteristics of Film-induced Tourism

Form	Characteristics
1. Film-induced tourism as part of a main holiday	Tourists will visit film location or book a film tour for a holiday without any previous destination knowledge
2. Film-induced tourism as a main purpose out of special interest	The booking of a holiday to a destination as a result of its profiles on the screen
3. Film-induced tourism icons as focal points of visit	Natural beauty, historical places, actors can serve as icons
4. Film-induced tourism to places where filming is only believed to have taken place	Tourists visit the filming places even if the film represents a different setting.
5. Film-induced tourism as part of romantic gaze	Tourists like to gaze on places reinforced by the films in solitude, establishing a semi-spiritual relationship with the place
6. Film-induced tourism for reasons of escape	Visiting film locations elevates tourists beyond the mundane reality of everyday life

Source: Adapted from Busby & Klug (2001)

Many film locations around the world become the pull factors for tourists to visit. The American soap opera 'Sex and the City' is one of the examples that has become such a big hit not only in the United States but around the world. Hundreds of restaurants, bars and shops featured in the film turn out to be must-see destinations for tourists visiting New York. The Korean film named 'Stairway to Heaven', one of the popular television series in Asia, was shot in many cliché places but the sentimental location is the merry-go-round at the Lotte World. After the release of the film, the merry-go-round at Lotte World has become the famous

attraction among Asian tourists (Aran, 2007). An evidence of emotional attachment that the film-induced tourists have with the films is the recreation of the impressive scene at the filmed locations. In 'Winter Sonata', the impressive scene that the audience has is when the lovers hold hands while walking on the log. As many visitors attempted to copy the scene from their favorite film, the famous log has been broken and removed from the location since it cannot cope with large number of visitors. Figure 1 shows the film location of 'Stairway to Heaven' and Figure 2 shows the film location of 'Winter Sonata'

Figure 1: Film location of 'Stairway to Heaven'



Source: www.visitkorea.or.kr

Figure 2: Film location of ‘Winter Sonata’



Source: www.visitkorea.or.kr

Certain films are likely to be more successful than others in attracting a number of tourists to the featured destinations. Such success involves various critical factors influencing film-induced tourism (Hudson & Ritchie, 2006b). The story line and site should be closely related in which the film involves the audience an emotional experience which links perfectly with the location (Tooke & Baker, 1996). Repeating exposure would provide greater familiarity, attachment and identification. All these elements will become the push factors for the audience to visit the site, people, experience and fantasies portrayed by the film. The success of a film can be a good predictor of film-induced tourism (Grihault, 2003). Another critical variable is that the

explicit beauty of the setting of the film locations can have a powerful impact on potential tourists.

FILM-INDUCED TOURISM RESEARCH

To influence the choice of destinations, understanding of how decisions are made and which factors can influence them are regarded as the important pieces of information (Woodside & Carr, 1988). There are plenty models explaining the tourist decision-making process which include important variables influencing tourist decisions. Table 2 summarises the list of important variables influencing the tourist decision-making process.

Table 2: List of important variables influencing tourist decision-making process

Variables	Authors
Travel stimuli	Schmoll (1977), Moutinho (1987), Middleton (1994), Chen (1998)
Confidence in travel intermediary	Schmoll (1977), Mathieson and Wall (1982), Moutinho (1987)
Previous travel experience	Schmoll (1977), Mathieson and Wall (1982), Moutinho (1987), Middleton (1994), Goodall (1988), , Chen (1998)
Perceived risks	Schmoll (1977), Mathieson and Wall (1982), Moutinho (1987)
Destination knowledge	Mathieson and Wall (1982), Goodall (1988)

It has long been recognized that travel stimuli through marketing efforts and previous travel experience have played an important role in influencing destination choice. Non-touristic-directed stimuli such as films can also have strong influences on tourist decision-making (Iwashita, 2003). These stimuli have not yet been included in the tourist decision-making models as important variables. The power of film in portraying a positive destination image to induce tourist arrivals to a place is clearly shown in various research (e.g. Tooke & Baker 1996; Iwashita 2006; Kim et al., 2008). Having reviewed the literature, it was found that film-induced tourism is relatively new in tourism research. Research on the impact of film on tourist decision-making is even

lacking (Busby & Klug 2001; Hudson & Ritchie 2006b; Rewtrakunphaiboon 2008). At present, many studies on film-induced tourism mainly focus on western films and the impact of films on the increase of the number of tourist arrivals to the destination.

