

## **Film Tourism and Destination Marketing: Case studies of In-bound and Out-bound in Thailand**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Factors affecting film tourism have been shown in generating both positive and negative impacts on the destination country. Film and television can have a very positive impact on tourism visits. However, number of tourist visit can also cause negative impact on polluting the environment of a tour site, as well as disturbing local citizens from the influx of tourists. The objective of this study is to determine the effectiveness of media in motivating film tourism. The study employs film tourism theory as a theoretical framework stating that tourists are motivated to visit a destination through push or pull motive factors. The findings indicated that destinations appear in the film attract tourists to travel to the filming location. However, the influx of tourists not only positively affects but also creates negative results in the destination. This study confirms tourist decision-making theory that variety of marketing activities can leverage film tourism and motivate tourists to visit a destination through push or pull motive factors.

Keywords: Film tourism, Destination marketing, Tourism impact, Film destination

### **I Introduction**

The 11th National Economic and Social Development Plan promotes tourism as a strategy to generate revenue into the country. The government expects to generate revenue from tourism more than two trillion Baht in the year of 2015. Business tourism is the main business of generating revenue for the country. The government policy fully supports entertainment tourism as an approach to attract tourists. South Korea is successful in the entertainment industry as a tourism attraction. The South Korean government fully supports the use of easy to access media to publish the beauty of nature and culture to the world. Many tourists go to travel in South Korea because they want to track their favorite movie series. Therefore, the growth rate of South Korea tourism is a top of Asia. This is consistent with the findings of Fontip Barmeerattanachai (2551) from the study of "The influence of Korean drama on Korean tourism in Bangkok." The research found that the impression in Korean drama influence the decision to go to Korea at the highest level. Korean movie influences the tourism behavior of people interesting in Korea at the high level. Nowadays, Chinese's tourist market is considered a major target market of Thailand. Chinese market is one of the top four priority markets among the other three remaining countries; Brazil, Russia, India. With continuously growth, there are 150,000 - 160,000 Chinese's tourists come into Thailand since October 2012, which generate revenue 6,000 million bath to the country.

Chinese people know more about Thailand, particularly Pattaya, after the China's Film name "Go LALA Go! (杜拉拉升职记)" was shot in Thailand. Thus, it became a destination for Chinese's tourists to visit when coming to Thailand. Moreover, the Chinese film "Lost in Thailand" (泰囧) cause Chinese want to come to Thailand even more, especially Chiang Mai. Several Chinese signs and symbols were made and place in Chiang Mai in order to support these film tourists. Chiang Mai university, one for the filming location, also prepare the place and hotel for Chinese's tourists who track the trail of this movie. Moreover, Bangkok, Phuket and Pattaya also becoming more popular as this filming tourist also want to visit such forever famous destination as well. Chinese film chooses Thailand to be the filming location in order to entertain the audience. However, it can automatically promote Thailand, which indirectly creates such positive impact upon the nation. Tourism business stakeholders are directly benefited from this film tourism. Chinese tourism expert said that more than 100,000 Chinese's tourists came into Thailand and generated more than 800 million Yuan during Chinese New Year 2013.

