

The New Hallmarks of Film-induced Tourism Amid the Post COVID-19 New Norm in Southeast Asia



Wei Lee Chin and Yong Liu

Abstract Film-induced Tourism worldwide has seen a gradual recovery aligning with the recovery of the global film and tourism sectors to the near pre-COVID levels. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the worldwide lockdown boosted the exponential growth and rapidly entrenched market share for online streaming business represented by the rise of Netflix. Digital cultural contents circulated via those streaming platforms redefine the traditional concepts and criteria of the so-called film-induced tourism studies. The new norm of travel behavior and changes of the demands and motivation of the tourists trigger some government agencies to implement more unconventional and innovative policy incentives and promotional strategies to support local tourism recovery. These promotional strategies exemplify the new hallmarks of film-induced tourism development in the Southeast Asian Region.

1 Introduction

During the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, global lockdowns significantly accelerated the growth of the online streaming industry, exemplified by the rise of Netflix. Other international media conglomerates and national broadcasters swiftly launched similar platforms, including over-the-top (OTT) media services and video on demand (VOD) services, alongside traditional broadcasting and cinematic distribution outlets. The proliferation of digital cultural content through these expanding streaming platforms, as well as other small screen-based OTT and VOD media, has

W. L. Chin

Geography, Environment and Development Programme, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Universiti Brunei Darussalam, Gadong, Brunei Darussalam
e-mail: weilee.chin@ubd.edu.bn

Y. Liu (✉)

Design and Creative Industries Programme, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Universiti Brunei Darussalam, Gadong, Brunei Darussalam
e-mail: yong.liu@ubd.edu.bn

© The Author(s), under exclusive license to Springer Nature
Switzerland AG 2025

M. Valeri (ed.), *Film and Tourism*, Tourism, Hospitality & Event Management,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-86874-0_5

redefined traditional concepts and criteria in film-induced tourism studies. The changing patterns of travel behavior, particularly the increased interest in destinations featured in film productions, have prompted government agencies to develop innovative policy incentives aimed at supporting the recovery of local tourism.

Although many tourism organizations and film commissions have been slow to recognize the potential benefits of film tourism, literature (Chin & Liu, 2018; Hudson, 2011; Liu et al., 2020) highlights the mutual advantages of collaboration between these two industries. Stakeholders in the film and tourism sectors are seen collaborating, mutually reaping the benefits of attracting more film productions as well as economic gains from the exposure of the film industry attracting tourists.

Film-induced tourism is defined by Hudson and Ritchie (2006) as a “tourist visit to a destination or attraction due to the destination being featured on television, video, digital video disc or the cinema screen” (Florido-Benítez, 2023, p. 1299). The notion of cinema-induced tourism has garnered widespread acceptance (Zhou et al., 2023), the impact of films on different nations (Chin & Liu, 2018; Popa et al., 2021), how movies affect cross-cultural tourism and how this influences the number of tourists (Michael et al., 2020), how film-induced tourism inspires travel motivations (Oshriyeh & Capriello, 2022), and the significance of brand and destination image created by film (Nakayama, 2023). However, the evolution of film-induced tourism has been apparent after the COVID-19 pandemic, where streaming platforms and other small screen-based OTT and VOD media have gained more popularity. While the aforementioned studies have looked at the relationship between traditional broadcasting, theatrical distribution channels and tourism, limited studies have looked at how these booming streaming platforms such as Netflix and Disney Plus affect travel motivations. Are they seemingly creating the same impact as traditional theatrical and broadcasting platforms? In this chapter, carefully selected case studies from multiple Southeast Asian countries are selected and qualitative methods such as semi-structured interviews are used to interview travelers, tourism sector stakeholders, local government officials, as well as film producers and production house managers, attempting to answer the research question.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Destination Branding Through Films

The success of a tourist destination is greatly dependent on its image and branding, which affects decisions made by visitors and their perceived value, satisfaction and behavioral intentions of their travels (Li et al., 2023). Movies and television shows have the power to influence this perception, which make “film-induced tourism” gain its popularity (Croy, 2011). With the change in consumer needs and the rise in streaming platform, destination’s image and branding play an even more significant role in the potential of film tourism. The rise in popularity of short films and the easy

accessibility of online streaming platform have generated an extended exposure to filming locations. According to O'Connor (2011), such prolonged and consistent repeated exposure of a destination will have positive tourism economic performances.

Destination image is inextricably linked to film-induced tourism as visitors' perceptions are pre-determined in one way or another by cinematic representations. Location image can greatly impact travelers' motivations if featured in a film or any television shows (Araújo-Vila et al., 2024). Cinematic representatives positive or negative can enhance or diminish the attractiveness of a destination (Ahmed & Ünüvar, 2022). The significance of destination image is evident, as film-induced tourism can both influence and be influenced by this image. A lot of filmmakers deliberately select scenic and iconic locations to increase the attraction and desirability of their film productions, while destinations can leverage their association with films to boost their images and attract tourists (Macionis & Sparks, 2009; Zhou et al., 2023).

