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Exploring the Dynamics of Film-Induced Tourism: Impact, Opportunities, and Challenges

Towards More Sustainable Practice in Thailand

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Abstract

Film-induced tourism has gained significant attention over the last decade and greatly impacts the economics of many destinations. Nevertheless, it can generate negative impacts in terms of environmental dimension and

sociocultural impact. This academic article discusses the benefits and costs of film-induced tourism and how it can

be managed and controlled to maximize positive impact and minimize negative impact in the economic,

environmental, and sociocultural dimensions. The stakeholders are also evaluated for their role in enforcing effective

planning, implementation, and controllable results.

The article investigates the influence of Thai films on tourism, which can be divided into three main areas:

economic, social, and environmental impacts. Lastly, the Thai film tourism management framework highlights the

involvement of stakeholders, pre-production planning, sustainable production, responsible marketing, tourism

experience management, and long-term sustainability to ensure the sustainable growth and preservation of Thai

culture and natural resources.

Keywords: Destination Management Organization, Economic Impact, Environmental Impact, Film-Induced

Tourism, Sociocultural Impact

Introduction

As tourism is considered an invisible export, film-induced tourism is a market segmentation that has long been

recognized as a magnet to increase economic benefit to country destinations. According to Beeton (2015), film-

induced tourism is defined as traveling to a destination where films or TV programs have been shot and includes

production studio touring. Many tourists follow their favorite celebrities to the real location to feel connected with the feeling they used to experience while watching movies.

The definition of 'film' has changed as media consumption has changed. Film-induced tourism traditionally focuses on films, but the current media ecosystem requires a broader perspective. This extended definition should include TV shows, web series, documentaries, and other digital media. Recognizing this greater reach is essential for effectively documenting the media's impact on tourism and maximizing its destination marketing and sustainable tourism development potential.

There are so many successful movies that attract international tourists to the destination, such as The Lord of The Rings in New Zealand, as amazing scenic landscapes which become the landmarks of the country. Harry Potter in the United Kingdom became a hot spot travel destination that gained millions of tourists worldwide. Another example is the filming of Tomb Raider in Cambodia, which can draw more foreign tourists to visit annually. These attractions have become more popular due to the pull factor that lures tourists to experience the real location sites as they have impressed in the movies (Gjorgievski & Trpkova, 2012).

Nevertheless, the impact of film-induced tourists is an inevitable scenario. Hence, a sustainable planning policy should be implemented effectively to guarantee the well-being of the host communities' ecological and sociocultural resources and protect the areas' natural, cultural, and local resources. Macionis and O'Connor (2011) confirmed sustainable tourism management consisted of the balance of benefits to economics, environmental, and sociocultural impacts and minimized negative impacts.

Although tourism caused by films can create economic advantages, it may result in environmental degradation and social problems, as well as congestion, pollution, and disruption of local populations, which may have a negative environmental and economic impact on long-term tourism in some regions. Also, there is a lack of research on the environment and social impact of tourism produced by films in Thailand. Managing this gap is essential for establishing sustainable tourism policies that combine economic benefits with environmental conservation and socially beneficial rights.

Film-Induced Tourism: Foundational Theoretical Perspectives

Traveling in the footsteps of movies is another marketing plan that can attract both domestic and international tourists. Therefore, governments in various countries make movies by filming them in attractive tourist locations and promoting tourism, such as the Korean government's strategy to promote the country via films. Many studies also found that film can increase the impact of Korean TV shows on viewers' travel choices, inspiring people to visit shooting locations (Im, 2015; Suh & Gartner, 2015; Kim et al., 2016; Han & Lee, 2015; Jeon, 2018). Korean TV dramatizations, in particular, have critically impacted the local lifestyle in Hong Kong (Ng & Chan, 2019).

Film-driven tourism has recently become mainstream in the worldwide tourism industry. Driven by the increasing desire among travelers for unique and drunken experiences. Using movies as a strategic marketing tool enables destinations to attract more tourists. This leads to greater revenue from tourism. Beeton (2014) explains how the psychological motivation of tourists plays an important role in driving the tourism generated by the film. Participants in the tourist sector, such as hotels and tourist attractions, can effectively attract and attract visitors. The next part will discuss the related theory that can apply to film-induced tourism.

Triple Bottom Line (TBL) Approach in Thai Film-Induced Tourism

The Triple Bottom Line concept (Elkington, 2016) emphasizes the need to balance economic, social, and environmental sustainability in the context of film-generated tourism in Thailand. This approach is critical to achieving long-term benefits while preserving tourist attractions' natural and cultural heritage. The following discussion will explore applying TBL guidelines to tourism produced by Thai films, considering economic, social, and environmental sustainability.