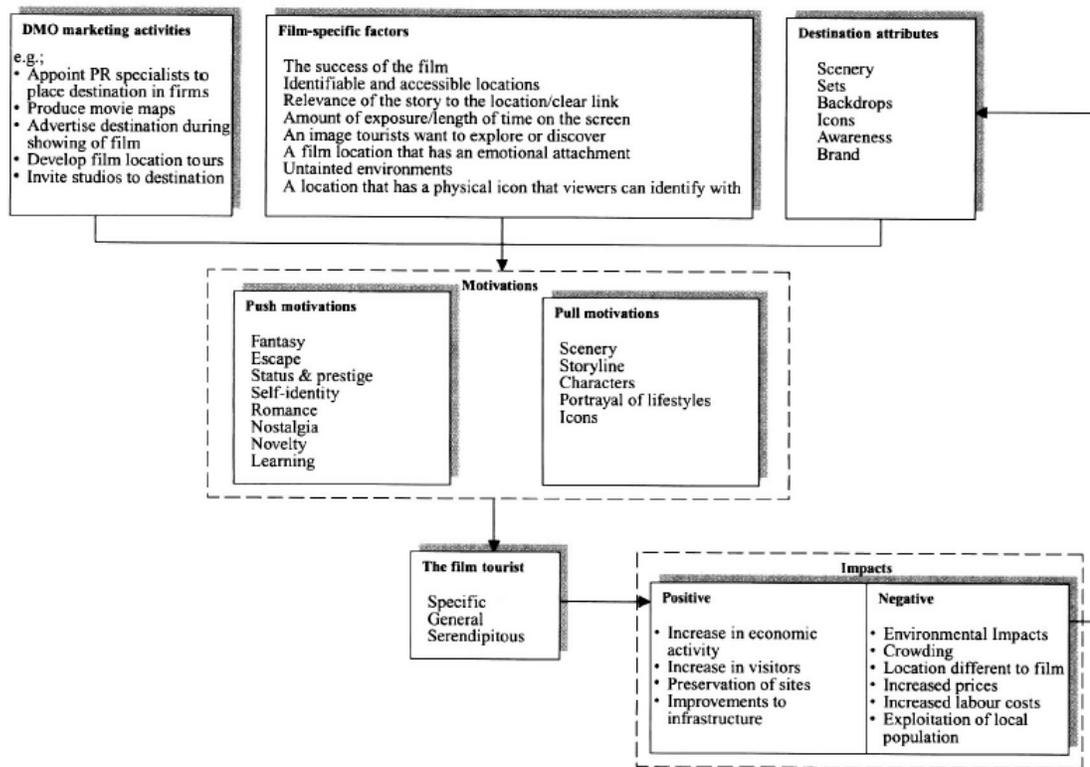
The popularity of this movie affects an increasing number of Chinese's tourists who travel in Thailand during the period as it can convey knowledge, ideas and stories to a widespread public. The movie is a medium that contains characteristics such as realism, special effects to create realistic images, photos, and audio, which make movies can relay events, feeling, understanding, and facts better than other media. Moreover, movie can be used as a medium of interaction between societies and as a tool to convey the language, traditions, attitudes, beliefs, values, and culture from one society to other societies, both on a personal and public level. Media industry does not produce general consumer goods but produce a cultural product and ideological message which influence over people's mind. (Vipa Udomchan 2001 referred in Chutima Chunhakarn, 2007). Today, TV drama helps people to reduce stress and enjoy life. Meanwhile, it also is a source of knowledge that teaches audiences how to behave in the society. Moreover, TV drama is also acting as socializing agent that represented and telling members of the society to realize the goals and values of the society. However, TV audiences have learned these things unconsciously. (Tippaya Sookpornvittawas, 2001)

Factors affecting film tourism have been shown in generating both positive and negative impacts on the destination country. Film and television can have a very positive impact on tourism visits. However, number tourist visit can also cause negative impact on polluting the environment of the tour site, as well as disturbing local citizens from the influx of tourists. Film tourism is considered as an interesting topic that should further study as its growing popularity and widespread throughout the world. In many countries, a film tourism is used as a spring-board to create massive revenue for the country.

## **II. Conceptual and Theory of Film Tourism**

Film tourism also called movie-induced tourism or film-induced tourism, means that tourists visiting attractive destinations that conveyed through the movie, VDO, TV, CD, DVD, and other media. Simon Hudson and J.R. Brent Ritchie (2005) found film tourism is inspired by these factors (1) destination marketing activities (2) film-specific factors and (3) destination attributes. These three factors result in the push- pull motivations to film theorist.

