

Push Factors of Visiting Korean Film Locations

ปัจจัยผลักดันการท่องเที่ยวสถานที่ถ่ายทำภาพยนตร์เกาหลี

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Abstract

Film has been regarded as one of the powerful indirect marketing strategies to promote tourism. Past studies indicate that film can create awareness and enhance appeals for film locations. To date, there is limited attention on testing whether film can be the driving forces to visit film locations. This study compares viewers and non-viewers of Korean film to examine whether and how film can be the push factors of visiting Korean film locations. The study focuses on Thai tourists as a sample. The results show that Korean film can be the push factors for viewers to visit Korean film locations. There are the differences in push factor items between viewers and non-viewers of Korean film. The study provides theoretical contributions to film-induced tourism and practical implications for tourism industry to market targeted tourist destinations.

Keywords: Push Factors, Korean Film, Film-Induced Tourism

บทคัดย่อ

ภาพยนตร์นับได้ว่าเป็นหนึ่งในกลยุทธ์การตลาดทางอ้อมที่ทรงพลังในการส่งเสริมการท่องเที่ยว งานวิจัยที่ผ่านมาได้ชี้ให้เห็นว่า ภาพยนตร์ช่วยสร้างการรับรู้และเพิ่มเสน่ห์ให้แก่สถานที่ถ่ายทำภาพยนตร์ได้ ในปัจจุบันนี้พบว่าการวิจัยซึ่งทดสอบว่าภาพยนตร์นั้นสามารถกระตุ้นให้เกิดความต้องการที่จะเดินทางไปท่องเที่ยวยังสถานที่ถ่ายทำภาพยนตร์ได้หรือไม่นั้น ยังได้รับความสนใจอยู่น้อยมาก งานวิจัยนี้จึงได้ศึกษาความแตกต่างระหว่างผู้ที่ชมและผู้ที่ไม่ได้ชมภาพยนตร์เกาหลี เพื่อเปรียบเทียบว่าภาพยนตร์เป็นปัจจัยผลักดันให้ผู้ชมไปเที่ยวสถานที่ถ่ายทำภาพยนตร์เกาหลีได้อย่างไร โดยเก็บข้อมูลจากกลุ่มตัวอย่างนักท่องเที่ยวชาวไทย ผลวิจัยชี้ให้เห็นว่า ภาพยนตร์เกาหลีสามารถเป็นปัจจัยผลักดันให้ผู้ชมไปเที่ยวสถานที่ถ่ายทำภาพยนตร์เกาหลี และปัจจัย

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ผลิตภัณฑ์ระหว่างผู้ชมและผู้ที่ไม่ได้ชมภาพยนตร์เกาหลีนั้นมีความแตกต่างกัน ผลการวิจัยนี้ย่อมเป็นประโยชน์ต่อทฤษฎีด้านการท่องเที่ยวเชิงภาพยนตร์ และอุตสาหกรรมท่องเที่ยวในการนำภาพยนตร์มาช่วยในการทำการตลาดให้แก่แหล่งท่องเที่ยวเป้าหมายได้

คำสำคัญ: ปัจจัยผลักดัน ภาพยนตร์เกาหลี การท่องเที่ยวเชิงภาพยนตร์

Introduction

In the past decade, film tourism has received increasing attention in tourism research (Beeton, 2001). Traditionally, the primary purpose of film was to entertain the audience. However, there has been a continuing flow of tourists visiting specific places shown on screen after the film has been successfully launched. Previous tourism studies indicate that film can be a powerful medium to build awareness of the destination, increase familiarity with the places as well as add appeals and meanings to the filmed locations (Croy & Heitmann, 2011; Riley & Van Doren, 1992). This particular tourism pattern is called ‘film-induced tourism’ (Beeton, 2004). Film has thus been regarded as a powerful tourism motivator to influence the viewers to visit specific film locations (Kim, Kim, & King, 2019).

