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MILLENNIAL STUDENTS, MOVIES, AND TOURISM

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This study examines the degree to which the leisure activity of “going to a movie film” influences an individual’s image formation process, and therefore desire to visit the portrayed tourist destination. The results of this single case study are twofold. First, demographic differences occur between pretest and posttest measures of destination attributes as the result of exposure to a destination-specific movie, and second, the desire to visit the film locations as expressed in the movie significantly vary by gender, age, and ethnicity.

Key Words: Cohorts; Destination tourism; Image; Millennial generation; Movies

Introduction

Tourism brochures and travel guidebooks are information sources created with the intention to promote a destination and influence individuals’ travel decisions (Morgan & Pritchard, 1998). In contrast, there are many other non-tourist-directed information sources that could create or change an individual’s image of a destination and desire to travel, such as news and popular culture (Iwashita, 2003). Movies, a popular medium, are commonly viewed as an entertainment source without any deliberate thought given to one of the outcomes being stimulating interest in a specific destination (Beeton, 2005). However, movies could present millions of viewers with substantial information about a destination, create a first-time image, or alter an existing image dramatically in a relatively short period of time. Therefore, the net result of

this type of destination exposure could impact the desire to travel in very powerful ways. For instance, academic researchers have already asserted that movies are more likely to reach wider audiences with less investment than specifically targeted tourism advertisements and promotion (Riley & Van Doren, 1992). Of various publicity tools, movies appear to have the greatest prevalence in destination marketing with press kits and media familiarization tours (Dore & Crouch, 2003).

There are various common press notations that allude to the impact that films have exerted upon geographical tourism development. A recent example would be the increase in visits to New Zealand after the release of the *Lord of the Rings* (2001) trilogy reported on a New Zealand website (<http://www.newzealand.com>). Within the US, *Deliverance* (1972), *Dances with Wolves* (1990), *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (1977),

Thelma and Louise (1991), *Field of Dreams* (1989), and *Steel Magnolias* (1990) were films that reportedly had an impact on visitor levels to Georgia, South Dakota/Kansas, Wyoming, Utah, Iowa, and Louisiana, respectively (Riley & Van Doren, 1992). This phenomenon is labeled "film-induced tourism" by Beeton (2005). The term film-induced tourism refers to "visitation to sites where movies and TV programs have been filmed as well as to tours to production studios, including film-related theme parks" (Beeton, 2005, p. 11).

Within this background of impression management, the remaining details of this article concern perceptions expressed by millennial students from a large southeastern university of their interest in visiting film locations in Japan. At this point it should be understood that the overlay of the millennial generation as a cohort for this study serves as a pivotal point in determining if there are differences in the values expressed by this group relative to being attracted to film locations expressed within the movie film, *Lost in Translation*.

Literature Review: Destination Image and Image Formation

The theoretical foundation for this study is primarily based on academic literature that centers on those factors and conditions that impact an image of a specified tourist destination in the minds of consumers. There have been numerous and different approaches to the study of destination image in academic research. To date it has been proven that destination image has a crucial role in an individual's travel purchase-related decision making and has been noted to be a primary variable in this process (Chon, 1990; Gartner, 1993; Goodrich, 1978; Gunn, 1988; Konecnik & Gartner, 2007; Um & Crompton, 1990; Woodside & Lysonski, 1989) and that the consumer's image is based on information that he or she was exposed to about the destination (Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; Gartner, 1993). Researchers outside of hospitality and tourism have also noted the impact that movie films have upon consumer behavior in terms of impacting emotions, intuition, creativity, and the promotion of products and services throughout the entire product life cycle (Elisasberg, Elberse, & Leenders, 2006; Noble & Schewe 2003; Wieremga,

2006). Other researchers have noted that movie messages interact with external cues to foster or diminish consumption behavior (Wansink & Park, 2001; Wansink, Brasel, & Amjad, 2000) and that consumers' consumption decision is influenced by the degree to which the product or service is high-versus low-involvement decision (Wansik, Brasel, & Amjad, 2000).

The underlying message in this collection of academic research is that consumers develop an image of the destination whether or not there was actual visitation involved. These images may be sharp or vague, factual or whimsical, but in all cases they are indicative of likes and dislikes (Gunn, 1988).