Figure 1 A framework for understanding film tourism



### 1. Destination Marketing Activities

Destination marketing activities, before-during-after, release of a film can attract a number of tourists into the province or country. Past researches found the success of various countries that encouraged producers to make films in their region in order to PR their region and gain benefit from film tourism impact. In some countries, Ministry of Tourism has made an official collaboration with the film industry in order to promote their location and induce film tourists through a film. Another successful film tourism campaign is "Movie Maps" which could be used as a location guide for film tourists and also film souvenir. Guide tours and film walk can also use for destination marketing activities to follow the success of the movie.

### 2. Film-specific factors

Previous research indicated that certain movies can create pull motivation and more successful if story line and site are closely interrelated. Audiences will tend to look for the site if any movie can repeat viewing or link the audience emotional with location as they feel familiar and bound to it. Moreover, film fantasies portrayed that can reflect the authentic image destination and capture the essence of a place tend to be more successful in attracting film

tourists. In addition, the amount of destination exposure and the length of time the location is on the screens are also other critical factors affecting film tourism.

### 3. Destination attributes

Some film destination is the more attractive film tourist than others. Dream destination of film tourist is typically an extraordinary beautiful landscape or a unique social and cultural vantage point. It could be a place that tourists wish to explore or rediscover after they see it in the movie screen. Furthermore, movie icon is also another important part of film tourism as it can become the focal point for visitors and associated location.

#### **Film Tourist Motivation**

Motivation of film tourism can be divided into push and pull motivation. 1) Push motivation factors are internal drivers that force people to travel at film destination such as the need of socialization, the demand of escape, the seeking of pilgrimage, the desire of romance, the feeling of nostalgia or just simply as the need for suntan. 2) Pull motivation factors are the attraction of the film that magnetizes audience into the film destination.

Macionis divides these factors into three types (1) place (location, landscapes, scenery and attributes), (2) Personality (characters, celebrity and casting), and (3) Performance (plot, theme, and genre) Moreover, the movie tends to attract more film tourists if the movie can portray the lifestyle of people in the location or if there is a movie icon that extraordinary attach to a location.

Cohen mentions other factors that attract the film tourists. Firstly, the setting of the film will catch the viewer's perception of a destination as a potential destination. More the setting is in the foreground of the story, the more it will leave an impression on the audience's mind. Secondly, the length of time and the part of the movie that's the audience see the location. Lastly, the explicitness of the movie setting is also impact film tourism as the more explicit the setting the more effect it will have.

#### **The film tourist typology**

Macionis classifies film tourist into 3 major groups as 1) specific film tourists who come to visit the place they watch in the movie, 2) general film tourists who participate in film tourism and come to the place of film destination unintentionally. 3) serendipitous film tourists who just happen to be in a destination portrayed in a film.

#### **Impact**

Besides the increasing number of tourists and economic activities which increase revenue for the country. Another benefit of film tourism is the tourists travel to the country all year round, not just seasonal like a typical tourist. Research indicates that many of the government's policies attract tourists into the country using a tourist film as a medium. Some countries develop the infrastructure and landscaping of the city in preparation for support filmmakers and tourists who will visit. As a result, the tourists continue to travel to the film location, although the movie is not new. The research found that 54% of the 12 films that can

attract visitors for more than five years. However, a large number of influx tourists may cause undesirable consequences such as natural environment destruction, traffic congestion, higher labor cost, and loss of privacy and facilities for locals.

### **III. Facts Concerning In-bound and Out-bound in Thailand**

The success of Korea's film tourism can be seen as many of Thai people want to go to Korea after watching Korean drama or movie. The Korean government has a policy to encourage foreigners to visit the country and to promote tourism in all kinds of styles. There is a commentary from the 5th media integration seminar on the topic of Educational Media Literacy: Knowing Deep, Choosing Better, Going Great between 27-29 August 2013 at Mahidol University.

Mrs. Supinya Klangnarong from National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission, Mr. Bundit Lunta managing director of Paradisalmedia Co., Ltd. and Assistant Professor Porntip Yenja editor from Kasetsart University offered commentaries why Korean dramas are popular in many countries. After studying more than 100 Korea movies, Asst.