Korea is one of the leading Asian countries to create film tourism phenomenon. Korean film and drama series have cultural impacts in many countries in Asia including Thailand (Korean Tourism Organization, 2017). The fame of Korean films has effectively immersed the audience into Korean culture in various aspects such as foods, products, way of life and language (Rewtrakunphaiboon, 2017). Beyond the cultural impacts as discussed, Korean film has positively induced many international film viewers to visit Korea. Thailand, in particular, has been one of key tourism markets since the launch of ‘Autumn in my heart’ in 2001 and Daejanggeum in 2005 (Inchan, 2013). The popularity of Korea as a tourism destination among Thai people is illustrated in Figure 1.

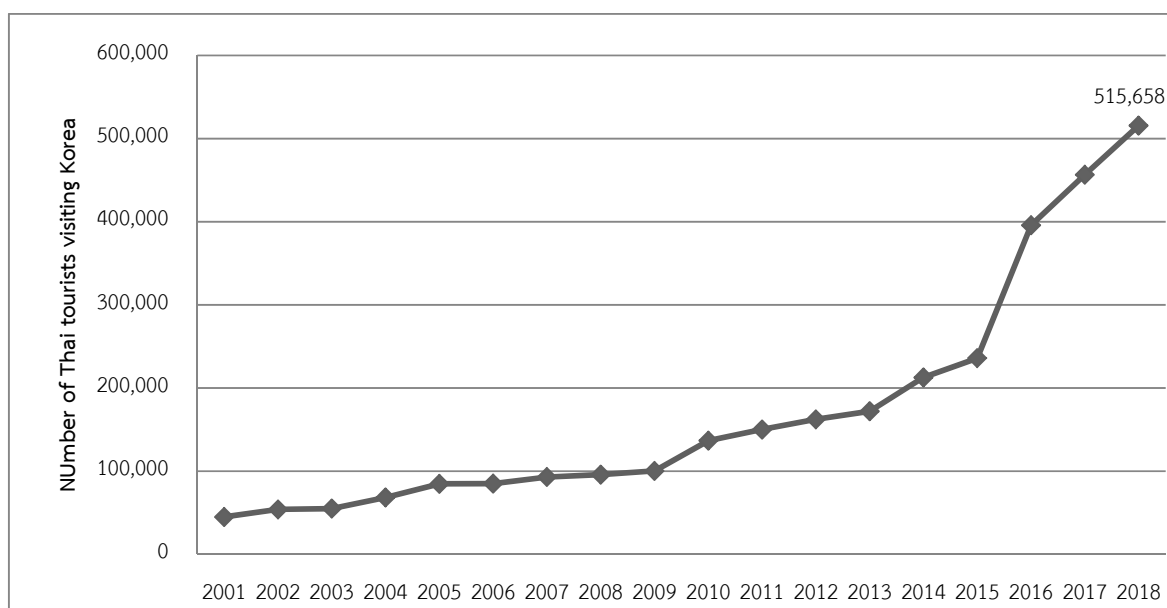


Figure 1 Number of Thai tourists visiting Korea between 2001 and 2018

Source: Ministry of Tourism and Sports (2019)

Considering the continued growing number of Thai tourists visiting Korea together with the popularity of Korean film and drama series in Thailand, the research question of this study therefore focuses on whether and how Korean film can become the push factors for film viewers to visit Korean film locations. This study concentrates on push factors, the internal forces that create the interest to visit the destination, by comparing viewers and non-viewers of Korean film. To examine the research question, the main objective of the study is to test the differences in push factor items between those who do not watch Korean film at all and those who watch either in low or high number of Korean films. By comparing the differences among these groups, the study would be able to provide insights on whether and how film can be the push factors for visiting the film locations. The results would advance theoretical contribution as well as provide implications for both tourism industry and film industry to pay close attention to the potentials of film in promoting the targeted tourism destinations.