A recent example is a Bruneian feature film *Gadong* (2024), which is named after the most popular and famous namesake business district located in the center of the capital city of Brunei Darussalam. *Gadong* (2024) tells a story about the struggling and resilience of four Indian immigrants, who live in Brunei and run a barbershop to make ends meet while longing for returning home someday, and how they cope with the hardship during the COVID-19 pandemic to keep their business and hope alive. The film's only connection with the iconic namesake place is that the barbershop operated by the protagonists is located in the Gadong district. Aziz Ali, the producer of *Gadong* (2024), claimed: "By investing in and promoting local talent, Brunei can diversify its economy and present Bruneian stories on the global stage" (Noor, 2024), further attracting more tourists to visit Brunei should the film receive more overseas release around the world.

This strategy can be traced back in the popular Chinese film *If You Are the One* released in 2008, which contributed to a significant influx of Chinese visitors to the Hokkaido region, Japan, coinciding with relaxed visa requirements making a 195% increase in Chinese tourists (Seaton & Yamamura, 2015). Another example is the 2018 Hollywood hit *Crazy Rich Asians* depicting Singapore as the main scene; however a large number of scenes in it were filmed in Malaysia, such as the Kuala Lumpur Carcosa Sri Negara, which was used as an exterior shot for the Young family home in Singapore; Langkawi Island was used as a backdrop for the bachelor party scene, while Cheong Fatt Tze mansion in George Town, Penang was filmed for an iconic courtyard mahjong scene, which brings out the blended culture of Southeast Asia and a positive image of Singapore and Malaysia. This romantic comedy has become an invaluable tourism marketing vehicle for Singapore boosting 6.2 per cent to 18.5 million visitor arrivals in Singapore in 2019 and travel searches in Kayak and Orbitz for Singapore have skyrocketed since the movie is premiered (Strait Times, 2019; The Wrap, 2018). It is often observed that the number of visitors to filming locations rises significantly after a film's release. Movies like *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, *Harry Potter* series, *Slumdog Millionaire*, and *City of God* have significantly influenced tourism trends, leading to an increase in tourists

visiting these filming sites, even if this impact has gone largely unnoticed (Araújo-Vila et al., 2024).

The importance of the link between film and tourism should not be underestimated as it shapes travelers' fantasies and image of an ideal travel locations. This is supported by studies by Nakayama (2023), who looked at how film and television dramas be effectively utilized and optimized as promotional tools for destinations. Hudson (2011) study suggests that destination marketing organizations should collaborate with film commissions and undertake marketing activities at four key stages of a film's lifecycle: prior to production, during production, at the time of the film's release, and post-release. In his earlier study, Hudson and Ritchie (2006) reiterated the importance of film tourism's success is highly dependent on the destination's proactive efforts to attract producers to film at their locations. This can be seen by a number of Southeast Asian countries like Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia where their governments are welcoming film producers and actively promoting film festivals. Collaboration of short film programs in Malaysia has brought filmmakers from all the ten ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) member states, namely Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia, Myanmar, Cambodia, Brunei, Malaysia, Philippines, Laos and Vietnam, facilitating the development of filmmaking in the Southeast Asian region (Liu et al., 2020).

To celebrate its 20th anniversary in July 2024, for the first time ever, the longest-running film festival in Malaysia—Mini Film Festival organized by UNIMAS in Kuching, Malaysia, featured its very own Borneo category in order to connect some of the filmmakers and creative people in the neighboring Sarawak and Sabah, Malaysia; Brunei Darussalam; and Kalimantan, Indonesia, according to the festival director Yow Chong Lee (Sanders, 2024). Although the direct purpose is crucial for all these filmmakers to meet and form up future artistic collaboration, the ultimate effect might benefit for the local Sarawak tourism whether bringing in a co-production film project from other regions on Borneo Island, or attracting tourists from these regions and beyond should this co-produced film receive international spotlights. The organizers of Dracula Film Festival also invited younger generation filmmakers from overseas e.g. Brunei, France, Italy and Japan, to Brasov, Romania, where is located in the well-known Transilvania region—the homeland of the fictional Vampire Dracula—to attend an annual smartphone filmmaking competition—Dracula Digital since 2016 (Ling et al., 2024).

2.2 Catalyst Effects on the New Norm of Post-COVID-19

Using the ARIMA (Autoregressive Integrated Moving Average) intervention modelling and drawing on the case study of the 2008 Indonesian domestic box office hit *Laskar Pelangi*, Waritama and Pasaribu (2022) concluded: “The increase in tourist arrival due to *Laskar Pelangi* film tourism is two times higher than without the effect, indicating that the film tourism phenomenon is possible to become a new form of innovation that is effective as a catalyst for the future of Indonesia's tourism

sector”. However, their study mostly, if not entirely, based on the data collected before the COVID-19 pandemic. Now we know the COVID-19 pandemic itself became a catalyst strongly impacted on, and fundamentally changed, the landscapes of both movie industry and tourism sector, which has caused the academics and industry stakeholders to rethink and reevaluate the new norms of influential factors on the changed consumer demands and behaviors.

