EXTENDED ABSTRACT

SCREEN TOURISM: MOTIVATIONS, TOURIST PROFILE AND PERCEIVED SATISFACTION

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Screen tourism, also known as film-induced tourism or film tourism, is tourism driven by movies and television series (Hudson and Ritchie, 2006; Mellinas, 2019). While some authors consider it a niche market (Macionis and Sparks, 2009) or see it as playing a secondary role in travel decision-making (Croy and Heitmann, 2011), screen tourism can act as a catalyst for tourist demand (Bolan and Williams, 2008), attracting tourists or increasing their interest in visiting destinations that have been used as locations for movies or TV series.

New Zealand is the paradigm of screen tourism, with 69% of its visitors stating that they choose this destination to explore specific locations featured in films and TV series shot in the country (TravelPulse, 2022). Much of the film-induced tourism in the country can be attributed to the success of "The Lord of the Rings" (Buchmann, *et al*., 2010; Jones and Smith, 2005). The second most significant example is "Game of Thrones" (Moses and Vasquez, 2020), which has promoted tourism in various locations used for filming (Contú and Pau, 2022; Mellinas, 2019; Gómez-Morales *et al*., 2022).

As modern tourists seek new experiences (Aertsen *et al*., 2022), screen tourism represents a significant opportunity for the tourism sector (Bongkosh and Suphaporn, 2015). In fact, many governments and institutions support film productions at both national and international levels (Li *et al*., 2017). However, several researchers have highlighted the lack of research on screen tourism in terms of the motivations driving this type of tourism (Irimiás *et al*., 2021; Kim et al., 2010; Macionis and Sparks, 2009; Oviedo-García *et al*., 2016; Rodríguez *et al*., 2013). The profile of this type of tourist is also not well-known (Rodríguez *et al*., 2013; Kim and O'Connor, 2011), nor to what extent screen tourism can meet the initial expectations of tourists before they visit a destination (Bitner and Hubert, 1994; Oshriyeh and Capriello, 2022).

To address these gaps in the field of film tourism, this research aims to: 1) investigate the main motivations driving this screen tourism, 2) determine the profile of screen

tourists, and 3) understand whether screen tourism can meet the expectations held before visiting the destination. To address these objectives, two empirical studies, one qualitative and one quantitative, were conducted.

To address the first objective of this study, the theory of motivations based on the push and pull factors was used (Dann, 1977). This theory categorizes motivations into two categories: those driven by internal factors (push) and those influenced by external factors (pull) (Dann, 1977; Uysal and Hagan, 1993). This work focuses on push motivations, as they are directly related to the decision to visit a location featured in a movie or TV series. Based on the literature review (Chen and Chen, 2015; Irimiás *et al*., 2021; Kim, 2012; Macionis, 2004; Mehmetoglu and Engen, 2011; Macionis and Sparks, 2009; Oviedo-García *et al*., 2016), we propose a set of five push motivations:

Immersion in the movie/series: This motivation considers the extent to which it is important for potential tourists to fully immerse themselves in the atmosphere of the movie or series, feeling as if they are inside the plot or even forming a connection with it. Previous research has shown that tourists who are emotionally connected to movies and series, sometimes forming strong bonds with characters, are more likely to visit locations where these productions were filmed.

Escapism: Movies and series have the ability to provide an escape from reality and transport viewers to an unreal world. This motivation assesses to what extent potential tourists have the desire to escape their current environment and, as a result, visit a destination featured in a film or series.

Novelty: Tourists may seek a unique experience during their trip, whether it's having a one-of-a-kind experience or adding something different to their vacation. This motivation revolves around living a unique and special experience by visiting a destination associated with movies or TV series.

Entertainment: This motivation considers the extent to which potential tourists can be entertained and enjoy the experience of visiting a destination featured in a movie or series they have seen. Fun is a common motivation in tourism and often involves active participation in various activities.

Landscape/place: This motivation considers the importance for potential tourists of seeing the location where the movie or series was filmed, allowing them to recall the production and feel connected to it.

Since watching movies or series has the power to stimulate tourism to the locations featured in them (Kim and Wang, 2012), it is likely to generate a set of prior expectations in potential tourists about what they can experience at the destination. These expectations may be influenced by the narrative itself, as well as by certain signals or symbolic meanings represented in the narrative. Fulfilling these expectations is essential for tourist satisfaction, as their level of satisfaction depends largely on the comparison between their prior expectations and the reality, they encounter at the tourist destination.

Furthermore, expectations related to a destination are also connected to the initial motivations (Spreng and Olshavsky, 1993). Therefore, before moving to a quantitative study to test the various motivations, a qualitative study was conducted to investigate the degree to which screen tourism can meet expectations and its possible relationship with motivations.

In the qualitative study, four in-depth interviews were conducted with individuals who had prior experiences with screen tourism. The goal of these interviews was to determine whether this type of tourist experience could satisfy the expectations individuals had formed before their visit. Participants were also asked about their motivations for visiting the destination, providing initial insights into whether the set of motivations proposed arose spontaneously among the interviewees. The interviews included two women and two men between the ages of 24 and 31.

For the quantitative study, an online survey was designed to address the three research objectives. The survey link was shared on various tourism forums in the spring of 2021. The survey collected information related to the motivations driving screen tourism, tourist habits and interests, sociodemographic variables (gender, age, education), behaviour regarding movie and series viewing (frequency, subscription to streaming platforms, viewing time), prior experience with screen tourism, and satisfaction derived from this type of experience.

Regarding the first research objective of identifying the motivations driving screen tourism, it can be concluded that three of the five proposed motivations (immersion in the movie/series, escapism, and entertainment) significantly influence the intention to visit. Interestingly, immersion in the movie/series was also mentioned as a relevant motivation in two of the in-depth interviews conducted in the qualitative study.

As for the profile of screen tourists, the results indicate that film tourists tend to be somewhat older than those with no prior experience in this type of tourism. They also watch movies more frequently and are more often connected to streaming platforms. Additionally, they are individuals who enjoy meeting new people while traveling and have an appreciation for the cuisine of tourist destinations.

Finally, concerning the third objective of this research, which is to understand the degree of satisfaction following the visit and the level of confirmation of expectations, it was observed that film tourism proved to be quite satisfying, with an average rating of 6.53 on a 7-point scale. The most mentioned destinations in the online survey were London (17 mentions), Rome (15), and New York (8). The level of confirmation of prior expectations was also quite high, with an average rating of 5.62 on a 7-point scale. However, the qualitative study revealed that having overly high initial expectations can be self-defeating leading to greater disappointment if those expectations are not met.

Given the positive results of screen tourism in terms of post-visit satisfaction, it is worthwhile to recommend some actions that tourism managers can undertake to promote tourism in destinations where movies and TV series have been previously filmed. Some of the actions that can be implemented include creating travel guides, offering guided tours, providing tourist signage at locations, proposing activities for engaging tourists related to the movies and television series and using new technologies to enhance the tourism experience both at the destination and before the visit.