Economic Sustainability

Film-induced tourism can boost the local economy by attracting tourists who use tourism services. After the release of "The Beach," tourism earnings in the Phi Phi Islands increased, benefiting the region (Taylor, 2017). Tourists visited the movie's stunning locales, increasing spending, company growth, and job prospects. Revenue and self-reliance promote economic sustainability and help local communities. Tourism earnings must be invested in local infrastructure and community programmes to promote economic sustainability. This may involve enhancing public services, building new infrastructure, and helping locals. Creating jobs for locals in tourism and associated areas can boost the local economy and promote financial equality.

Social Sustainability

To achieve social sustainability, it is important to ensure that tourism helps local communities without harming their social lives. Creating jobs in the area and putting money into projects that improve the neighborhood can make people much more resilient. Wu et al. (2023) also say that respecting and encouraging tourists to act in a culturally appropriate way will help protect the cultural history of destinations. When films inspire socially sustainable tourism, they can help visitors and locals get along well and respect and understand each other much better.

Environmental Sustainability

Conserving Thailand's natural resources and ecology necessitates minimizing the environmental impact of film-induced tourism. The island of PP, seen in "The Beach," is degraded by tourism. Tourist numbers, garbage management, and conservation could be restricted to address this issue (Dodds, 2010). Protection and conservation of the natural environment are needed to support film tourism and prevent irreversible damage. Sustainability can be achieved through environmental measures.

The Opportunities and Benefits of Film-Induced Tourism

The increasing number of international tourists arriving at a destination where films are directed generates a huge positive impact on economics, environment, and sociocultural dimensions. The following discussion illustrates how tourism fosters economic growth, environmental conservation, and cultural exchange through a comprehensive analysis and illustrative examples.

1. Economic Growth and Job Creation

Film-induced tourism has been shown to boost economic growth and create job opportunities, revitalizing local economies. According to Croy and Walker (2014), the economic impact of film-produced tourism is significant. Movies and television series contribute to increased tourism, accommodation bookings, and spending. The example of New Zealand, highlighted in "The Lord of the Rings" trilogy, exemplifies this phenomenon, with the country experiencing a rise in foreign tourists and related revenues (Gjorgievski & Trpkova, 2012). This economic stimulus extends beyond the traditional tourism sector, benefiting various industries such as services, transportation, and retail.

In 2023, Thailand's revenue from foreign film production reached \$6.753 billion (\$184 million), the highest since the country started promoting international film production between January and May. In 2024, Thailand will host film production worth approximately \$3,416 billion. The Government ensures Thailand's beautiful and diverse location. The Ministry of Tourism and Sports aims to generate revenue from overseas film production of more than \$7.5 billion (equivalent to \$204 million) by 2024. Furthermore, the Ministry aims to promote film tourism by attracting tourists to places appearing in major foreign films in Thailand. This significantly contributes to the Thai economy (Khaosod English, 2024).

2. Environmental Conservation

Contrary to potential environmental concerns associated with increased tourism, film-induced tourism can contribute to environmental conservation. Silver (2016) notes that film locations often coincide with pristine and picturesque landscapes, prompting heightened interest in their preservation. When conducted responsibly, filming activities can raise awareness of environmental issues and promote conservation efforts. For example, the popularity

of filming sites like Scream. Michael in Ireland, portrayed in "Star Wars: The Force Awakens," has led to conservation initiatives to preserve sites vulnerable to these ecosystems (Croy et al., 2010). The combination of film-generated tourism and environmental conservation undermines the potential for generating mutually positive results.

3. Cultural Exchange and Promotion of Heritage

The tourism generated by movies can create cultural exchanges and promote heritage. It fosters a profound appreciation for the diverse cultures on the screen. Beeton (2015) emphasizes that movies can serve as powerful cultural representatives by presenting a unique heritage of destinations to global audiences. The success of the film "Crazy Rich Asians" in promoting Singapore's cultural richness and heritage architecture exemplifies this phenomenon (Jessop, 2021). Tourists, drawn by the desire to connect with the on-screen narrative, often engage with local communities, partake in cultural activities, and contribute to preserving cultural heritage sites. This dynamic interaction enhances cross-cultural understanding and appreciation.