Literature Review

Film tourism

Watching film is one of the most prevalent leisure activities available to almost every individual. Watching film and travelling can be interconnected and complimented each other. Both activities reflect similar forms of temporary escapes from realities (Carl, Kindon, & Smith, 2007). Visiting film locations can be regarded as a journey to a world of imagination and fantasy (Turner, 1988). Those who seek to visit places or locations featured in the film are called 'film-induced tourists' (Busby & Klug, 2001). Hudson

and Ritchie (2006) define film-induced tourism as 'the visits to the destination due to the influence of television, DVD, cinema screen, internet and digital media'. Film locations can refer to specific locations, film studio sets, theme parks or tourist attractions featured on the screen (Beeton, 2010)

Film can provide positive attitudes towards film locations and influence viewers on their travel decisions (Butler, 1990). The level of exposure to film can also enhance audience involvement in having film location experiences (Kim & Wang, 2012). Furthermore, past studies indicate that there is a strong relationship between emotional attachment and interest of visiting film locations (Carl et al., 2007; Iwashita, 2006). The emotional attachment with film emerges from a combination of plot, characters, music and scene setting (Hao & Ryan, 2013; Rajaguru, 2014; Rewtrakunphaiboon, 2017). By visiting film locations, film tourists can relive their memories of the film (Beeton, 2010) from one's imagination, interpretation and memory of the film (Kim, 2012a).

To date, Korean film studies in Thailand reveal useful insights in various aspects. Korean film settings give the importance of beautiful sceneries (Barameeratanachai, 2008). Positive attitude towards Korean film leads to appreciation of Korean culture, Korean brand preference, and intention to visit Korea (Wongkhao, 2007; Srisurin, 2016). Storylines, locations, costumes, foods, and everyday life presented in Korean film play important roles in transferring Korean culture to Thai audience (Inchan, 2013). It has also been suggested that frequency of watching films leads to culture and value assimilation among Thai youth (Chuttsakulphairatch, 2014). Although there is an increasing number of Korean

film research in Thailand, studies examining on whether and how Korean film can become the push factors to visit Korean film locations and why they would visit such locations are still lacking. To fully understand the influence of film-induced tourism, the study therefore addresses this particular area of research to be further investigated.

Film and tourism motivation

Tourism motivation is defined as ‘a meaningful state of mind, which adequately disposes an actor to travel and is subsequently interpretable by others as a valid explanation for such a decision’ (Dann, 1981). Tourism motivation theories are widely recognised among tourism researchers that they are based on the two concepts of push and pull factors (Yoon & Uysal, 2005). Push factors are the factors that drive the tourist to travel while pull factors refer to the factors that draw the tourist to a destination (Dann, 1977). According to Krippendorff (1990), travelling means going away from everyday situation. For tourism marketers, it is necessary to understand what drives tourists to travel. By applying the tourism motivation concept to this specific study, it is therefore useful to test whether and how viewing film can influence people to leave their usual environment to visit film locations.

Push factors are regarded as the key factors since they are essential to examine the initial arousal to take a holiday and a direction for tourist to choose a destination (Macionis, 2004). Crompton (1979) provides a useful outline of various push factors to take a holiday such as escape from routine environment, exploration, relaxation, prestige, social interaction or education. Although there are plenty studies

of push factors in various types of tourism, research examining whether there is a difference between the push factors among film viewers and non-film viewers is still limited. Research on push factors in the area of film-induced tourism is still lacking. Moreover, our present understanding of the influence of Asian films on film tourism trend is even limited (Rewtrakunphaiboon, 2017).

Recent studies start focusing on Korean film tourism motivation in different settings such as at the airport where the tourists have decided to visit the destination (e.g. Rajaguru, 2014) or while the tourists are on the film tours and film locations (e.g. Buchmann, Moore, & Fisher, 2010; Peaslee, 2011). It is interesting to note that some film tourists may be incidental tourists and may not be motivated by film watching (Croy & Heitmann, 2011). Rittichainuwat and Rattanaphinanchai (2015) study Korean film tourists visiting Korea and find that specific film tourist shows higher tourism motivation than the general film tourists. Although past studies provide valuable insights to understand the group of tourists who have strong interest in the film locations of a specific film, the results can be questionable in terms of their generalizability due to the use of case study approach (Connell, 2012). Another interesting argument is whether the effects of a particular film should be thought as the main effects (Fernandez-Young & Young, 2008). In other words, film tourists may be influenced by the total effects accumulated over a period of film watching.