As a matter of fact, Stewart (2022) asserted that consumer demands and behavior would be permanently altered by the global COVID-19 pandemic, and all stakeholders in the tourism industry should adapt to the new normal and subsequent changes. “As travellers strive for meaningful short breaks and touristic experiences, one way for destinations to bounce back would be using immersive technologies and the redesigning of tourism offerings. As has already been established, the largest market segment for film tourism is Gen Y, a generation well adapted to the use of digital and electronic technologies” (Chin et al., 2023; Stewart, 2022). As a resonance with such a dominant market component of film tourism, film industry has actually changed its distribution strategies even amid the COVID-19 pandemic; and thereafter, those new distribution strategies, for example, OTT, VOD, and other small screen platforms, have been entrenched in the market, primarily appealing to the younger generation audiences. The recovery of tourism industry in the post pandemic age, therefore, especially needs innovative and refreshing concepts and solutions to think forwardly and operate wisely, in order to turn some negative or disadvantageous factors into the positive usefulness of promotional strategies (Liu et al., 2020).

For example, as a popular tourism destination in Malaysia, Penang has successfully attracted many international film productions, of which most are Hollywood and Western blockbusters, to film its iconic capital city—George Town “as a fictional representation for an array of exotic destinations of Otherness, thereby removing its original identities as a destination itself” (Liu et al., 2020). This “concealed identity” for Penang portrayed in the West-produced movies is quite similar to Budapest’s “missing identity” represented as “somewhere else” in Hollywood and Western movies and “Budapest is still in need of a well-defined and positive tourism image as a destination” (Irimiás, 2012). However, Liu et al. (2020) empirical study showed that the “concealed identity” of Penang is still a successful tactic to promote it as a tourist destination and the local government has already taken measures to promote local film festivals and attract both domestic and international tourists in the hope to see more filmmakers portray Penang as its original and authentic place in films. In recent couple of years, these measures may have already generated positive results: two feature films, *Locksmith* (2023) made by Hong Kong director Pei Chiek Goh and *The Chosen One* (2024) by Singaporean director Lim Suat Yen, both use Penang’s real identity as the backdrop for the narrative unfolding in their respective films (Dermawan, 2023; Dewi, 2023). Since the two films were just released in limited markets, it might wait for more updated data coming out and see whether the measures and the recently produced films contribute effectively to boosting more tourist visit to Penang.

3 Methodology

The data collected in this research are based on two case studies namely on *How to Make Millions before Grandma Dies* (2024), which is the biggest film at the Thai box office in 2024 to date; and how the Singaporean government takes advantage of the global box-office success of *Taylor Swift: The Eras Tour* movie (2023) and makes her eponymous live concert (2024) in Singapore exclusive across the Southeast Asian region to boost its own tourism.

How to Make Millions before Grandma Dies (2024) is chosen not only due to its success in Thailand but also across Southeast Asia. Filmed in Talat Ohlu, one of Bangkok's Chinatowns in Thailand, this film was first released in April 4, 2024 and in a short period of time, the film was able to earn US\$ 27 million, making it the highest-grossing Thai film of 2024 (Frater, 2024). This movie has so far become a record-setting blockbuster across Southeast Asia and stands as the highest-grossing Thai film in Singapore, Malaysia and Vietnam, attracting approximately 3.5 million admissions when released. This movie has also expanded its theatrical distribution beyond the Southeast Asian markets, for example, in Australia and New Zealand (Westec Media) since July 18, 2024, followed by China (Teamer Media), Hong Kong (Intercontinental), Taiwan (Catchplay) and South Korea (NK Contents) (Screen Daily, 2024).

How to Make Millions before Grandma Dies (2024) is even more popular due to the emotional depth and relatability it created to the audiences. The film's emotional intensity has kindled a social phenomenon in Southeast Asia, prompting the audiences to share their tearful reactions on social media. The response has been so profound that cinemas in the Philippines start offering tissues to moviegoers.



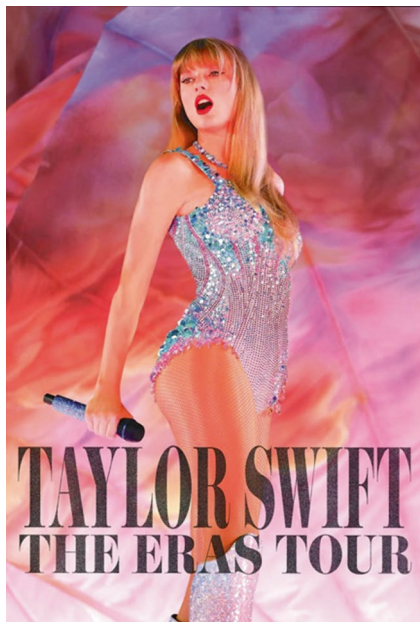
Film Poster of *How to Make Millions before Grandma Dies* (dir. Pat Boonnitipat, 2024)

According to Expedia (2023), film and concert tourism are forecasted to dominate 2024 travels. Expedia forecasted that in 2023, travelers would seek travel inspiration from television and movies, a trend that indeed materialized and is expected to continue in 2024. According to their study, over half of travelers' report researching or booking trips to destinations featured in TV shows or movies, and one in four acknowledge that TV shows and films now have an even greater impact on their travel plans than before. In 2023, the cultural influence of Taylor Swift Eras Tours was evident, boosting not only ticket sales but also travel and tourism. Expedia anticipates that Tour Tourism will remain strong in 2024. Nearly 70% of their survey respondents indicated they would be more likely to travel to a concert outside their hometown, with over 40% using a concert as a reason to explore a new destination (Expedia, 2023).