Only a decade ago, it was noted that there is a lack of academic research in film-induced tourism. Riley et al. (1998) began to analyse the changes of the visitor number at ten former film sites in United States. Busby & Klug (2001) studied the visitor profiles in Notting Hill, London. Kim & Richardson (2003) analysed how ‘Before Sunrise’ filmed in Vienna and ‘Groundhog Day’ filmed in Pennsylvania can influence the viewers’ perceptions of a place. Hudson & Ritchie (2006b) examined the impact of

'Captain Corelli's Mandolin' on the Island of Cephalonia in Greece. Iwashita (2006) surveyed the impact of UK popular cultures on Japanese visitors to UK. Carl et al. (2007) explores the film tourists' motivation, expectation and satisfactions of landscapes of the location of 'Lord of the Rings'. Recently, research related to Asian films by Kim et al. (2008) initially investigated the impact of Korean drama series in reducing tension and mistrust between Japan and Korea while Rewtrakunphaiboon (2008) proposed a framework for studies on the impact of film on tourist destination choice. The study focuses on the impact of Korean films on destination choice.

BENEFITS OF FILM TOURISM

One of the major economic benefits that film-induced tourism can bring to the local community is enduring tourism receipts. Film locations can be all-year, all-weather attractions which alleviates problems of seasonality in the tourism industry (Beeton, 2004). Riley et al. (1998) studied 12 films and found that the peak of the interest appear after the release of the film, approximately 50% increase in visitation at least five years later and the image is often retained for a long time. There are a number of studies shown in Table 3 that reveal the increasing visitation numbers at film locations

Table 3: Impact of Film on Visitor Number

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 (2006a)

Another significant benefit of the film tourism is that it increases the cultural value for the film location. Film tourism is a medium of which a range of cultural meanings and values may be communicated. Many heritage sites that serve as film locations gain popularity after the film release because these places acquire specific meaning through film narration. Without film storylines, a castle or a stately home may not be indistinguishable from others (Busby & Klug, 2001).

Film can enhance 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 powerful since they can continuously reinforce the appeal of the destination that build top-of the mind awareness. One of the most recent destinations that has largely benefited from film-induced tourism is New Zealand. 'The Piano' provides positive benefits for tourism in New Zealand and was depicted in posters to promote international tourism advertising. The image of New Zealand has been further reinforced since it has been the backdrop of the three 'Lord of the Rings' films. The New Zealand tourism website promotes the country as 'Home of Middle-earth'. Other well-known films shot in New Zealand include 'The Last Samurai', 'Whale Rider' and 'Perfect Strangers'.

DESTINATION PROMOTION CHALLENGES

Natural, historical and man-made attractions have been traditionally recognized as the main types of tourist attractions. DMOs have repeatedly promoted these attractions in all sorts of advertisements. A number of these attractions is limited and DMOs may find it difficult to attract tourists who have visited the attractions to revisit the destination. Some DMOs have actively promoted 'hall marks events' as another type of attraction that enhances destination image and acts as a luring device for tourists to the destination. Ritchie (1984) defines 'hall marks events' 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'. The hallmark events include trade fairs, festivals, culturally unique events, historical commemorations, major socio-political happenings and sporting events. Although films can be useful to promote new destinations, only several have taken such advantages. Riley (1994) suggests that films can be used as a showcase of tourist attractions within the frame of the story allowing the potential tourists to develop a complete destination image. Audience can view the movie repeatedly and with each encounter, there is a potential to attract the audience as visitors to the film locations.

Promoting tourist destinations to potential holidaymakers through short advertisement segment of radio, newspaper, television and magazine is a very expensive proposition. For example, Europe, the leading continent in term of number of international tourist arrivals, spent €600 million in 2007 for their advertising campaigns (Risse, 2008). Although Thailand reduces 25% budget for tourism advertising campaigns, Tourism Authority of Thailand alone spent 1.2 billion baht in total for their advertising campaigns (Intarakomalyasut, 2004) Through the promotion, DMOs hope that the potential holidaymakers will be favorably impressed with the destinations through the exposure of the advertising spots and print media and such efforts could induce visitation to the destination. However, current tourism promotion lacks the resource to prolong destination exposure to capture awareness and sustain the interest of potential holidaymakers (Riley, 1994). Moreover, consumers are exposed to hundreds of print and broadcast advertisement which confuse their consumption each day. It is suggested that destination promotion through films is one of the effective solutions for the challenges facing DMOs at present. Films can fulfill the deficiencies of prolonged exposure as well as sustain the interest of the audience (Riley, 1994). Promoting through films would be even more powerful for unknown tourist destinations with lesser expense than traditional advertising campaigns.