There are different definitions of destination image proposed by many researchers (Assael, 1984; Baloglu & Brinberg, 1997; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999a; Baloglu & Mangaloglu, 2001; Crompton, 1979; Gallarza & Calderon, 2002; Gartner, 1993; Gunn, 1988; Ko & Park, 2000; Lawson & Baud-Bovy, 1977; MacKay & Fesenmaier, 1997; Milman & Pizam, 1995; Rezende-Parker, Morrison, & Ismail, 2003; Schneider & Sonmez, 1999; Walmsley & Young, 1998); however, a commonly adopted definition is that image is the sum of beliefs, ideas, and impressions that people have of a place or destination based on information processing from a variety of sources over time, resulting in an internally accepted mental construct (Assael, 1984; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999a; Crompton, 1979; Gartner, 1993). It has been empirically demonstrated that the elements that influence destination images are multidimensional (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999a; Pike, 2002; Pike & Ryan, 2004). Furthermore, Kim and Richardson (2003) discovered that consumer perceptions of a depicted place did not lead to empathic involvement as a result of film exposure. The reason for this perceived disconnect was the perception that the film location was fictitious and therefore did not lead to affective involvement.

Destination image studies can be found in other disciplines, such as anthropology, psychology, marketing, and sociology, with respect to the understanding of tourism consumer behavior (Gallarza, Gil, & Calderon, 2002).

The study of destination image has become a prevalent subject in tourism studies in the recent

decade. Researchers have a wealth of destination image literature available and there have been numerous and different approaches to its study in tourism. In addition to studies on conceptualizing destination image, in general this research encompasses: (a) studies that recognize the importance of using structured and unstructured methodologies to assess and measure a destination image (Baloglu & Mangalolu, 2001; P. Chen & Kerstetter, 1999; Dann, 1996; Driscoll, Lawson, & Niven, 1994; Echtner & Ritchie, 1993; Fridgen, 1987; Hsu, Wolfe, & Kang, 2004; Jenkins, 1999; MacKay & McVetty, 2002; Milman & Pizam, 1995; Murphy, 1999; Reilly, 1990; Walmsley & Jenkins, 1993; Woodside & Lysons, 1989); (b) studies that assert that destination image can be influenced by geographical or cultural distance (Ahmed, 1991; Crompton, 1979; Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; Goeldner, Ritchie, & McIntosh, 1999; Joppe, Martin, & Waalen, 2001; MacKay & Fesenmaier, 1997; Mackay & Fesenmaier, 2000; Telisman-Kosuta, 2003); (c) studies that note that previous visitation or direct experience alters and modifies the existing image of the destination (Ahmed, 1991; Baloglu, 2001; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999b; Chon, 1990, 1991; Dann, 1996; Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; Fridgen, 1987; Hu & Ritchie, 1993; Milman & Pizam, 1995; Oppermann, 1996; Pearce, 1982; Phelps, 1986; Tiefenbacher, Day, & Walton, 2000); and (d) studies disclosing that destination image formation is often the result of vectoring multiple external information sources and is also unique to the individual as well as their cultural and social setting (Ashworth & Voogd, 1990; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999a; Bramwell & Rawding, 1996; Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; Gartner, 1993; Gunn, 1988; MacKay & Fesenmaier, 1997; Stabler, 1988; Stern & Krakover, 1993; Um & Crompton, 1991). Recently researchers have noted that negative movie messages have exerted a direct impact upon consumer purchasing ranging from avoidance of particular unhealthy foods, convenience foods, and smoking (Gunther, Bolt, Borzekowski, Liebert, & Dillard, 2006; Oakes & Slotterback, 2007).

Academic researchers have introduced different frameworks that explain the image formation process. According to Gunn (1988), tourists form an image of a destination after undergoing a seven-

stage process: (a) accumulating mental images of the destination, thus forming an organic image; (b) modifying the initial image after more information, thus forming an induced image; (c) deciding to visit the destination; (d) visiting the destination; (e) sharing the destination; (f) returning home; and (g) modifying the image on the experience in the destination. Based on the seven stages, the author expressed that tourists' destination image is distinguished by two dimensions: (a) organic images that are made from nontourist information about a destination, such as television documentaries, books, school lessons, and stories from friends' experiences, and (b) induced images or promoted information about a destination, such as travel brochures, publicity, and advertisements and modified induced images that are the result of personal experiences of a destination. Gartner (1993) proposed a typology of eight image formation agents relating to the degree of control by the promoter and credibility with the target market. The eight agents are: (a) overt induced I (traditional forms of advertising); (b) overt induced II (information received from tour operators); (c) covert induced I (second-party endorsement of products through traditional advertising); (d) covert induced II (second-party endorsement through unbiased reports, such as newspaper articles); (e) autonomous (news and popular culture); (f) unsolicited organic (unsolicited information received from friends and relatives); (g) solicited organic (solicited information received from friends and relatives); and (h) organic (actual visitation). Other researchers (Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; Stabler, 1988) have applied these studies into developing an image formation process.