Taylor Swift: The Eras Tour (2023) was therefore chosen as one of the case studies due to its success in its movie grossing a total of US\$250 million globally, of which US\$71.8 million was garnered internationally (Rubin, 2023). *The Eras Tour* movie showcased Taylor Swift's globally acclaimed concert, featuring songs from all her albums, including bonus tracks. Although the theatrical version (cinema version) had a shorter run-time than the live concerts, this provided Taylors' fans (swifties) who missed out on tickets the opportunity to enjoy the acclaimed concert. The film adaptation received widespread praise on its cinematography, fashion styling, and her impressive performances throughout her career. According to the American review-aggregation website for film and television—Rotten Tomatoes,

this movie became the highest-rated musical movie of 2023 (Rubin, 2023). In addition, this movie has also landed itself in streaming platforms like Disney Plus to garner more viewers. Disney Plus released Taylor's Version of the concert on March 14, 2024, marking it as the third version of The Eras Tour film to be released. Taylor's Version of The Eras Tour on Disney Plus provides an extended, full-length experience of the concert, featuring four bonus songs that were not included in the theatrical release (Disney Plus, 2024).

Soon after the release of the movie, The Singapore Tourism Board collaborated with AEG Presents Asia to host Taylor Swift's The Eras Tour in Singapore, making it the sole Southeast Asian destination to host her concert. Singapore was drawing fans from all over Southeast Asia and performing six sold-out shows to an audience of 300,000 fans in Singapore. According to estimates by a Maybank economist, 70% of these concertgoers were traveling from abroad, potentially spending up to US\$370 million in the city-state. Singapore-inbound flights shot up by 186% and accommodation bookings almost quintupled during the mega event (CNN, 2024).



Film Poster of *Taylor Swift: The Eras Tour* (dir. Sam Wrench, 2023)

35 in-depth interviews (See Table 1) for this research were carried out to obtain more thorough information. Informants interviewed were tourists, local governments, film producers and movie enthusiasts. This is done to get a deeper insight into how destination marketing has evolved, its relationship with stakeholders as well as their views on how film has affected their travel motivation and preferences. This study employed semi-structured interviews to collect data. This method is less

Table 1 Table of respondents

Respondents	Category of respondents	Field of work	Interview time (average for each respondent)
Officials 1–4	Bangkok government officials	Government/ Tourism/ Film	45 min
Officials 5–8	Singapore government officials	Government/Film	35 min
DMOs 9–11	Bangkok DMOs	Thailand tourism board	40 min
DMOs 12–15	Singapore DMOs	Singapore tourism board	45 min
Producer 16–20	Film producers/production house managers	Film production	30 min
Travelers 21–35	Tourists	Tourists/Movie enthusiasts	40 min

restrictive and provides more opportunity to better understand respondents' viewpoints on the film and tourism industry. Questions were tailored according to the respondents' roles to get an in-depth understanding about their perspectives on the evolution of film-induced tourism. Interview data were coded and then analyzed using Nvivo software to examine key themes from interviewees. Purposive samplings were also carried out for this research to identify respondents who indicated their interests in travel and film industry as well as officials from the relevant departments in the respective countries. Limitations of this research should also be acknowledged. It is recognized that only a small number of interviews were undertaken and this might be an issue of representativeness of our sample for the entire Southeast Asia region. The purposive sampling method employed in this study involved individuals with a known interest in film and travel, which may introduce biases. However, random sampling would have been unsuitable, as it could have resulted in a higher likelihood of selecting individuals with no interest in film or travel.

4 Findings and Analysis

In this section, some of the key results will be discussed and analyzed. The results show how destination image is shaped from films or screen products and how they are closely associated with their predetermined image set from films. Additionally, the significance of exposing and exploring multiple platforms to screen movies is highly pertinent to the outcome of film-induced tourism. Multiple like-minded platforms such as over-the-top (OTT) media service, video on demand (VOD) service, in addition to the conventional broadcasting televised and theatrical distribution outlets all plays different roles in affecting travelers' perception. Previous studies especially before the COVID-19 pandemic have shown that movies screened in cinemas contribute to film-induced tourism which inspire travel motivations or affect decision making in choosing a destination. In this study, results confirmed the

importance of other VOD or OTT platforms due to the constant exposure and easy accessibility. After COVID-19, the widespread acceptance of short form videos and online streaming platform like Netflix and Disney + faced a boom in sales and subscriptions and the easy accessibility has impacted film-induced tourism in a positive way. The “one-click accessibility” and “no boundary viewing” in terms of time and place voiced by respondents have shown how the movie industry has evolved with time.

