
Film Tourism in the Promotion of a Touristic Area

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Abstract:

Purpose: The purpose of the article is to find out consumers' expectations and motivations for using set jetting as a form of promotion of an area. The authors considered what viewers think about the placement of an area in a movie or TV series, and whether this form of promotion contributes to visiting the depicted place. They also sought answers to the question, what could activate these trips?

Design/Methodology/Approach: The empirical part was based on pilot survey research conducted using the CAWI method in October 2023. The study was conducted on a sample of 216 adult Poles over the age of 18. It was a random selection. The theoretical part of the article is based on a review of literature on the tourist promotion of the area, mainly set jetting and city placement.

Findings: Respondents like to watch movies or series - more than 50% do so daily or several times a week. The Netflix platform is the most popular (78.7%). Nearly 90% of respondents specified that locating the action of a movie/series in a particular place increases the recognition of that area. Thanks to movies or TV series, one can get to know new places; it is a non-intrusive advertisement that positively increases the attraction. 43% of respondents visited a place under the influence of watching a movie/series. An important issue was to obtain information on the elements that encourage set jetting, i.e. visiting an area under the influence of a movie or TV series. It turned out that this was mainly the desire to learn about the tourist attractions of the place (82% answered definitely and rather yes), to participate in events related to the plot (65.28%) or to feel the "spirit" of the characters (63.43%).

Practical Implications: Set jetting is a relatively new trend in tourism. Becoming aware of travellers' motivations and whether watching series/movies influences their choice of destination can contribute to targeted efforts by local governments. Set jetting is an effective alternative to traditional marketing communication tools to engage audiences. However, it is important not only to place a given place in a TV series or movie but also to arrange a variety of forms so that a given viewer will want to visit the place viewed. This is because the current viewer is focused on experiencing, experiencing, likes out-of-the-box solutions, not just passive reception.

Originality/Value: There is not a lot of research being conducted on the topic being discussed. These are usually case studies on a film/series or area. The results of the original research presented here, although pilot, cover a broader range of the topic under discussion.

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1. Introduction

The tourism sector is an important part of the economy of many regions, cities or towns. This is reflected in their socio-economic development through the generation of jobs, development of tourism and paratourism infrastructure, creation of tourism products and, consequently, improvement of the quality of life of residents. In addition, tourism is nowadays an important element of human activity undertaken in leisure time.

Tourist activity is conditioned by many factors, both internal (individual characteristics of the individual, e.g. age, gender, education, interests, motivations) and external (attributes of the destination, tourist promotion, image, fashion). These factors are referred to in the literature as pull factors "pull" and push factors "push" (Głabiński, 2018; Riley and Van Doren, 1992). For many cities or areas, the need to develop a unique local product and its out-of-the-box promotion is of particular importance. Therefore, local government units are looking for new opportunities to distinguish their area.

Film tourism, also known as set jetting, is seen as a driving force behind tourism development in many places. This is because mass media play an important role in shaping a destination's image and developing tourists' tourism intentions (Connell, 2012; Pham and Hwang, 2022). So-called set jetting is one of the main tourism trends in 2023 (www.forsal.pl; www.nocowanie.pl, www.nowaturystyka.pl). It should also be emphasized that the current audience tends to be oriented toward interaction, experience, and creative solutions that evoke emotions.

Hence, there is a need to look for unconventional forms of promoting the area (Thalassinos *et al.*, 2019). City/region placement in a film or TV series is an effective and attractive tool for promoting places, additionally perceived as non-irritating. City placement is closely related to the phenomenon of set jetting, in which the idea is, among other things, to create tourist products associated with the viewed region or even to create a fashion for tourist destinations.

The purpose of the article is to find out consumers' expectations and motivations for using set jetting as a form of promoting an area. This form is closely related to city placement, hence the authors wondered what viewers think about the placement of a given place in a movie or TV series. They also wondered whether this form of promotion contributes to visits to the depicted area, and what could activate these trips?

The article includes an introduction, literature review, methodology and results of the primary research conducted. Finally, a discussion resulting from the conducted research and literature studies is carried out and conclusions are drawn. The article uses literature analysis, online sources, as well as primary research.

2. Literature Review

The topic of tourism promotion of an area is described quite extensively in the literature (Adamopoulos and Thalassinou, 2020). Most often it refers to the concept of territorial marketing, also referred to as place marketing, destination marketing, place branding (Babecki 2011; Szromnik 2016). As Zawadzki (2013) points out, the multifaceted nature of an area's tourism product means that single entities cannot create and promote them on their own. The subject of product policy is the so-called composite tourism product offered by a certain area.