While promotional efforts of a destination through media (e.g., travel magazines, travel brochures, travel guidebooks) play an important role in influencing the tourist decision-making process, there are many other non-tourist-directed information sources that could play an important part in forming a destination image and creating the reason for travel (Iwashita, 2003). According to Gunn (1988), these destination images are organic. Gartner (1993) identify these images as being formed by autonomous agents (i.e., news and popular culture). News and popular culture that consist of independently produced reports, documentaries, movies, television programs, and news articles are deeply

embedded in everyday lives that are likely to have high market penetration (Kim & Richardson, 2003).

Intersection of Movie Films and Tourism

Popular culture is known to have powerful effects on destination image formation in the context of tourism due to the fact that it can provide substantial information about a place in a short period of time. Since their appearance, movies have influenced people's tastes and ideas enormously (Butler, 1990). Movies, television shows, and documentaries that are not produced with the intent to attract tourists to a destination influence viewers indirectly as a background part of the movie's message (Butler, 1990). According to Williamson (1991, as cited in Riley & Van Doren, 1992), for a destination, there is nothing better than publicity generated by a major motion picture and the high-profile actors. Most tourism entities lack the financial backing for a strong advertising campaign and this can limit them to rely on tourism brochures that are less effective. Unfortunately, an individualized brochure cannot effectively reach a mass audience in a synchronous manner as does the big screen.

According to Brown and Singhal (1993), the impact of popular movies and television programs on individual and societal beliefs as well as behaviors will continue to increase as cable television and video use rapidly advances. Butler (1990) argued that what is shown in visual mass media (e.g., movies, videos, and television) will become even more important than print media in shaping images of, and visitation to, places due to expanding accessibility and high credibility of these information sources. Similarly, Schofield (1996) suggested that contemporary tourists' organic images of places are shaped through the vicarious consumption of movie and television without the perceived bias of promotional material. Thus, diffusion of popular culture, because of its high credibility and market penetration, may be the only image formation agent capable of changing an area's image dramatically in a short period of time (Gartner, 1993). The film-induced deconstruction of space and its reconstruction in the image of tourism is a growing phenomenon (Schofield, 1996). Movies can communicate a striking image (Cohen,

1986) and attract visitors to the filmed locations. Many countries are capitalizing on the success of movies to promote and create a positive image of their destination to attract tourism. For example, travel to Australia increased shortly after the release and following box office success of *Crocodile Dundee* (1986) and the film's male star became a tourism spokesperson for the country (Gartner, 1993). The British Tourist Authority has shown its commitment to promoting film-induced tourism by producing a movie map that lists over 200 locations in the UK that have been featured in films or television programs (Busby & Klug, 2001). Also, in order to promote the film, *50 First Dates* (2004), the island of Oahu, Hawaii, the Oahu Visitors Bureau (OVV) along with a resort and an airline teamed up with Columbia Pictures on a promotional campaign that included electronic marketing and field and national promotions. The electronic marketing campaign focused on driving people to the *50 First Dates* (2004) mini-website that featured a chance to win a trip to the island of Oahu, map, and information on the locations where scenes from the movie were filmed. It appears that New Zealand attempted to capitalize on the glamour generated in the *Lord of the Rings* movies by the promotion of "New Zealand, Home of the Middle-Earth" on their website of Tourism New Zealand. Films such as this promote the country as a place of adventure and other-worldly scenery (Jones & Smith, 2005; Morgan, Pritchard, & Piggott, 2003).

Although the huge impact of movies on tourism has been seen in several examples, it is difficult to measure and quantify the actual impact or actual tourist visits that is caused by a movie's release. Recently, there have been several academic studies that identified an increase in popularity of locations depicted in films (Riley, Baker, & Van Doren, 1998; Riley & Van Doren, 1992; Tooke & Baker, 1996).

Riley and Van Doren (1992) presented the case that movies filmed in the US for US and international markets have been influential in promoting US tourist destinations. The authors examined the impact of several movies on visitor levels to each filmed destination. For example, key scenes of the movie *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (1977) were filmed against the basalt rock outcrop of

Devils Tower National Monument in northeast Wyoming. The location is in relative isolation that visits to this site require prior planning and a realization that the trip is worth the time and effort involved (Riley & Van Doren, 1992).

Tooke and Baker (1996) demonstrated that four UK television series attracted visitors to the locations where the filming was believed to have taken place. The main implication was that the use of filmed location has considerable value; therefore, it is worthwhile for destinations to attract television films or movie companies for better exposure to the public.

Riley et al. (1998) collected data at 12 locations in the US where popular movies were filmed. The study results showed that the locations enjoyed at least 4 years of visitation increases after the movies were released. The authors also revealed that for some locations, the movies' impact on tourism have created economic windfalls while for others they have caused safety concerns and overcrowding.