4.1 Government Officials and Destination Management Organizations (DMOs)

All government officials in Bangkok and Singapore agrees on the importance of film-induced tourism and highlighted the effort the government put into collaborating with not only local but also international film producers. All of them also agree that film industry scene has changed over time with more people opting for streaming platforms especially with the societies’ busy schedule. The convenience of streaming platform like Netflix is inevitably the go-to platform when time is limited.

The officials also shared the roles government is playing to encourage speedy approval for filming in certain locations and working hard to encourage both local and international productions to film in Bangkok, Thailand. To a certain extent, the Bangkok officials, somewhat, facilitate to streamline the location scouting process in both preproduction and production stages for the filmmakers who are willing to film in Bangkok, as these officials recognize that the development of local tourism may be the eventual beneficiary due to their facilitation, should any of the films succeed in the future.

We have a department set up who is in charge of dealing with local and international films producers who want to film in Bangkok. We also have set up an attractive package for international producer team. However, we have to admit that approval can be slow, sometimes depending on where they want to film. If it’s places like temples or with high traffic, we have to seek approval from multiple departments. But this is why the department is set up to speed things up. We are trying our best to assist and encourage producers to come too. If it is just a neighborhood and lesser traffic, then approval is quicker. (Official 3)

We are proud of our local film production and is actively encouraging this. As you probably heard of a lot of Thai films before and the recently filmed *How to Make Millions Before Grandma Dies* has been so successful across Southeast Asia. This was only filmed in a small part of Bangkok neighborhood, but the effect it has on people is huge. A lot of people cried (while) watching that movie and remembered Thailand as the destination! No matter what emotions the film brings – happy, sad, scary, horror, our aim is to create those memories and emotions for people to remember Thailand. (DMOs 10)

Furthermore, the Bangkok officials also raised some concerns on language barrier which might hinder the local film productions in expanding into international market. However, there are all working to try out if this will work in a streaming platform like Netflix. As more and more filmmakers realize the OTT and VOD platforms

are equally important like cinematic distribution for their films to reach out global audiences, which will contribute to the competitiveness of the destination (Chin et al., 2017; Chin & Hampton, 2020), Bangkok officials also recognize the importance of such streaming platforms for the development of local film-induced tourism.

Films should not stay in cinema only although it is still important. If possible, it should be made available in streaming platform too, although our local Thai production film might be facing difficulties as films are in Thai language. We need to stay competitive hence a lot of producers are investing in dubbing. With the hectic schedule with people's life, I am sure movies in streaming platform will sell even better. *The Believers*, for example, is filmed in Thailand and is in Netflix. It has been so successful and season 2 is coming up. The recently popular movie *How to Make Millions before Grandma Dies* is going on the streaming platform too. We will hope to see a positive response. (Officials 4)

On the other hand, international film producers are attracted to film in Singapore due to their efficiency in support in paperwork, license and approval. The outcome of the film productions is also mostly very rewarding and successful both for Singapore as a tourist destination induced by films as well as for the film production companies. It is worth noting that five years after its global hit in theatrical release, *Crazy Rich Asians* (2018) is still being very popular on Netflix thus attracting more international tourists to visit Singapore recently.

We take pride in our efficiency in dealing with foreign movie producers and as an attractive destination as a film production destination. Although small in size, we are doing quite well in attracting foreign movie producers. We are also working closely with the Singapore Tourism Board on this. I am sure you have heard of the *Crazy Rich Asians* depicting Singapore as a rich and vibrant city which attracted so many tourists not only within Southeast Asia but also from the States. (Officials 7)

Yes definitely! Netflix or any streaming platform is on the rise. Singaporeans are busy people and appreciate the convenience of being able to view during commuting, while waiting for their coffee and waiting for the bus. Taylor Swift Era Tour on Disney plus was so popular among the teenagers and those who were not able to get the tickets to her concert have created their own concert at home. *Crazy Rich Asians* was also so popular on Netflix in Singapore and internationally and they are coming back to film season 2 next year! (DMOs 15)

The Tourism board was so delighted to see the results and amount for visitors it brings from the exclusive tour of Taylor Swift concert in Singapore. Although not a movie per se, it is an event that attracted millions of tourism receipts benefiting Singapore nationwide. (DMOs 12)

4.2 Travelers/Movie Enthusiasts

Most travelers have mentioned that watching a movie does give them a predetermined image of that particular destination. All travelers have also agreed that the repeating and constant exposure of the destination in film contents does affect their decision to visit a particular destination. Almost all travelers/movie enthusiasts

interviewed have made the trip to the destination of their choice after watching the movies via streaming platforms like Netflix. “After watching *Crazy Rich Asians*, I visited Singapore 3 months later when my schedule permitted. I was so excited to visit the food street (Newton Circus) shown in the scene and I thoroughly enjoyed my time there, telling my husband: ‘this is where they filmed the movie.’” (Traveler 21). According to Traveler 25, “I recently visited Bangkok too after watching the viral movie *How to Make Millions before Grandma Dies*. Although I didn’t go to that particular neighborhood, I still associate this famous movie with Bangkok and it still plays a role in pushing me to visit Thailand.” Another respondent also expressed: “Yes. I would agree that watching films affects where I choose my next destination to travel. I am a movie enthusiast, so every time I stream or watch a movie on Netflix, I will see if the place featured is suitable for me to bring my family (to visit).” (Traveler 23).