Research Hypotheses

Based on past research, it is suggested that the exposure to destinations featured on film can enhance positive attitudes and preferences

towards film locations. Moreover, past studies seem to indicate that there is a relationship between the number of films watched and the emotional involvement level the viewers have with the films. Regardless of number of films people watched, this study positions that film watching should be likely to motivate the viewers to visit the film locations. Thus, there should be the differences between those who watch films in any frequency levels and those who do not watch films at all. To test this notion previously discussed, two main hypotheses are formulated as follows:

H1: Those who watch a low number of Korean films (Low) have higher degree of all push factor items to visit film locations than those who do not watch Korean films (None).

H2: Those who watch a high number of Korean films (High) have higher degree of all push factor items to visit film locations than those who do not watch Korean films (None).

Research Methodology

Research design

To test the proposed hypotheses, this study divides the respondents into three groups; a group who do not watch Korean films (None) and two other groups who watch Korean film in two different levels; low (1-5 film/s) and high (more than 5 films). With this research design, the researcher would be able to compare the difference of push factor items between those who do not watch film (None) and those who watch film in two different levels (Low and High).

Sample and data collection

Data were collected at Suvarnabhumi International Airport, a major airport in Thailand

accommodating all of international flights to overseas destinations. Data collection was completed prior to the COVID-19 outbreak affecting the tourism industry globally. The sample of the study included 610 Thai tourists who were at least 20 years old and could possibly travel to any overseas destinations including Korea. To select respondents for the survey, a multi-stage sampling technique included the three stages; 1) a simple random sampling to select days, 2) a systematic random sampling to select departure gates, and 3) a systematic random sampling by selecting every fifth passengers to complete the questionnaire. Only voluntarily participants were included in the study.

Instrument

This study uses a self-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire contains four main sections including patterns of watching Korean film, interest of visiting Korean film locations, push factors items, and demographic profiles. Regarding the measurement of the number of Korean films watched, one question asks the number of films watched from any of channels such as television, DVD, internet or cinema (Kim & O'Connor, 2011). The question further asks whether the respondents would be interested in visiting film locations regardless of the number of Korean films they have watched. Only those indicating their interest in visiting Korean film locations have been included for further analyses. For the push factors, the questions ask the respondents to rate seven items on 5 point Likert scale. The said items are adopted from the past film-induced tourism studies (Kim 2012a; Kim, Agrusa Lee, & Chon,

2007; Macionis & Sparks, 2006). A pilot test and item-checking by a panel of experts have been conducted for content validity of the instrument. Furthermore, the questionnaire has also been approved by the Ethics committee for human research prior the main data collection. Last but not least, the reliability test for the seven push factor items shows the Cronbach alpha of 0.90, a proof for high reliability of the questionnaire.

Results

Sample profiles

Descriptive findings suggest that 65.9% of the respondents are female and 55.2% of the respondents are between 20 and 39 years old. Nearly half (47.0%) are single while 77.7% of the respondents hold at least a bachelor degree. Over half of the respondents work in the business sector (55.7%) and have monthly income between 20,001 and 60,000 baht (54.7%).

The number of Korean film watched is used to classify the respondents into three groups in which each consists of approximately one-third of the respondents. Thus, there are 191 respondents (31.3%) who do not watch any Korean films (None), 242 respondents (39.7%) who have watched between 1-5 Korean film(s) (Low), and 177 respondents (29.0%) who have watched more than 5 Korean films (High). When the respondents of all three groups were asked whether they would be interested in visiting film

locations in Korea, 85 non-watching respondents (44.5%) (None), 170 low-watching respondents (70.2%) (Low) and 139 high-watching respondents (78.5%) (High) indicated their interest of visiting Korean film locations.