Busby and Klug (2001) discussed the concept of film-induced tourism in relation to the wider phenomenon of cultural and literary tourism. The study found that a variety of different forms of film-induced tourism exist and every tourist is motivated by different factors to visit filmed locations. More recently, Kim and Richardson (2003) provided empirical evidence that a popular movie could affect some of the destination image components and interest in visiting the filmed location. The authors also found that the level of empathic involvement with the film characters was not significantly associated with either cognitive or affective components of destination image or with familiarity and that the movie did not enhance the degree of familiarity with the destination portrayed in it.

Focus of Study

It appears that this body of academic research agrees that movies are more than just casual entertainment given that they inform people in many ways (Mankekar, 2001). Furthermore, it appears that academic researchers have recognized that movies, as a form of mass media and popular culture, are influential in creating and changing an

individual's image of a destination due to the medium's ability to influence perceptions in a relatively short period of time. More specifically, what remains to be studied is the degree to which generational impacts exist relative to the impression formation process. Therefore, a resounding conclusion from this film-induced tourism literature review is that a dearth of information exists concerning the impact that movie films exert upon a specific consumer cohort group, the millennial consumer. To satisfy this lack of information the authors designed a pre/postempirical study with the specific purpose of measuring the degree to which a specific millennial cohort group's (university students) attitudes changed due to movie film exposure, and to determine if significant value shifts occurred by gender, age, or ethnicity.

Study Hypotheses

In order to achieve the study's purpose, the following research hypotheses were proposed and tested.

- H₁:** There is no significant difference between millennial students' premovie versus postmovie impression ratings concerning the expressed tourist destination.
- H₂:** There is no significant influence for any of the 16 identified destination attributes upon a respondent's desire to visit the film locations as expressed in the movie.
- H₃:** There is no significant impact of gender, age, or ethnicity upon a respondent's desire to visit the film locations expressed in the movie.

Research Methodology

This field experiment involved pretest and posttest questionnaires with a movie as the treatment between the pretest and posttest stages. First, a master list of attributes was developed after a review of the literature (J. S. Chen, 2001; J. S. Chen & Hsu, 2000; P. Chen & Kerstetter, 1999; Echtner & Ritchie, 1993; Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; Hsu et al., 2004; Hu & Ritchie, 1993; Joppe et al., 2001; Kim, 1998; Rezende-Parker et al., 2003; Rittichainuwat, Qu, & Brown, 2001). Then, destination image attributes that were commonly used throughout the studies and those that were

found to be most influential were selected. Also, those that were relevant to the study were included, such as the attribute related to language (i.e., no difficulty communicating in English). This resulted in 16 destination image attributes (see Table 1). For the closed-ended questions, including the scale items, a Likert scale, categorical scale, and multiple choice methods were used.

The selected movie for the treatment was *Lost in Translation* (Turan, 2003), which was shot entirely on location in Japan. The movie was chosen based on discussions with moviegoers that have seen this movie and other movies that were filmed in Japan. *Lost in Translation* (2003) is a movie about two dissimilar Americans in Tokyo. Due to the time difference between the two countries, the characters are unable to sleep and cross paths one night in the luxury hotel bar. The male character (Bob, played by Bill Murray) and the female character (Charlotte, played by Scarlett Johansson) become friends and venture through Tokyo, having often hilarious encounters with local people of Japan, and ultimately discover a new belief in life's possibilities. The film is about dislocations and disorientations. The film is smart about cultural differences, about the strangeness of being in a place where you don't know the cultural markers (Turan, 2003). The movie shows the high-rise architecture, city entertainment, temples and palaces, and the beautiful countryside. Scenes throughout the film also show virtually every inch of the upscale Park Hyatt Hotel in Tokyo including the exterior, bar, gym, rooms, and elevators. The hotel became a character of the movie itself and has attracted many people to the hotel due to the shooting of this movie on its premises (Gibson, 2004).

Because of the limited time given for the experiment, selected chapters of the movie DVD were shown instead of the full-length movie (1 hour and 42 minutes). This process of editing was done in order to fit the movie within the time frame in which the classes were offered. Scenes that were excluded were those that were repetitive and had too much plain dialog. The scenes were carefully chosen and excluded to not affect the flow or message of the movie.

Sampling Frame and Data Collection

The sampling audience for this study encompassed 247 undergraduate students aged 20–24

who were enrolled in hospitality undergraduate courses at a major metropolitan university in the southeast of the US. Students of this average age are commonly classified as the millennial generation. For the purpose of this study the millennial generation is considered a cohort group that was born during the same time period and who experienced similar environmental events during the formative years of early adolescence to early adulthood (Noble & Schewe, 2003). According to Noble and Schewe, external environmental events that shape generational behavior center on economic changes, political ideologies, technological innovations, wars, and social disturbances. The assumption is that these external events influence a cohort group's value system barring other moderating factors.