However, the findings found that the emotions created in that movie does not particularly link to that particular destination. In fact, the emotions create memories of where the movie is being filmed. “Yes. I have watched both *Crazy Rich Asians* and *How to Make Millions before Grandma Dies*. *How to Make Millions before Grandma Dies* is a popular movie now and a lot of people are filming themselves cry on TikTok. That is what attracted me to watch this movie. I cried a lot but of course I don’t link sadness to Thailand. I will just remember this movie is filmed in Thailand and the next time I visit I might visit the neighborhood that the movie is filmed. I have been to Singapore but of course I don’t expect all people are rich in Singapore after watching *Crazy Rich Asians*. Movies are just a medium for our memory.” (Traveler 30)

When asked if there is a difference between viewing movies in traditional cinema and on streaming platforms, all respondents said that they prefer to have a choice to view the same movie in a streaming platform. This gives a lot of more flexibility and accessibility to both the movie and the viewers. “Not only streaming platform is important to us, it creates so much more accessibility. I can even watch it while waiting for my kids or in between chores or even play it in the background while cooking. Honestly, I do not have the time to watch a movie in cinema. I watch short films too available online and these are pretty influential. The same content will normally pop up and I will really get influenced to travel to a particular place.” (Traveler 33). The importance of changing trends with the upcoming generation is also highlighted in the interviews. “As the world is changing, so do our preferences. We need something quick and ready whenever we have time. Netflix or Disney Plus are my best friends especially when I’m commuting” (Traveler 22). “Of course, the government catches this short content trend that attracts the current generation. That is why the Malaysian government have been actively engaging and promoting local film festivals to showcase local talent and invite international film collaborators and also urges film producers to explore other non-conventional platform like streaming platforms.” (Traveler 33)

4.3 *Film Producers*

All film producers interviewed have stressed the significance of not only concentrating their movies on one particular platform. All have acknowledged the importance of the growing streaming business which should not be neglected.

We need to evolve with the market trend. We need to understand what the people wants to watch nowadays. How they can be captivated in our film. Our content and script has to evolve and has to be interwoven into the destination that we choose to film. Thankfully *'How to make millions before grandma dies'* has been successful as we explore options to go into international market. We are also diving into streaming platform like Netflix as we see the importance of easy accessibility. (Producer 16).

Additionally, one interviewed producer claimed: “With generation Y and Z dominating the film market, short form videos and online based streaming platform needs to be prioritized. Traditional cinematic experience is still important but we can do it both. This way the constant portrayal of the film and the destination is more likely to spark travel interests and visit.” (Producer 20)

Lastly, when asked if the constant portraying of the destination in films affects the perceptions of viewers of that destination, all producers interviewed agreed it does play a significant role. They also added that the possibility of attracting tourists to watch films is high as they have already a “pre-connection” with the film before arriving the destination as its filming location.

5 Conclusion

The potential of film-induced tourism is enhanced by the destination’s image and branding, given the shift in consumer needs and the growth of streaming platforms. Filming locations have seen increased exposure as a result of the growing popularity of short films and the ease of access to online streaming platforms. Few research has examined how the popularity of streaming services like Netflix influences people’s reasons for traveling. This study explores if such streaming platform has the same effect as conventional theater and television platforms. Travel patterns are changing, and people are becoming more interested in places that have been portrayed in movies. This has led government organizations to create creative policy incentives to help the local tourism industry recover especially after the COVID-19 pandemic. Stakeholders in the tourism and film industries are seen working together, benefiting from increased tourism and increased film productions as well as financial gains from increased public awareness of the film industry. This trend can be seen in the above Singapore and Thailand case studies.

The study’s findings supported the significance of other VOD or OTT platforms because of their widespread use and ease of access. Short form video adoption and online streaming services like Netflix and Disney Plus experienced a surge in sales and subscriptions following COVID-19, and the accessibility of these platforms has

had a positive effect on travel inspired by movies. The “one-click accessibility” and “no boundary viewing” with regard to location and time demonstrate how the definition of movie industry and motion pictures has changed over time. Findings showed that all government official in Singapore and Bangkok acknowledged the value of tourism influenced by movies and emphasized the government’s efforts to work with both domestic and foreign filmmakers. They all concur that the landscape of the film business has evolved over time, with an increasing number of people choosing streaming services in light of people’s hectic schedules.