Considering a locality (region, city, village) in the context of an area's tourism product, it should be noted that it consists of so-called tourism sub-products. Among the types of tourism product distinguished in the literature, the following are distinguished: tourism service, tourism event and the specific products of the tourist area are objects (such as museums), trails, events or souvenirs.

The promotion of an area's tourism product is most often handled by DMOs (Destination Management Organizations). For their communication activities, they very often use unconventional related forms like city placement or set jetting.

City placement is a form of promotion, the main idea of which is based on the placement of a particular product or place in a film, TV series, program, book or computer or board game. Such an activity can be a region, city, locality or tourist attraction. It is not a form used only by larger agglomerations, as small villages and towns also use it (Werenowska, 2015).

An important advantage is the permanence of the message and its repeatability. It's not just about the perpetuation of the film/serial in the technical sense, but about permanence in the psychological sense, as the image associated with the story falls more deeply into people's minds (Szromnik, 2015). As Werenowska (2015) and Gębarowski (2007) point out, unlike classic advertising, city placement engages the viewer more, as he is more strongly focused on the storyline and is not distracted by commercials.

It allows to show the most interesting places, monuments, entertainment, cultural or architectural sites, acting as a kind of movie postcard promoting a given area. The image that viewers will see should be fully in line with the intentions of the local government (Zawadzki, 2013; Posadzińska and Adamczyk, 2018), which must also decide whether to choose mass media or focus on studio-based, niche initiatives.

Through the use of city placement, it is possible to increase the recognition of a place, emphasize its uniqueness, attract tourists or investors. It is a promotion of a given place, without persuasion, indirectly affecting the mind of the viewer. In addition, frequent contact with a given place through a TV/cinema window makes the area not quickly forget about itself.

Related to city placement is the concept of set jetting also referred to in the literature as film tourism or screen tourism. It can be defined as visiting places known from the screen, taming those places that can become easily accessible, and a tourist can see them and feel like a character from a film or TV series he or she has seen.

Activities that can be considered as set jetting in the literature are mentioned (Connell 2005; Žemla and Zawadzki 2014), among others:

- visits to locations depicted in a specific film/television production,
- visits to film sets,
- visits to specific film/television theme parks and attractions,
- attractions and theme parks that are directly related to the film, but also have a general tourist attraction,
- visits to filming locations,
- participation in organized tours of film locations,
- participation in organized tours of movie stars' homes, haunted places and related film locations,
- visits to film festivals.

The literature emphasizes not only the influence of films and series on the transformation of the space in which the action takes place, but also the importance of films and series in the promotion of tourist destinations. Studies by some authors suggest that a negotiation is noted between the visual media representation of a film and an existing tourist destination (Kim and Kim, 2017; Mostafanezhad and Promburom, 2018; Hao *et al.*, 2024). In order to enhance a destination's brand image, DMOs use a number of measures to attract filmmakers to their destinations (Özdemir and Adan, 2014).

Research related to film tourism is interdisciplinary in nature. Mostly, they mostly focus on topics such as the transformation of space under the influence of films and series; the construction of symbolic spaces, the behavioral patterns of tourists under the influence of film, the experience of film tourism, the influence of films on tourists' perception of places and expectations, the connection between film tourism

and cultural tourism, or the influence of films and series on the choice of travel destinations (Gkritzali *et al.*, 2016; Lao *et al.*, 2023; Wu and Lai, 2023; Wen *et al.*, 2018).

As Piepiora *et al.* (2022) specify, research on set jetting to date consists mainly of studies on mapping the phenomenon. Cities or regions are spaces that allow people to experience themselves in many different ways, and they are also ready-made stages for experiences. What is important are the components of the experience that you cannot take with you, e.g. the atmosphere of the place, culture, local community.

3. Methodology

The empirical part of the article is based on a CAWI survey of 216 respondents. The study used an online survey, which allows the survey to reach a larger number of people in a relatively short period of time. However, this method has some limitations, including the ease of opting out of the survey or the fact that the majority of people with access to the Internet can participate in the survey.

The survey, based on an author-designed questionnaire, was conducted in October 2023. Random selection was used. Due to the limited volume of the article, only some of the results are discussed, as the survey was broader, also covering the identification of a particular place (city/region) with a TV series or movie.

The completed survey was also a pilot study, as there are not many studies of this type, the questionnaire was revised to, among other things, check the respondents' level of understanding of the questions asked, as well as the scope of the research conducted.