Push factors of visiting Korean film locations

To test the hypotheses, one-way ANOVA is used to test the differences between the three groups of those who are interested in visiting Korea; those who do not watch Korean film (None), those who watch a low number of Korean films (Low) and those who watch a high number of Korean films (High). The results show that there are significant differences among the three groups in all seven push factor items to visit film locations. These push factor items include 'to experience the scenery featured in film', $F(2,378) = 14.663$, $p = 0.000$, 'to add something special to holiday', $F(2,378) = 12.252$, $p = 0.000$, 'to imagine one selves in film atmosphere', $F(2,378) = 10.038$, $p = 0.000$, 'to experience the film atmosphere', $F(2,378) = 18.838$, $p = 0.000$, 'to take photographs at film sites', $F(2,378) = 7.322$, $p = 0.001$, 'to experience film locations', $F(2,378) = 7.873$, $p = 0.000$, and 'to relive the scenes from film', $F(2,378) = 21.541$, $p = 0.000$. Table 1 shows that both groups of Korean film viewers (Low and High) have higher mean score rating of all seven push factor items than non-Korean film viewers (None).

Table 1 Mean score rating of push factor items by group

Push factor items	None (N = 85)		Low (N = 170)		High (N = 139)		Differences between three groups	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	F	p-value
1. To experience the scenery featured in film	3.05	0.90	3.58	0.79	3.61	0.83	14.663	0.000
2. To add something special to holiday	3.16	0.86	3.56	0.73	3.69	0.81	12.252	0.000
3. To imagine one selves in film atmosphere	2.65	0.97	3.15	0.91	3.17	0.92	10.038	0.000
4. To experience the film atmosphere	2.80	0.95	3.41	0.85	3.56	1.00	18.838	0.000
5. To take photographs at film sites	3.06	1.06	3.50	0.86	3.53	1.05	7.322	0.001
6. To experience film locations	3.00	1.00	3.42	0.89	3.48	0.94	7.873	0.000
7. To relive the scenes from film	2.73	1.04	3.26	0.86	3.55	0.89	21.541	0.000

Scheffe post hoc tests have been further conducted in all possible pairwise contrasts to test the two proposed hypotheses of the study. For the first hypothesis testing, the results show that there is a significant difference in all push factor items ($p = 0.000$) between those who watch a low number of Korean film (Low) and those who do not watch Korean film (None). Thus, the first hypothesis is accepted. By comparing

the differences between these two groups (Low-None) as shown in Table 2, it can be seen that the big mean differences include 'to experience the film atmosphere' ($M = 0.61$), followed by 'to experience the scenery featured in the film' ($M = 0.54$), and 'to relive the scenes from film' ($M = 0.53$). The smallest difference between these two groups is on 'to add something special on a holiday' ($M = 0.40$).

Table 2 Mean difference on push factor items to visit film locations

Push factor items	Low-None	High-None
1. To experience the scenery featured in the film	0.54*	0.56*
2. To add something special to the holiday	0.40*	0.53*
3. To imagine one selves in the film atmosphere	0.50*	0.52*
4. To experience the film atmosphere	0.61*	0.76*
5. To take photographs at film sites	0.44*	0.47*
6. To experience film locations	0.42*	0.48*
7. To relive the scenes from film	0.53*	0.82*

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level

Regarding the second hypothesis testing, the results show that there is a significant difference in all push factor items ($p = 0.000$) between those who watch a high number of Korean films (High) and those who do not watch Korean film (None). The second hypothesis is therefore accepted. Considering the differences in mean ratings between the two groups (High-None) as shown in Table 2, the big mean differences include 'to relive the scenes from film' ($M = 0.82$), followed by 'to experience the film atmosphere' ($M = 0.76$), while the smallest difference between the two groups is 'to take photographs at the film sites' ($M = 0.47$).

The results of the hypotheses testing reveal that Korean film can be the push factors to drive viewers to visit Korean film locations. Furthermore, the study also indicates that there is a significant difference in the degree of push factor items to visit film locations between non-Korean film viewers and Korean film viewers. Regardless of the number of film watched being in either low or high numbers, those who watch films tend to have higher degree of push factors to visit film locations. The results have clearly shown that the two groups of Korean film viewers (Low and High) have higher mean score

ratings in all push factor items than non-Korean film viewers. Therefore, the two proposed hypotheses of the study are both accepted.