FILM-INDUCED TOURISM IN PRACTICE

There are many strategies used by various DMOs to market film locations through promotion and product development. One of the effective strategies to induce film tourists is collaborative campaigns with the film industry (Grihault, 2003). DMOs are beginning to forge relationships and provide incentives for film commissions to track productions and film releases so the organizations can act as soon as they see the signs of a film. Various DMOs are trying to entice producers to make films in their countries since it clearly shows that the economic impact is immense. England is a good example of how film and television has been a blessing on their tourism industry. Approximately 28 million visitors visit Britain each year after viewing the country on the screen (Kim et al., 2008). VisitBritain made attempts to invite Indian film producers to use locations in UK for 'Bollywood' films even if the locations are used as backdrops for other countries. The Australian Tourism Commission (ATC) recently collaborates with Disney on 'Finding Nemo', being the first DMO to promote a destination through an animated film. The Singapore Tourism Board launching The Film in Singapore! Scheme (FSS) aims to facilitate international film-makers and broadcasters in the shooting, production and post-production of quality movies and television programmes in Singapore. Each film-maker or broadcaster may be granted financial support based on the extent to how the film or programme can uniquely showcase Singapore's locations (Singapore Tourism Board, 2008). These DMOs also works closely with film distributors and other partners to ensure that the maximum exposure of the location is obtained. This is because they are fully aware that the exposure to a film gives a town, city or country a better opportunity to be viewed by potentially millions of audience than targeted through a tourism promotion campaign (Hudson & Ritchie, 2006b).

Movie maps have also been widely used by DMOs to promote film locations of the destination. Movie maps have been found to be successful as part of film tourism marketing campaigns (Hudson & Ritchie, 2006b). They can ease film tourists to trace the locations where the films took place. VisitBritain produced a movie map highlighting over 200 filmed locations across Britain which presented film-related places. These materials have quickly become Visit-Britain most successful printed product. The maps generate media prompting people to discover different parts of Britain as they follow the footsteps of the screened actors (Demetradi, 1996). Other destinations that have produced movie maps include United States, Australia, New Zealand and Korea. Figure 3 illustrates an example of an interactive movie map of London where visitors can view movie map locations by underground station.