The film is regarded as one of the forms of modern cultural tourism that attracts a wide range of travelers. The 2544 Lara Croft: Tomb Raider film, starring Angelina Jolie, is a good example of a memorial in Cambodia, a historical site that may become a popular tourist attraction, especially among young people (Rahman et al., 2019). The relationship between culture and tourism is mutually beneficial and cooperative. In the tourism setting, incorporating cultural elements allows for acquiring deep expertise, distant circumstances, and an overwhelming feeling of care. On the other hand, for culture, this integration is beneficial for protecting and preserving cultural resources, as well as for building a favorable image and promoting the preservation of cultural assets (Loulanski & Loulanski, 2015).

In summary, film tourism offers many opportunities and benefits across economic, environmental, and cultural dimensions as destinations continue to capitalize on it. Tourism stakeholders must create effective, sustainable practices to maximize benefits while mitigating potential challenges.

Challenges and Concerns from Film-Induced Tourism

While the tourism generated by film continues to grow steadily, many challenges and concerns must be carefully considered. The following discussion explores three key issues related to film-produced tourism: over-tourism and infrastructure crisis, sustainability and environmental conservation, and managing community expectations and impacts. By carefully investigating the relationship between film tourism and these concerns, the stakeholders can develop effective strategies to create sustainable and mutually beneficial relationships between the film industry and the host destination.

1. Overtourism and Infrastructure Crisis

An overabundance of tourists that exceeds a destination's carrying capacity is known as over-tourism, and it is one of the main issues arising from film-induced tourism (Cavagnaro, 2021). An increase in visitor arrivals,

sometimes influenced by the success of a movie or TV show, can strain infrastructure, cause congestion, and adversely affect inhabitants' quality of life. Dubrovnik, a scenic village in Croatia, famous for being featured in "Game of Thrones," significantly increased tourists, leading to packed streets and stretched public facilities (Jamal & Budke, 2020). Destination management strategies must emphasize capacity control, zoning laws, and the creation of sustainable tourist models that balance economic benefits and the conservation of indigenous ecosystems and community welfare.

2. Sustainability and Environmental Conservation

The combination of film-induced tourism and sustainability produces inquiries regarding environmental preservation and ethical tourism practices. Film productions typically select unspoiled natural sites, which might lead to possible environmental harm and disturbance of habitats (Milano et al., 2019). The case of New Zealand, which was used as the setting for the "Lord of the Rings" trilogy, demonstrates the difficult balance that must be maintained between maximizing the economic benefits of tourism that are triggered by film and protecting endangered ecosystems. Implementing sustainable practices, including eco-friendly film production guidelines and conducting environmental impact assessments, are essential for reducing the ecological footprint linked to film-induced tourism (O'Connor, 2016). The film industry, local administrations, and environmental organizations must cooperate to preserve the natural environment while promoting cinematic attractions.

3. Managing Community Expectations and Impacts

Film-induced tourism affects host towns' cultures, lifestyles, and social dynamics beyond economic gains (Xiang et al., 2017). Maintaining host communities' authenticity and well-being requires managing community expectations and reducing tourism-induced changes. For instance, Matamata, New Zealand, was changed into Hobbiton for "The Lord of the Rings" and "The Hobbit" films, causing traffic, noise, and lifestyle changes (Rut, 2018). Sustainable film-induced tourism requires community engagement, clear communication, and rules that balance economic interests with community needs (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2018). Ensuring that film-induced tourism benefits local communities equally and that they participate in decision-making is essential to building healthy, lasting connections.

The movie "Lost in Thailand" has varied influences on the behavior of Chinese tourists. The film facilitates cultural exchanges and fosters mutual understanding between Chinese and Thai travelers. The film's display of Thai culture sparked the curiosity of many Chinese travelers, encouraging them to explore Thailand's heritage, traditions, and way of life. This curiosity often resulted in more meaningful exchanges between tourists and locals, giving rise to a deeper sense of cultural appreciation. Increased tourism has led to some social problems. The sudden rise in Chinese tourists has resulted in occasional cultural misinterpretations and conflicts between tourists and locals due to

differences in social standards and behavior. Steps such as providing sensitive cultural training for tourists and service providers are necessary to address these issues. This will promote polite and coherent interactions (O'Regan & Choe, 2022).

Film-induced tourism can create economic benefits and, in contrast, also major issues. Overtourism, sustainability, and community expectations require sophisticated solutions to balance economic gains with responsible tourism. The film industry, local authorities, and communities must collaborate to make film-induced tourism a beneficial force for sustainable development and cultural and natural heritage preservation.