The majority of travelers acknowledge that watching a movie does give them a preconceived notion of that specific place. Every traveler has also concurred that seeing a destination featured repeatedly in movies influences their choice to go there. Almost every traveler and movie buff interviewed have traveled to the location of their choice after viewing films on Netflix or another streaming service. However, the results also showed that there is little connection between the feelings evoked in the film and that specific location. In fact, the feelings bring back memories of the location where the film is being shot. All respondents also stated that they would prefer to have the option to watch the same movie on a streaming platform when asked if there was a difference between watching movies in traditional theaters and on streaming platforms. This greatly increases the movie’s flexibility and accessibility for both the audience and the films. Every film producer interviewed also stressed the importance of spreading their films across multiple platforms. Everyone has agreed that the expanding streaming industry is significant and should not be disregarded.

The findings demonstrate how the destination’s image is shaped by movies and how it is strongly related to the predetermined image set that comes from movies. Furthermore, the importance of exposing and investigating various platforms for film distributions is highly relevant to the result of tourism influenced by films. There is a good chance of drawing tourists from moviegoers because they have already formed a “pre-connection” with the movie before traveling to the destination where the movie was filmed.

References

- Ahmed, Y., & Ünüvar, S. (2022). Film tourism and its impact on tourism destination image. *Çatalhöyük Uluslararası Turizm ve Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi*, 8, 102–117.
- Araújo-Vila, N., Cardoso, L., Almeida, G. G. F., & Almeida, P. (2024). Film-induced tourism as a key factor for promoting tourism destination image: The James Bond saga case. *Administrative Sciences*, 14(5), 94. <https://doi.org/10.3390/admsci14050094>
- Chin, S. W. L., Hassan, N. H., & Yong, G. Y. V. (2023). The new ecotourists of the 21st century: Brunei as a case study. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 9, 1. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2023.2191444>
- Chin, W. L., Haddock-Fraser, J., & Hampton, M. P. (2017). Destination competitiveness: Evidence from Bali. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 20(12), 1265–1289. ISSN 1368-3500. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2015.1111315>

- Chin, W. L., & Hampton, M. P. (2020). The relationship between destination competitiveness and residents' quality of life: Lessons from Bali. *Tourism and Hospitality Management*, 26(2), 311–336. <https://doi.org/10.20867/thm.26.2.3>
- Chin, W. L., & Liu, Y. (2018). The film-induced tourism development in Brunei: Perspectives and potentiality. *Borneo Research Journal*, 12(2018), 36–56. <https://doi.org/10.22452/brj.vol12no1.3>
- CNN. (2024). *Singapore defends Taylor Swift's exclusive Southeast Asia stop after neighbors cry foul*. <https://edition.cnn.com/2024/03/05/asia/singapore-taylor-swift-southeast-asia-intl-hnk/index.html> Accessed 11 July 2024
- Croy, W. G. (2011). Film tourism: Sustained economic contributions to destinations. *Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes*, 3(2), 159–164. <https://doi.org/10.1108/17554211111123014>
- Dermawan, A. (04 January, 2023) "HK stars in Penang to film 'locksmith' movie". *New Straits Times*. <https://www.nst.com.my/news/nation/2023/01/867130/hk-stars-penang-film-locksmith-movie>. Accessed 13 September 2024
- Dewi, K. K. (03 July, 2023). Penang 'the chosen one' as a venue for filming of new Malaysia-Singapore movie. *The Star*. <https://www.thestar.com.my/metro/metro-news/2023/07/03/penang-the-chosen-one-as-a-venue-for-filming-of-new-malaysia-singapore-movie> Accessed 13 September 2024
- Disney Plus. (2024). "Taylor Swift | The Eras Tour (Taylor's Version)" Streaming Now Exclusively on Disney+. <https://press.disneyplus.com/press.disneyplus.com/news/taylor-swift-the-eras-tour-taylors-version-now-streaming>. Accessed 11 July 2024
- Expedia. (2023). Introducing unpack 24: The trends in travel from expedia, Hotels.com and Vrbo. <https://www.expedia.com/newsroom/category/campaigns/travel-trends/>. Accessed 11 July 2024
- Florida-Benítez, L. (2023). Film-induced tourism – The impact the of animation, cartoon, superhero and fantasy movies. *Tourism Review*, 78(5), 1298–1314. <https://doi.org/10.1108/TR-11-2022-0537>
- Frater, P. (2024). *Thai Film 'How to Make Millions Before Grandma Dies' Reaches \$27 Million in Southeast Asia Rollout – Global Bulletin*. <https://variety.com/2024/film/news/thai-film-how-to-make-millions-before-grandma-dies-asia-rollout-1236050530/> Accessed 11 July 2024
- Hudson, S. (2011). Working together to leverage film tourism: Collaboration between the film and tourism industries. *Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes*, 3(2), 165–172. <https://doi.org/10.1108/17554211111123023>
- Hudson, S., & Ritchie, J. R. B. (2006). Promoting destinations via film tourism: An empirical identification of supporting marketing initiatives. *Journal of Travel Research*, 44(4), 387–396.
- Irimiás, A. (2012). Missing identity: Relocation of Budapest in film-induced tourism. *Tourism Review International*, 16(2), 125–138.
- Li, Y., He, Z., Li, Y., Huang, T., & Liu, Z. (2023). Keep it real: Assessing destination image congruence and its impact on tourist experience evaluations. *Tourism Management*, 97, 104736. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2023.104736>
- Ling, M., Liu, Y., & Nechita, F. (2024). Project-based learning at Dracula Digital: A comparative perspective from Romania and Brunei. *Trends in Higher Education*, 3(3), 757–778. <https://doi.org/10.3390/higheredu3030043>
- Liu, Y., Chin, W. L., Nechita, F., & Candrea, A. N. (2020). Framing film-induced tourism into a sustainable perspective from Romania, Indonesia and Malaysia. *Sustainability*, 12(23), 9910. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12239910>
- Macionis, N., & Sparks, B. (2009). Film-induced tourism: An incidental experience. *Tourism Review International*, 13, 93–101. <https://doi.org/10.3727/154427209789604598>
- Michael, N., Balasubramanian, S., Michael, I., & Fotiadis, A. (2020). Underlying motivating factors for movie-induced tourism among Emiratis and Indian expatriates in the United Arab Emirates. *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 20(4), 435–449.