The millennial cohort generation that was born between 1981 and 1994 has unique behavior characteristics different from that of other generations (Dziuban, Moskal, & Hartman, 2005; Howe & Strauss, 2003; Oblinger, 2003; Oblinger & Oblinger, 2005). The millennial generation has been exposed to a rich media environment that has resulted in a consuming group that is reflective, cautious, and is known to challenge traditional value systems (Dziuban et al., 2005). They also are drawn to technology and media gadgets as a primary means of communicating and it is commonplace for them to interact through cellular phones, instant messenger systems, Podcasts, MP3 players, the Internet, Blue Tooth, RSS feeds, Wi-fi, and the Web. The millennial generation use their media gadgets, personal web pages (My Space), wikis, and blogs to manage the assimilation of information, conduct research, and consume services (Oblinger & Oblinger, 2005; Porter & Donthu, 2006). Furthermore, these millennial students use technologies for social networking, studying, and personal entertainment. This cohort group is known to actively seek out social, financial, athletic, academic, or any other forms of achievement (Shih & Allen, 2007).

The cohort group known as millennials (alias Net Gen, Gen D, or Digital Natives) assimilate and incorporate information concerning social and leisure products and services much differently than previous generations due to this preference of robust audiovisual electronically based mediums

(Porter & Donthu, 2006). Following this general line of reasoning then, it is therefore logical to assume that the millennial's impression formation process via movie films is worthy of measurement as well. These value-related cohort characteristics makes this group of students a very appropriate sample for this study given the paucity of information surrounding this generation of consumer and the leisure product of movies.

Results

Profile of Respondents

The sample of university students was mostly female (65.9%) with the majority being American Caucasian, non-Hispanic (74.4%), followed by Hispanics (12.6%). A large portion (96.7%) of the respondents was age 25 or under and only eight (3.3%) of the respondents were over the age of 26. In terms of academic level, the sample was almost evenly distributed with 39% freshmen, 16.3% sophomores, 22% juniors, and 20.3% seniors. Overall, the composition of the sample is not surprising because this study used a convenience sample that was comprised of mostly undergraduate hospitality students and almost exclusively representative of the millennial generation.

A qualifying question at the beginning of the survey revealed that only three respondents had been to Japan in the past 5 years. Therefore, the three respondents who had been to Japan were excluded from the data analyses. Travel experience of the respondents was also looked at. Less than half of the respondents (43.7%) had taken a domestic trip five times or less in the past 3 years. In this study, domestic leisure travel referred to overnight trips within the continental US that are more than 100 miles away from home. In terms of international travel, 54.5% had not taken an international trip in the past 3 years. In this study, international travel referred to overseas trips that do not include Canada or Mexico. This indicates that the respondents were not worldly travelers.

This study dealt with a movie and its impact on an individual's image formation. For this reason, movie experience was also included in the questionnaire. The majority (83.6%) indicated that they had not seen the movie selected for this study and

26.8% had watched a movie at a commercial theater 11 times or more since January 2004.

Hypothesis 1

In relation to H₁, the results of this study clarify that a movie does have an impact on destination image formation that did not exist prior to the viewing of the movie. In order to find out whether there is a statistical significant difference between the pretest/posttest data with the same group of people, paired samples *t*-test was the chosen method of analysis. The results revealed that 8 out of 16 attributes showed statistical significant difference ($p < 0.05$) between the pretest and posttest mean scores (Table 1).

Among the eight attributes that showed a statistical significant difference ($p < 0.05$), six had an increase in their mean scores from pretest to posttest; those were, "cleanliness/hygiene" ($p < 0.01$), "friendly/hospitable" ($p < 0.01$), "safe place to visit" ($p = 0.023$), "quality accommodations" ($p < 0.01$), "reliable local transportation" ($p < 0.01$), and "quality nightlife entertainment" ($p < 0.01$). Two of the eight attributes, "appealing local food" ($p = 0.030$) and "no difficulty communicating in English" ($p = 0.007$) had a decrease in their mean scores from pretest to posttest.

To further analyze the observed differences on these 16 destination attributes the researchers further analyzed the data by gender, age, and ethnicity using an ANOVA procedure.