4. Results

Based on the survey, it can be concluded that respondents enjoy watching movies or series – 16.2% do so daily, and 38.4% watch them several times a week. They most often watch them via the Netflix platform (78.7%), public/cable TV – 30.6% of indications, Disney+ (28.7%) and HBO GO (26.4%). It is therefore worthwhile for local governments to take an interest in the productions also made available on paid platforms, as they are increasingly popular.

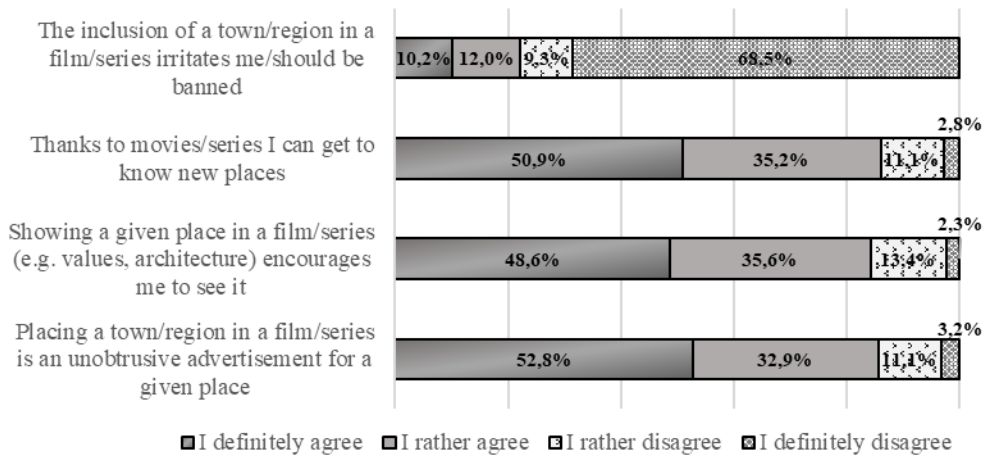
Almost 90% of respondents (45.8% definitely yes, 42.6% rather yes) agreed that locating the action of a film/series in a particular city/region/village increases the recognition of that place. Respondents were asked how important the selected elements are to them when watching a film/series.

It turned out that the place of the plot is important to almost 70% of respondents, the interiors of buildings to 63%, natural values to 61%, and monuments/architecture to

60.7%. Thus, one can see great potential to make a place stand out among others. It would be worthwhile to find some distinctive element that would be easily identifiable, as well as around which a tourist product could be created.

All the more so because for 85.2% of respondents, a film or TV series is an important (above 3 on a five-point scale) element encouraging them to visit a particular city/region depicted in the storyline. Figure 1 shows the attitude of respondents to the selected statements.

Figure 1. Attitude towards selected statements



Source: Own research.

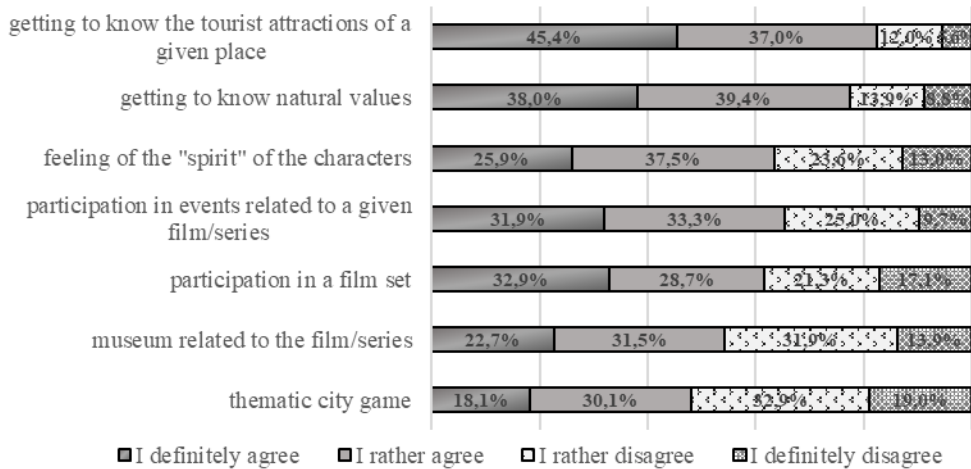
It can be seen that thanks to films or TV series, one can get to know new places and showing a place encourages people to see it. This way of promotion is also perceived as non-intrusive advertising, which positively increases the attractiveness.

43.1% of respondents visited a place under the influence of watching a movie/series. An important issue for the use of set jetting was to obtain information on the elements that encourage people to visit an area under the influence of a movie or TV series. The results are shown in Figure 2.

It turned out that this is mainly the desire to learn about the tourist attractions and natural features of the place, to participate in events related to the plot or to feel the "spirit" of the characters (63.43%).