Prof. Porntip concluded that the Korean drama presents the good image of the nation through the conservative of the couple. Every movie has a scene of lovers kissing less than three times. Scene couples sleeping in the same bed always cover by a thin curtain. When couples in love, they'll do whatever it takes to get married properly without having sex before marriage. In some stories, a man must win the heart of mother in law, prove himself or even establish his financial status before he can marry with the woman he loves. Korean characters always have a distinct career. The makeup and costumes are realistic such as women are not make up while cooking. Korean movies will not teach directly, but will offer content naturally. For example, "Dae Jang Geum" is the movie that teaches how to cook Korean dishes, "Doctor Ho Chun" present doctor's life. The audience unaware gain the knowledge with entertainment.

Alisa Wittwassakul (2006) conducted a research "Public relations approach in promoting the Republic of Korea's images through television drama Dae Jang Geum - A Jewel in the Palace." After conducting documentary research, the researcher operate in-depth interview with the 53 participants from these following organizations. The Korea Tourism-Supporting Manager, Head of Public Relations, Public Relations Department of Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), Program Acquisition Officer of the Thai Television Channel 3, Editor from Siam-Inter Multimedia Publishing PLC, Editor from Tawan- Song Publishing, Korean drama tour, Film Critiques, Professional Writer of Stage Plays, Korean living in Thailand, Dae Jang Geum fan club. Country promotions by using TV dramas are very is very successful. TV dramas considered as a cultural product, moral, lifestyle and tour destination, etc. Viewers have a positive attitude towards South Korea and their dramas. Therefore, promotion strategy for Korean dramas is important in choosing a good cultural content as well as entertains viewers. The success of this film results in the rising trend of the Korean Drama's Trails Tour.

Weerawan Sanitnok et al (2007) studied "The impact of Korean drama toward Korean trend consumption of the Bangkok population." The results showed that most of the

respondents have watched a Korean drama for 1-2 years through regular TV program. The frequency of watching a movie is not much as they watch Korean movie once in a while. Interesting content is the main factor that respondents use to select the movie. Most audiences have a positive attitude toward South Korea after the end of the movie. On the other hand, the success of film tourism in Thailand is the impact of Chinese Movie that cause massive of Chinese people comes into Thailand. Nowadays, many Chinese's tourists interested in visiting Thailand. Evident from the statistics of nearly 600,000 tourists submit Thailand tourist visa application at the Consulate in Shanghai in 2012 which approximately 50 percent increase from 2011. Particularly, when there is a phenomenon that Chinese apply for a Thai visa from the consulate reach up to 9,000 people per day. This is clearly shown that the Chinese people are interested in traveling to Thailand. (O-pas Luengdaorong, Thailand's data center in China, China, 28 January 2013) One of the keys driving factors of Chinese's tourist in Thailand is the impact movie called "Lost in Thailand" which reflect that movie plays an important role in promoting tourism in Thailand. So if we can further push and encourage entertainment in Thailand to Chinese's audiences, then, Thailand's tourism sector and all tourism-related businesses would gain more benefit from the film tourism.

Lost in Thailand is a low-budget comedy road movie that shoots in Thailand by using Chiang Mai as a main filming location. The film is about two businessmen who come to Thailand before the end of the world which believed to be on the date of 21 December 2012. The movie was holding the highest grossing first release film of the day and month which generated over the 100 million yuan in one day and 320 million yuan during 12-15 December 2013. Lost in Thailand have broken the record of Painted Skin II: The Resurrection which launched in the same year and also overtake Hollywood movie like Titanic 3-D and Transformers 3. The success of this movie had brought massive Chinese's tourists into Thailand. And also results in building a reputation for "Rose Chalisa" Lady boys of Thailand leading actor in the story as well Xinhua news agency has put her pictures in Photos of pretty she-male in Lost In Thailand. Kaseirn Wattanachaowisut, Chamber of Thai-Chinese Tourism Alliance Association stated that film tourism creates great impact for Thailand tourism as Chinese is a major market for Thailand's tourism.