On the pretest dimension the attributes of "communicating in English" and perception that Japan had "interesting customs" significantly varied by gender at the levels of 0.05 and 0.014, respectively. Relative to age, the attributes of "quality accommodations" (0.026), "quality of shopping facilities" (0.05), "quality of nightlife entertainment" (0.001), beautiful architecture (sig 0.027), and belief that Japan was a "good value for the money" (0.001) were significant as well. For these five factors the 19–25 age group's mean ratings were significantly different than their counterparts. In terms of ethnicity, the Hispanic group expressed the highest mean ratings while African American expressed the lowest overall mean ratings on almost all destination attributes. The attributes of "quality accommodations" (sig. 0.026),

Table 1
Paired *t*-Test: Pretest and Posttest 16 Destination Attributes

Destination Attribute	Pretest Mean (SD)	Posttest Mean (SD)	Mean Difference (SD)	<i>t</i> -Value	<i>df</i>	Sig. (Two-Tailed)
Cleanliness/hygiene	3.55 (1.05)	4.00 (1.02)	0.45 (-0.03)	-6.363	243	0.000*
Restful/relaxing	3.17 (0.99)	3.21 (1.22)	0.04 (0.23)	-0.548	243	0.584
Friendly/hospitable people	3.50 (0.92)	4.13 (0.95)	0.63 (0.03)	-9.237	243	0.000*
Safe place to visit	3.50 (0.88)	3.68 (1.09)	0.18 (0.21)	-2.283	243	0.023*
Appealing local food	3.78 (1.18)	3.63 (1.30)	-0.15 (0.12)	2.189	243	0.030*
Quality accommodations	3.65 (0.92)	4.29 (0.91)	0.64 (-0.01)	-9.541	243	0.000*
Quality shopping facilities	3.78 (1.07)	3.92 (0.99)	0.14 (-0.08)	-1.806	243	0.072
Reliable local transportation	3.40 (0.92)	3.88 (1.04)	0.48 (0.12)	-6.731	243	0.000*
Quality nightlife entertainment	3.63 (0.91)	4.18 (0.97)	0.55 (0.06)	-7.690	243	0.000*
No difficulty communicating in English	2.57 (1.07)	2.32 (1.15)	-0.25 (0.08)	2.728	243	0.007*
Interesting customs	4.08 (0.93)	4.05 (1.04)	-0.03 (0.11)	0.554	243	0.580
Natural scenic beauty	4.12 (0.95)	4.17 (1.00)	0.05 (0.05)	-0.808	243	0.420
Variety of historic sites	4.03 (0.98)	3.98 (1.05)	-0.05 (0.07)	0.678	243	0.499
Cultural sites of interest	4.04 (1.01)	4.09 (0.95)	0.05 (-0.06)	-0.667	243	0.505
Beautiful architecture	4.09 (0.94)	4.22 (1.03)	0.13 (0.09)	-1.865	243	0.063
Good value for the money	3.43 (1.05)	3.44 (1.12)	0.01 (0.07)	-0.204	243	0.839

Pretest and posttest mean value 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree.

* $p < 0.05$.

“quality shopping facilities” (sig. 0.05), “quality nightlife entertainment” (sig. 0.001), “beautiful architecture” (sig. 0.027), and “good value for the money” (sig. 0.001) clearly indicate a difference in initial perceptions by ethnic groupings.

On the posttest dimension fewer significant differences materialized while the mean ratings generally polarized as a result of movie exposure. Tables 2a and 2b indicate that ratings generally increased or decreased, thus confirming or disconfirming attribute expectations that existed prior to movie exposure. The male mean ratings were significantly different from the females (sig. 0.002) on the attribute that Japan was a “restful and relaxing place” and Japan was a “safe place to visit” (sig. 0.014). When age was considered, the 19–25 age group produced the highest mean rating on the attribute of shopping facilities (sig. 0.037). Finally, ethnicity generated five significantly different mean ratings. In referencing Table 2b the mean ratings expressed by African Americans were universally lower than their Hispanic and American Caucasian counterparts. Therefore, the major finding is that the ethnic value system of the respondents resulted in significant differences on the destination attributes of “local food appeal” (sig. 0.018), “quality of accommodations” (sig. 0.033), “interesting customs” (sig. 0.013), “natural scenic beauty”

(sig. 0.038), and “cultural sites of interest” (sig. 0.008).

Hypothesis 2

The second hypothesis identified what combination of the 16 destination attributes (independent variables) exerted a significant influence upon the respondents desire to visit the film locations (dependent variable) as identified in the movie. A hierarchical regression procedure that inputted the 16 variables in a stepwise fashion determined that 3 of the 16 variables exerted a predominant and significant influence upon the respondents’ desire to visit the designated film locations. The results for this stepwise regression are provided in Table 3.