Sustainable Practices in Film-Induced Tourism

While offering substantial economic and cultural benefits, film-induced tourism also raises concerns about its environmental and socio-cultural impact. This section discusses sustainable practices within film-induced tourism, examining strategies for responsible destination branding, marketing, and implementing eco-friendly and culturally sensitive approaches. It presents case studies of destinations that have successfully embraced and integrated sustainability into their film-induced tourism strategies.

1. Destination Branding and Marketing

Sustainable destination branding and marketing in film-induced tourism involve promoting a location while minimizing negative impacts on the environment and local communities (Croy, 2015) highlights the significance of strategic destination management in balancing economic gains with environmental and socio-cultural considerations. Implementing sustainable branding also requires collaboration between filmmakers and destination marketing organizations. The study conducted by Croy and Heitmann (2015) emphasizes the need for partnerships that align with sustainable objectives. Engaging in responsible product placement, incorporating eco-friendly narratives, and highlighting cultural authenticity in film productions contribute to creating a positive and sustainable destination image.

2. Strategies for Responsible and Sustainable Film Tourism

Based on the aforementioned issues, film tourism not only contributes to the economy but also poses environmental and cultural challenges for the local community. Several studies provide convincing evidence that the impact may bring about challenges in terms of control. Therefore, it becomes essential for both the public and private sectors to have a comprehensive understanding and exercise to control the implemented measures and identify the key stakeholders engaged in achieving long-term advantages.

The reference case study of Ireland, Macionis and O'Connor (2011), focused on collaboration between stakeholders, including the host community, film operators, and the government involved in the long-term viability of film-generated tourism. The main stakeholders in Ireland considered film-produced tourism to be the most important. The main objective for the future is to guarantee the satisfaction of every tourist who visits film sites in Ireland. Their

opinions and experiences may be influenced by their interactions with hotels, bus drivers, and companies. The tourism and film industry stakeholders are working together to stimulate the growth of film tourism in Ireland.

Furthermore, Du et al. (2020) have proven the importance of understanding changes in the behavior of movie visitors. Lost in Thailand has established a new record for the development of the film industry and the promotion of tourism. Effective tourism marketing is based on the success of the movie. Popular films attract a large audience and have the potential to initiate cultural movements. Movies can influence the audience and increase and change tourists' perceptions of the shooting location. To create a useful picture of a movie. Destinations should thoroughly explore their tourist resources and characteristics.

Sustainable practices in the film-related tourism industry are critical in achieving a balance between economic benefits and environmental, social, and cultural reasons. The above talk focuses on branding at strategic destinations, strategies, approaches to responsible film tourism, and successful case studies. Tourism generated by successful films needs to be implemented and delivered sustainably to positively impact locations and film industries worldwide.

Future Directions and Recommendations

While film-generated tourism continues to evolve, exploring future directions is essential to leveraging its potential benefits while dealing with the associated challenges. It should be noted that the Film-induced Tourism phenomenon results from government efforts and unexpected trends. Moreover, movies can deter people from visiting certain places, as exemplified by the film 'No More Bet' (Wenxin, 2023), which has led to Chinese tourists avoiding travel to areas due to safety concerns. The following discussion focuses on three key topics: the potential for increased collaboration, strategies to balance the benefits and challenges of film-produced tourism, and sustainable film tourism management planning in Thailand.

1. The Potential for Increased Collaboration

There is significant potential for increased collaboration between the film and tourism industries to bring about mutually beneficial outcomes. According to the Hudson (2015) study, strategic partnerships are crucial, and closer collaboration can boost destination marketing efforts. Destination marketing organizations should work with producers to market films during pre-production, production, release, and post-release. An example of successful collaboration is the partnership between Netflix and the Spanish city of Girona, showcased in "Game of Thrones," highlighting the potential for beneficial partnerships between streaming platforms and tourist destinations (Morgan et al., 2020).

2. Strategies for Balancing Benefits and Challenges

Achieving an effective balance of the benefits and challenges of film tourism requires strategic planning and sustainable practices. Croy et al. (2019) recommended creating a comprehensive destination management plan that addresses environmental, cultural, and economic concerns. New Zealand's handling of the "Lord of the Rings"

phenomenon demonstrated a successful strategy in dealing with the challenge. The country implemented site management plans, visitor education, and stakeholder involvement to ensure the sustainable growth of film-generated tourism while preserving its natural and cultural resources (Liu et al., 2020). Implementing similar strategies worldwide can help mitigate challenges and amplify the positive impact of tourism generated by movies.