Therefore, we should encourage the movie makers to use Thailand as a filming location, especially in the Northern part of the country in order to diversify income throughout the country from where normally Chinese comes to Bangkok and the coastal area. Anchalee Kulmapijit, the executive of Maetaman elephant camp and bamboo rafting, comment that recently many of Chinese's tourists have come to the place. Most come on a group tour to watch elephant show, ride a cart, and ride elephant along Maetang river. The overall time of the trip is three hours with a personal charge for 1500 Baths includes meals. She expects 20% more of Chinese tourist will come during this new year.

Wasan Tachakun, president of Ban Tawai Handicrafts entrepreneurs association, claimed that many Chinese's tourists shop for souvenirs at Ban Tawai such as carving wood, wooden furniture and home decoration. She expects 50,000 Chinese's tourists to come to Ban Tawan trade and commerce festival during the new year which should produce approximately 30,000 million bath.

Mr. Panom Meesuk, an executive of Chiang Mai Adventure Tour and also a president of

the Cooperative of Chiang Mai Tours & Professional Guides (CCTG), state that Chinese film "Lost in Thailand," can stimulate tourism but actually Chinese's tourists already want to come and stay in Chiang Mai since it's nearby Kunming province that offers direct flights to Chiang Mai. Chinese's tourists are bustling this year with approximately 50,000 people, or 50% of the total foreign tourist. 3-5 star hotels were booked out during New Year festival.

Chinese's tourists like to visit temples such as Wat Phra That Doi Suthep, Wat Chedi Luang, Wat Chiang Man, Underworld City - Wiang Kumkam, Elephant Camp, Orchid Farm, Snake Farm, Zoo, shopping and Walking Street and Night Bazaar. Average spending 3,500-4,000 Baht / person / day, expected revenues 2,000-3,000 million Baht per year.

Unlike American or European that like natural tourism, Chinese's tourists Chinese's tourists like to ride bikes downtown of Chiang Mai to sightseeing the historic site around the moat and historic community lifestyle. If there is a flight from Beijing - Chiang Mai and Shanghai - Chiang Mai, it will enable high purchasing power tourists to make a direct fly to Chiang Mai, which will double the number of Chinese's tourists into Thailand.

UNEYAO Airlines (吉祥航空) opened the flights Shanghai - Bangkok on 16 January 2013 to accommodate the number of Chinese's tourists wishing to visit Thailand, which has greatly increased. Partly as a result of the film "Lost in Thailand" that greatly built a reputation for tourism in Thailand.

Mr. Jao Hungleng (赵宏亮), president of JUNEYAO Airlines Co., Ltd., informed during a courtesy call on Consulate General in Shanghai on 22 January 2013 that the purposes of opening China-Thailand flights were to serve as a bridge between China and Thailand in order to stimulate the economy and tourism business of both areas. Another purpose of opening this flight is to be a choice for travelers who travel between Chiang Hai - Bangkok. Mr. Jao Hungleng saw the increasing of Chinese's tourists come to Thailand. Some of them have seen the movie "Lost in Thailand" and want to travel to Thailand so such flights can support this group of people.

#### IV. Analysis Film Tourism

Destination Marketing Activities, before-during-after the movie launch, can attract a number of tourists into the filming location. The research found that a city or a country with progressive ideas on building relationships with filmmakers and offer their location for the filming in order to PR the city or countries. Such countries or cities using this strategy are very successful with their film tourism such as Naomi Island.

Namiseom is a tiny half-moon shaped island located in Chuncheon, South Korea. It formed as it was inundated by the rising waters of the North Han River as the result of the construction of Cheongpyeong Dam. The island has a flat area, no mountains, previously known in Korean only. However, it's become famous spread over many countries in Asia after the filming of a movie "Winter Sonata". To this day, tourists from around the world flock to follow this drama until the overflow island.

In terms of film-specific factors, South Korean use movie "Dae Jang Geum" making people across Asia familiar with the kimchi and Hanboks. It can attract tourists from all over the world to see that traditional culture and be mixed together with modern culture. This illustrates that historical films can build such global impact.