The metric of the respondents’ desire to visit the film locations explained by the predictor variables, as measured by R^2 , is increased by 37.6% through the inclusion of “safe place to visit” (28.8%), “good value for the money” (6.9%), and “appealing local food” (1.9%). This finding therefore indicates that these respondents view the safety of the film locations as a primary driver of their decision to visit the locations. The regression coefficients indicate that all three attributes are significant at $p > 0.01$. “Safe place to visit” shows the highest standardized beta coefficient value at

Table 2a
Demographic Mean Comparison: Gender and Age

Destination Attribute	Gender		Age	
	Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean
Cleanliness/hygiene	3.48 (0.98)	3.99 (1.0)	3.48 (0.95)	3.97 (1.0)
	3.66 (1.16)	4.02 (1.0)	3.62 (1.0)	4.03 (0.97)
Restful/relaxing	3.09 (0.96)	3.03 (1.1)	3.03 (0.82)	3.13 (1.1)
	3.30 (1.0)	3.53 (1.3)	3.26 (1.0)	3.26 (1.2)
		Sig. 0.002	3.17 (0.98)	3.33 (1.4)
Friendly/hospitable people	3.48 (0.93)	4.08 (0.96)	3.45 (0.83)	4.15 (0.91)
	3.52 (0.90)	4.23 (0.93)	3.55 (0.96)	4.11 (0.98)
			3.50 (0.92)	4.11 (0.92)
Safe place to visit	3.46 (0.89)	3.56 (1.0)	3.46 (0.75)	3.55 (1.1)
	3.59 (0.84)	3.92 (1.1)	3.55 (0.93)	3.76 (1.0)
		Sig. 0.014	3.22 (0.87)	3.78 (0.97)
Appealing local food	3.83 (1.16)	3.63 (1.2)	3.74 (1.1)	3.71 (1.2)
	3.69 (1.2)	3.61 (1.3)	3.81 (1.2)	3.59 (1.3)
			3.78 (1.1)	3.33 (1.2)
Quality accommodations	3.64 (0.88)	4.28 (0.87)	3.52 (0.77)	4.27 (0.89)
	3.65 (0.98)	4.29 (0.99)	3.77 (0.97)	4.33 (0.91)
			3.11 (1.0)	3.89 (1.0)
			Sig. 0.026	
Quality shopping facilities	3.81 (1.12)	3.88 (0.99)	3.61 (0.98)	3.72 (1.0)
	3.71 (0.94)	3.99 (0.98)	3.92 (1.0)	4.06 (0.93)
			3.44 (1.5)	3.78 (1.0)
			Sig. 0.05	Sig. 0.037
Reliable local transportation	3.34 (0.86)	3.85 (1.0)	3.24 (0.78)	3.72 (1.0)
	3.49 (0.99)	3.93 (0.94)	3.49 (0.96)	3.99 (1.0)
			3.67 (1.3)	3.89 (1.0)
Quality nightlife entertainment	3.61 (0.93)	4.22 (0.98)	3.35 (0.75)	4.10 (1.1)
	3.67 (0.85)	4.11 (0.96)	3.82 (0.95)	4.27 (0.86)
			3.67 (1.0)	3.67 (1.0)
		Sig. 0.001		
No difficulty communicating in English	2.48 (1.0)	2.31 (1.1)	2.43 (0.96)	2.33 (0.5)
	2.76 (1.0)	2.35 (1.1)	2.69 (1.1)	2.33 (1.1)
	Sig. 0.05		2.33 (1.2)	2.00 (0.70)
Interesting customs	4.19 (0.89)	4.10 (1.0)	4.03 (0.80)	4.09 (1.0)
	3.88 (0.98)	3.93 (1.0)	4.14 (0.99)	4.04 (0.99)
	Sig. 0.014		3.67 (1.1)	3.78 (1.2)
Natural scenic beauty	4.16 (0.93)	4.16 (1.0)	4.11 (0.80)	4.22 (1.0)
	4.04 (0.99)	4.18 (1.0)	4.15 (1.0)	4.16 (0.98)
			3.89 (1.1)	3.89 (0.92)
Variety of historic sites	4.06 (0.96)	4.01 (1.0)	3.95 (0.87)	3.83 (1.0)
	3.95 (1.0)	3.93 (1.0)	4.11 (1.0)	4.10 (1.0)
			3.56 (1.33)	3.78 (0.97)
Cultural sites of interest	4.10 (1.0)	4.11 (0.92)	3.88 (0.89)	3.97 (0.98)
	3.92 (1.0)	4.02 (0.98)	4.16 (1.0)	4.19 (0.90)
			3.78 (1.2)	3.67 (1.0)
Beautiful architecture	4.11 (0.93)	4.21 (1.0)	3.96 (0.85)	4.13 (0.96)
	4.04 (0.96)	4.22 (1.0)	4.21 (0.95)	4.30 (1.0)
			3.56 (1.3)	3.89 (1.1)
		Sig. 0.027		
Good value for the money	3.44 (0.99)	3.50 (1.1)	3.18 (0.86)	3.39 (1.0)
	3.40 (1.0)	3.35 (1.1)	3.63 (1.1)	3.52 (1.1)
			2.78 (0.97)	2.78 (1.2)
		Sig. 0.001		