3. Sustainable Film Tourism Management Planning in Thailand

Film tourism drives global economic growth and cultural exchange in Thailand. A strong management framework is considered essential for sustainable film tourism. This framework emphasizes the involvement of stakeholders and covers pre-production planning, sustainable production, marketing, tourism experience management, and long-term sustainability. The following discussions and figures illustrate an image model of the working framework for Thailand.

1) Participation and Cooperation of Stakeholders

All stakeholders should be involved, which is crucial to the success of sustainable film tourism. The main stakeholders include state agencies such as Thai Tourism (TAT). The Ministry of Tourism and Sports (MOTS) and the Thai Hotel Association (THA) have ensured that this involvement ensures that the planning process is comprehensive and reflects the needs and values of the local population. By promoting strong cooperation among stakeholders with these disadvantages, Thailand has established a solid and well-coordinated approach to managing film tourism to maximize benefits and minimize potential negative impacts (Rattanaphinanchai & Rittichainuwat, 2018).

2) Pre-Production Planning

Effective pre-production planning is critical in reducing film tourism's environmental and social impact. This involves conducting an environmental impact assessment (EIA) and choosing a location for filming according to strict sustainability criteria. For example, when considering filming on an island, examining and assessing potential locations is important to ensure they can support filming activities without significantly damaging the ecosystem. This process protects natural resources and guarantees the necessary licenses and approvals from local authorities, facilitating more sustainable film production (Williams & Dupuy, 2017).

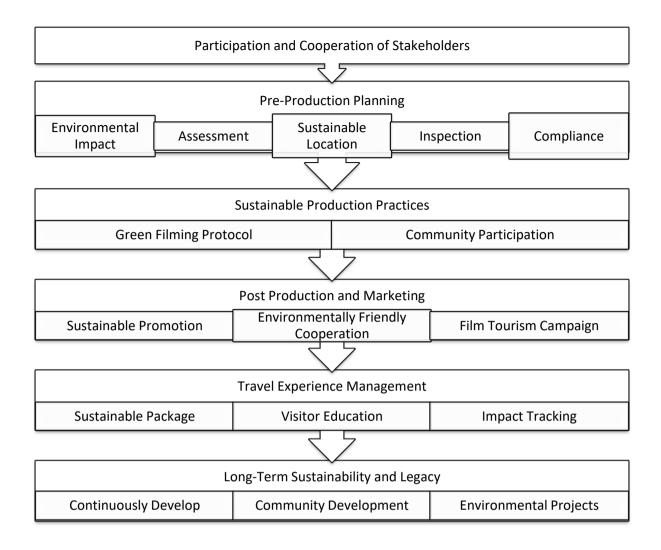


Figure 1 A framework for managing sustainable film tourism in Thailand

3) Sustainable Production Practices

To promote sustainability in film production, it's important to implement green filming procedures, such as using renewable energy sources, reducing waste, and involving local communities in decision-making processes regarding major projects like airport construction. This collaborative approach ensures that local concerns are considered (Collins & Cooper, 2016).

4) Post-Production and Marketing

It's essential to use sustainable post-production and marketing strategies to promote films and destinations in an environmentally friendly and culturally sensitive manner. Emphasize sustainable film production practices and filming locations' natural and cultural attractions to attract environmentally conscious travelers and enhance public image. Collaborating with eco-friendly brands and organizations will further demonstrate a commitment to sustainable tourism (Melanie, 2021).

5) Travel Experience Management

Developing sustainable travel packages and educational programs can greatly enhance the tourism experience. These should include environmentally friendly accommodations, travel, and activities that provide insights into local culture and environmental conservation. For example, guided tours can offer valuable experiences while promoting appreciation for the destination's natural and cultural heritage. These initiatives also emphasize the importance of responsible tourist behavior (Cheng & Chen, 2022).

6) Long-Term Sustainability and Legacy

The focus on sustainability and long-lasting waste management ensures that the tourism benefits generated by this film are sustainable and widespread. Continuous sustainability improvement is critical to adapting to changing environmental and social economies. Investments in community development initiatives, such as infrastructure improvements and capacity-building projects, can provide sustainable benefits to local populations. Furthermore, support for environmental conservation programs also helps preserve natural resources and biodiversity, making Thailand an attractive destination for future tourists (Yi et al., 2022).

Under this comprehensive framework, Thailand can effectively manage film tourism to support sustainable development and preservation of natural and cultural heritage. This guidance's key elements include stakeholder participation, detailed planning, implementation of sustainable practices, responsible promotion of destinations, improvement of travel experiences, and a focus on long-term sustainability. With these efforts, Thailand can take advantage of film-induced tourism's economic and cultural benefits while preserving unique environmental and cultural assets for future generations.

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