- Nakayama, C. (2023). Destination marketing through film-induced tourism: A case study of Otaru, Japan. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Insights*, 6(2), 966–980. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JHTI-02-2022-0047>
- Noor, A. (July 21, 2024). “Breaking new ground”. *Borneo Bulletin Online*. <https://borneobulletin.com.bn/breaking-new-ground-3/>. Accessed 15 December 2024
- O’Connor, N. (2011). A conceptual examination of the film induced tourism phenomenon in Ireland. *European Journal of Tourism Hospitality and Recreation*, 2, 105–125.
- Oshriyeh, O., & Capriello, A. (2022). Film-induced tourism: A consumer perspective. In D. Jaziri & R. A. Rather (Eds.), *Contemporary approaches studying customer experience in tourism research* (pp. 223–244). Emerald Publishing.
- Popa, D., Nechita, F., Liu, Y., & Chin, W. L. (2021). Linking positive psychology and intercultural competence by movies: Evidence from Brunei and Romania. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12, 750904. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.750904>
- Rubin, R. (2023). “Taylor Swift’s ‘The Eras Tour’ Surpasses \$250 Million at Global Box Office”. <https://variety.com/2023/film/box-office/taylor-swift-eras-tour-surpasses-250-million-global-box-office-1235810348/>. Accessed 11 July 2024
- Sanders, N. T. (July 3, 2024). Mini film festival x mini arts festival to feature Borneo category. *New Sarawak Tribune*. <https://www.newsarawaktribune.com.my/mini-film-festival-x-mini-arts-festival-to-feature-borneo-category/>. Accessed 13 September 2024
- Screen Daily. (2024). *How To Make Millions Before Grandma Dies’ leads 2024 Thai box office ahead of pan-Asia rollout (exclusive)*. <https://www.screendaily.com/news/how-to-make-millions-before-grandma-dies-leads-2024-thai-box-office-exclusive/5192758.article>. Accessed 10 July 2024
- Seaton, P., & Yamamura, T. (2015). Japanese popular culture and contents tourism – Introduction. *Japan Forum*, 27(1), 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09555803.2014.962564>
- Stewart, J. (2022). Could television streaming sites lead the charge for film-induced tourism post covid?: Seeking the “sites/sights” seen on the small screen! In R. Baleiro & R. Pereira (Eds.), *Global perspectives on literary tourism and film-induced tourism* (pp. 217–239). IGI Global.
- The Strait Times. (2019). *Crazy Rich Asians, Trump-Kim summit propel tourist arrivals, spending in Singapore to record highs*. [https://www.straittimes.com/singapore/crazy-rich-asians-trump-kim-summit-propel-tourist-arrivals-spending-in-singapore-to-record#:~:text=Total%20arrivals%20rose%206.2%20per,on%20Wednesday%20\(Feb%2013\)](https://www.straittimes.com/singapore/crazy-rich-asians-trump-kim-summit-propel-tourist-arrivals-spending-in-singapore-to-record#:~:text=Total%20arrivals%20rose%206.2%20per,on%20Wednesday%20(Feb%2013)). Accessed 10 July 2024
- The Wrap. (2018). *‘Crazy Rich Asians’ Effect: Singapore Travel Searches Spike Since Movie Opened, Singapore hits the jackpot thanks to sleeper hit’s success*. <https://www.thewrap.com/crazy-rich-asians-prompts-triple-digit-spike-travel-searches-singapore>. Accessed 10 July 2024
- Waritama, B. F., & Pasaribu, E. (2022). Measuring the magnitude of film tourism as a catalyst of the Indonesian tourism sector: A case study of laskar pelangi film in belitung island. *The Journal of Indonesia Sustainable Development Planning*, 3(1), 1–13. <http://journal.pusbin-diklatren.bappenas.go.id/lib/jisdep/article/view/255>
- Zhou, B., Xiong, Q., Li, P., Liu, S., Wang, L. E., & Ryan, C. (2023). Celebrity and film tourist loyalty: Destination image and place attachment as mediators. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 54, 32–41.