These elements in particular are what local governments should pay attention to when creating a tourism product. For many respondents, it is also an interesting idea to organize a thematic game, as well as to create a museum related to a particular film/series.

Figure 2. Elements of the area that can contribute to visiting a place after watching a movie/series



Source: Own research.

An example of creating a thematic city game is, for example, Sandomierz, very well positioned in the consciousness thanks to the series "Father Matthew." "Spirit" of the character, on the other hand, was felt by respondents taking pictures "in the monument" of Krzysztof Jarzyna at Łasztownia in Szczecin, inspired by the film "Poranek kojota".

5. Discussion

We should agree with (Hao *et al.*, 2024) that destinations, using set jetting for their promotion, should strive to maintain public awareness while creating a symbolic space that balances commercial and cultural interests. Movies or TV series can inspire, as the original research also concluded, to discover new things; they can trigger desires; after watching, the viewer wants to see a place, explore and feel it.

From the research, it was found that TV series or movies are good places to promote given areas. In addition, this type of message can be broadcast frequently and then the city/region in question can more easily position itself in the minds of the audience. Other authors (Araújo Vila *et al.*, 2021) also emphasize that TV series have become one of the most successful types of audiovisual products. Their potential to cultivate a mass loyal audience makes them an excellent medium for promoting the places they depict, presenting them as attractive destinations and inducing the phenomenon known as set jetting.

When visiting or staying in a place, the viewer wants to experience its uniqueness, not get the same thing that is everywhere. This is supported by their research that

respondents remember the highlighted elements in a particular movie/series, which they then look for in the place they visit.

Pham and Hwang (2022) also conducted research on the effect of the perceived attractiveness of scenes in a movie on changes in intention to visit that place. Their study found that while the tourist opportunity factor representing the various leisure activities perceived by the filmed setting has a significant negative effect on changes in intention to visit that place, the country's images of attractiveness and excitement act as a positive halo and result in the consolidation of the initial intention to visit the filmed place. According to them, the peer group that visited the filmed place also plays an important role.

In contrast, a study by Araújo Vila and co-authors (2021) looked at the determinants influencing viewers' decisions to visit a place they have seen in TV series. Their results suggest that well-known Spanish TV series are more likely to attract domestic tourists to these destinations.

The results of their study, as well as the research conducted by the authors of the article, confirmed that destination awareness and motivation to visit significantly influence the decision to visit film destinations, while the influence of destination awareness is stronger. The potential is even greater when the series succeeds in motivating viewers to visit the depicted destination, to experience firsthand the places they see on screen, where the actors and directors have been, and to compare their mental image with the reality of the location.

6. Conclusions

Based on the primary research conducted, as well as the literature review, it should be emphasized that current trends related to the use of the tool of city placement or set jetting, despite being innovative, may not bring long-term promotional benefits to the area.

This is because it is not enough to place elements of a given place in a film or TV series, it is necessary to create sustainable tourism products around them (e.g., cyclical events, museums), taking advantage of natural and architectural values, which will contribute to strengthening the image. For many localities, such activities can be an opportunity to come out of the shadows and gain favor.

It should be noted that a movie or TV series is very much about emotions, and tourism is also about the same thing; so these elements are closely linked. Tourists gain, above all, traveling to places promoted in the film or TV series in the footsteps of their favorite characters; visiting places in an active way; learning about history, the city, gaining knowledge in an unconventional way; an attractive form of entertainment.

The transformation of urban spaces for the purposes of film and the subsequent creation of tourism products based on their ideas can, on the one hand, promote places and, on the other, distort its identity. Therefore, one should be aware of the benefits as well as the risks. It is worth mentioning that almost every city, town or village has unique qualities that stem from its heritage, values or traditions.

Using them in an inherently popular film or TV series can benefit many entities operating in the space of a given area. It is also important to keep in mind the risks that may arise. For one cannot act blindly. You have to think about what is a distinguishing feature of a place, make plans and, what is also important, respect your audience so that promoting a place in a film or TV series feels natural, not artificial.

The right film or series can breathe new life into places, attract visitors to lesser-known areas, provide original themes or change the image of a place, encourage tourism.

The authors realize that the research conducted had some limitations, such as a relatively small sample size. Therefore, it is difficult to generalize the results of this research, it was treated as a pilot study, which, on the one hand, makes it possible to correct the research tool, and on the other hand, gives a lot of information on the topic addressed. In the opinion of the authors, the presented article can broaden the knowledge about the perception of set jetting and city placement among the public. In the future, it will certainly be worth overcoming these limitations and conducting research on a larger scale, which the authors intend to do.

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