The attributes of destination attributes can also make tourists want to visit or re-visit the place. The specialty of location is a key component of attraction that makes the audience recognize and want to visit the place. For example, 400-500 Chinese's tourists who come to Chiang Mai after watched the movie "Lost in Thailand" will go visit many of the film locations, including Chiang Mai University.

There are two kinds of motivations in film tourism, which is push-motivation and pull-motivation. Push motivation is a drive from internal to tourist. Pull motivation is a drive from the movie that make the audience want to visit such a location.

Kaseirn Wattanachaowisut, Chamber of Thai-Chinese Tourism Alliance Association, said that from this day forwards many tour agencies would operate more film tourism by using Chiang Mai as a main location follow by Chiang Rai, Mae Hong Sorn or moving to Lumphang, Payao, Prae, and Nan where abundance of destination and local culture still remain.

The popularity of this film tourism increases all kinds of film tourists in Thailand, which include those who come to visit the place they watch in the movie, those who participate in film tourism and come to the place of film destination unintentionally, and those who just happen to be in a destination portrayed in a film.

Pornsupa Umnouyjitlerd staff in Tourist Police Volunteers - Ministry of Tourism and Sport, revealed that she and her team standby at 20 sites of tourism destination and landmark in Chiang Mai, including temples, police station, natural attractions, the University of Chiang Mai, Phu Ping palace, Zoo, and Night Safari.

She said that there are more than 400 tourists asking for direction each day. She also makes conversation with many tourists while performing her duty trip. She said that most of the tourist came to see the place, culture and also education at CMU. Some of them even want to send their children to study here.

Most of Teenager tourists come for natural attraction, elephant riding, rafting, shopping at the Night Bazaar and Walking Street. Many of them come to track for the film "Lost in Thailand" by going to the various filming locations which including Thai restaurant and mango sticky rice store. Although the movie is not currently on the screen but many tourists still travel to the filming location.

Nareerut Seaubvichai, the owner of mango sticky rice store name "Mango Tango," said that 50-100 Chinese's tourists come to eat mango sticky rice, mango juice, mango dessert and mango ice cream each day. The tourists will come to the shop around noon and most coming in the afternoon. Travelers prefer to eat a mango can be caused from a movie. Moreover, photo sharing via social media tourists would be about attracting more tourists to come.

The drawbacks may result from the influx of tourists, including environmental impacts, congestion, traffic jams, rising prices, higher labor costs. And inconvenience to local residents. Many people dress like CMU students to take pictures as souvenirs as well as tent camping stay on campus. After such events, the university has rules banning Chinese's tourists visiting the University arbitrarily. CMU arranges parking areas, with tram tour services and guided with an inexpensive charge. It is effective and can organize Chinese's tourists at a certain level.

## V. Conclusion

Film tourism is a significant tool that makes the tourists know and accept country or destination, which can be led to the relationship of cultural, social, trading, investment, until macro economy. Thus Thai government should support and encourage movie industry to develop Thailand's film to be international accept. Creating film tourism needs to be shoot in beautiful location in order to attract and drive audience's demand to go to that destination. Many tour agency launch film tourism program for some movie that can create or change location identity. Social research institute of Chiang Mai university presents the research finding in Thailand-China strategic research seminar (2nd) on 19 October 2013 at Huachiew Chalermprakiet University in Xiamen Fujian, China. The research name "Modern Chinese Tourist Behaviors in Chiang Mai after the Movie Lost in Thailand" was conducted recently. The result found the change of Chinese's tourists behavior in Thailand which more interest in film tourism. Particularly in the case of the movie called "Lost in Thailand" that change the first destination of Chinese's tourist from Phuket or Pattaya into Chiang Mai. Department of tourism policies on using film tourism to increase new destination and create a variety of tourism and expect to gain 2,500 million baht from film tourism in 2014. Therefore, all stakeholders involved in the film tourism should focus on increasing the positive impact and reducing the negative impact.

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