Figure 3: Interactive movie map



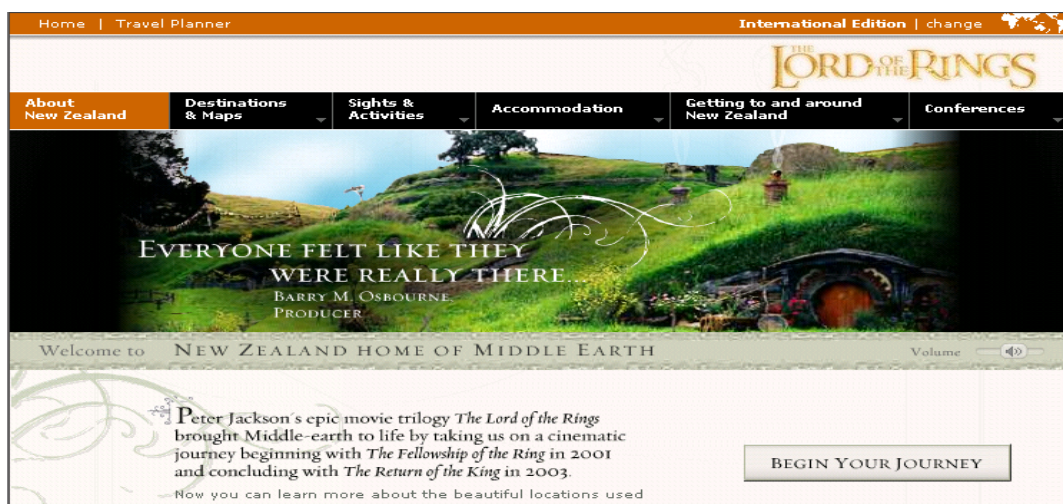
Source: www.movie-london.net

Promotion of hotels, guesthouses and dining places featured in the film can be a powerful magnet to generate tourism. These places can be differentiated from others through films. A small hotel such as The Crown Hotel at Amersham, England, successfully promotes the room used by Hugh Grant in 'Four Weddings and a Funeral'. The hotel was fully booked for at least three years after the film's release. In Cephalonia, Greece, some owners advertise their lodging as the location of the alleged affair between Nicholas Cage and Penelope

Cruz in 'Captain Corelli's Mandolin' (Hudson & Ritchie, 2006b).

Websites that link particular films to their film locations is a very effective promotional tool to induce tourists to the destination (Croy & Walker, 2003). This promotion strategy has been used in New Zealand where Tourism New Zealand developed part of its website to specifically promote 'The Lord of the Rings' and other film locations throughout the country. Figure 4 shows the 'The Lord of the Rings' website.

Figure 4: 'The Lord of the Rings' website

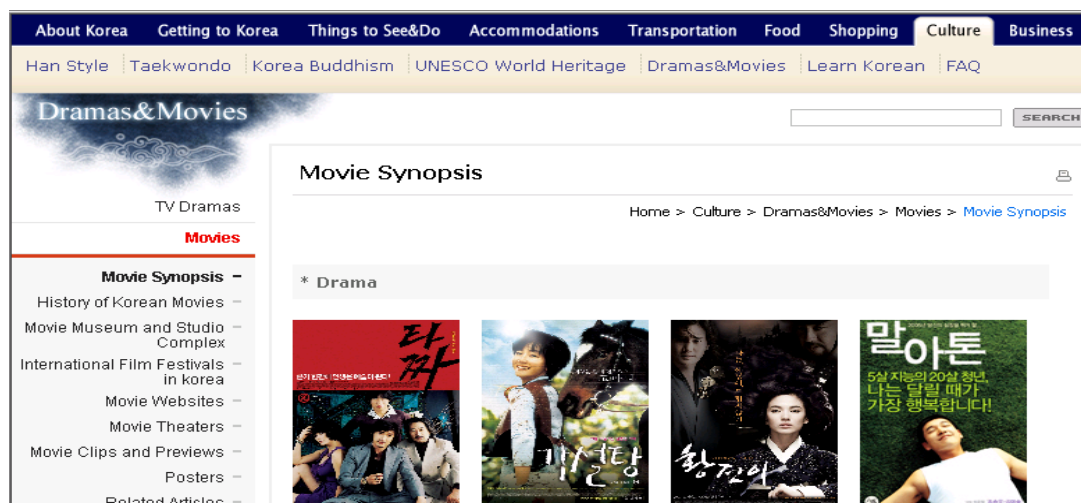


Source: <http://www.newzealand.com>

Other marketing strategies which have been used by DMOs include guided film tours and film walks. These tours rely heavily on the illustrations from the films so that the tourists can recognize the real landscapes used in the film. Furthermore, there should be a dedicated film tourism website that provides film synopsis, links to film-related websites,

necessary information about traveling in the destination such as suggested tours, accommodation, food and shopping as well as opportunities to learn more about the film destination such as history, language, religion, lifestyle and leisure activities at the destination. Figure 5 shows the Korea film tourism website.

Figure 5: Korea film tourism website



Source: www.visitkorea.or.kr

CONCLUSION

This paper provides an illuminating view of film-induced tourism by highlighting a research gap in tourism research and calling for more empirical studies into this area. It further reveals 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 Korea. Lessons learned from these countries can benefit many destinations that intend to use films to promote existing or new attractions. Despite the benefits of films on tourism and the lessons learned from various DMOs, many tourism organizations have been very slow to employ marketing opportunities through films. This may be due to the lack of research and knowledge on how to implement film marketing strategies.

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 great impact on tourist destination choice, film-induced tourism is regarded as a complex and dynamic concept and

success depends on a number of factors beyond the control of DMOs (Hudson & Ritchie, 2006b). Further research is needed on the critical success of the film tourism and the psychological aspects of tourist behavior in visiting film locations.

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, 2006b). 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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