Discussion

Referring to the research question of the study, this study aims to examine whether and how Korean films can be the push factors to visit Korean film locations. The study focuses on the differences between Korean film viewers and non-viewers. The results reveal that Korean films can be the push factors to visit Korean film locations. Furthermore, there is a significant difference in the degree of push factor items to visit film locations between the Korean film viewers and non-viewers. Regardless of the number of films watched, those who watch Korean films have higher mean score ratings in all push factor items to visit film locations than those who do not watch Korean film at all. These push factor items include 'to experience the scenery and landscape featured in the film', 'to add something special to the holiday', 'to imagine one selves in the film atmosphere', 'to see behind the scenes', 'to experience the film atmosphere', 'to take photographs at film sites', 'to experience film locations' and 'to relive the scenes from

film'. Insights into the push factors to visit film locations would be beneficial to destination marketers or film companies to understand the power of film as well as the internal drives of film-induced tourists to visit film locations.

There are interesting findings from the study that can be further implemented for film tourism marketing strategies. The results suggest that Korean film is very powerful to influence the film viewers in two aspects related to film tourism motivation. By comparing to those who do not view Korean film, the first insight is that viewers who watch a low number of Korean films (Low) would be more interested in visiting film locations for 'to experience the film atmosphere' while the viewers who watch high number of Korean films would be more likely to visit film locations 'to relive the dramatic scenes featured in film'. The findings imply that the frequent exposure to Korean film can enhance the viewers' desire to be at the film locations to which they are emotionally attached. The second insight is that high frequency viewers tend to seek a much deeper meaningful experience beyond for just 'to experience the film atmosphere' to another level of desire, that is, 'to relive the dramatic scenes' at the film locations. This aspect of knowledge would help tour companies plan tour itinerary and activities to fit the specific needs for different market segments of film tourism.

The findings of the study also provide theoretical contribution to support the power of film as the push factors to visit film locations. Furthermore, the results also add new findings to our present knowledge of film tourism in various aspects. First, it gives new evidences to the previous work on film tourism motivation (Kim 2012a; Kim, Agrusa, Lee, & Chon, 2007) that there is a significant difference between those

who watch and do not watch film in their push factors to visit film locations. Second, this study adds further empirical findings to the past studies that the exposure to film can increase audience involvement (Kim & Wang, 2012) and emotional attachment (Carl et al; 2007; Kim 2012b) with the film locations regardless of the number of films they have watched. Third, the study further expands the work of Beeton (2004)'s by showing that the viewers who watch a higher number of films tend to have stronger emotional attachment and involvement with film than those who watch a low number of films. Thus, those who watch a high number of films are likely to visit film locations to relive their own memories of the film they have watched.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Almost two decades ago, it was almost uncertain for Korea whether there would be a success when they first introduced the new concept of creative economy with 'Hallyu phenomenon' through drama series and film (Lersakvanitchakul, 2018). Today, Korean culture and Korean fever become a strong influence in many countries around the world and attract many tourists to Korea. The results of this study provide empirical findings to support the power of film in creating the flow of film tourism. The study also suggests practical implications on how films can become the push factors to motivate viewers to visit film locations. Based on the findings, film can be a powerful indirect tourism marketing strategy to build awareness, to create emotional place attachment as well as to attract the tourists to targeted destinations. The success of Korean film can provide useful insights for any tourism destinations to adopt film as one of the marketing strategies to promote places and attractions.

At present, film-induced tourism in Asia is still in its developing stage. This study has made another progress on examining the power of film on film tourism. It has provided empirical findings that film can be the push factors for viewers to visit the film locations by using Korean films as a case study. However, there is still plenty of room for future research in the film tourism arena. A similar quantitative research can be further conducted with different film origins or research settings or nationalities of the respondents to fully examine the influence of film on the push factors to visit film locations. Furthermore, a qualitative research can also be conducted to explore the push factors in a deeper meaning. Lastly, the pull factors as part of tourism motivation such as activities at the film locations can be a future area to be investigated by using either qualitative or quantitative method or even mixed methods.

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