Pretest and posttest mean value 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree. In the gender columns the top value is for females and the bottom value is for males. In the Age columns the top value is for ages 18 and under, the middle value is for ages 19 to 25, and the bottom value is for ages 26 and over.

Table 2b
Demographic Mean Comparison: Ethnicity

Destination Attribute	Ethnicity	
	Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean
Cleanliness/hygiene	3.14 (0.85)	3.86 (0.65)
	3.43 (0.77)	4.13 (1.5)
	3.60 (1.0)	3.99 (0.95)
	Sig. 0.022	
Restful/relaxing	3.19 (0.81)	3.38 (1.0)
	3.30 (0.98)	3.27 (1.5)
	3.11 (0.99)	3.16 (1.0)
Friendly/hospitable people	3.29 (0.64)	4.05 (0.59)
	3.73 (0.82)	4.30 (1.1)
	3.51 (0.92)	4.12 (0.95)
	Sig. 0.034	
Safe place to visit	2.95 (0.59)	3.33 (0.65)
	3.77 (0.77)	3.83 (1.2)
	3.54 (0.87)	3.69 (1.0)
	Sig. 0.006	
Appealing local food	3.33 (1.1)	2.71 (1.3)
	3.80 (0.88)	3.77 (1.4)
	3.83 (1.2)	3.71 (1.2)
		Sig. 0.018
Quality accommodations	3.19 (0.68)	3.81 (0.87)
	3.90 (0.80)	4.37 (1.1)
	3.67 (0.92)	4.33 (0.84)
	Sig. 0.019	Sig. 0.033
Quality shopping facilities	3.33 (0.79)	3.62 (0.80)
	3.90 (0.88)	4.13 (1.2)
	3.82 (1.0)	3.91 (0.95)
Reliable local transportation	3.05 (0.97)	3.62 (0.86)
	3.33 (0.88)	4.17 (1.2)
	3.47 (0.88)	3.87 (1.0)
	Sig. 0.007	
Quality nightlife entertainment	3.29 (0.71)	3.95 (0.66)
	3.47 (0.93)	4.17 (1.1)
	3.69 (0.91)	4.21 (0.97)
No difficulty communicating in English	2.62 (0.74)	2.29 (1.0)
	2.30 (0.87)	2.50 (1.5)
	2.64 (1.1)	2.33 (1.1)
Interesting customs	3.52 (0.68)	3.38 (0.80)
	4.23 (0.81)	4.07 (1.6)
	4.15 (0.91)	4.10 (0.90)
	Sig. 0.000	Sig. 0.013
Natural scenic beauty	3.38 (0.74)	3.52 (0.81)
	4.27 (0.82)	4.20 (1.4)
	4.20 (0.94)	4.25 (0.94)
	Sig. 0.000	Sig. 0.038
Variety of historic sites	3.38 (0.66)	3.33 (0.79)
	4.23 (0.85)	4.07 (1.2)
	4.09 (0.98)	4.04 (1.0)
	Sig. 0.003	

Table 2b
Continued

Destination Attribute	Ethnicity	
	Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean
Cultural sites of interest	3.57 (0.59)	3.43 (0.67)
	4.23 (0.81)	4.10 (1.2)
	4.06 (0.98)	4.14 (0.90)
	Sig. 0.003	Sig. 0.008
Beautiful architecture	3.57 (0.59)	4.00 (1.3)
	4.27 (0.69)	4.23 (1.3)
	4.15 (0.96)	4.25 (0.92)
	Sig. 0.002	
Good value for the money	3.10 (0.76)	3.00 (0.70)
	3.73 (0.98)	3.67 (1.3)
	3.42 (1.0)	3.48 (1.1)
	Sig. 0.02	

Pretest and posttest mean value 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree. The top value in the columns is for African American, the middle value is for Hispanic, and the bottom value is for American Caucasian.

0.359, followed by “good value for the money” (0.246), and “appealing local food” (0.157). Respectively, the *p*-values assigned to “safe place to visit,” “good value for the money,” and “appealing local food” are 0.000, 0.000, and 0.007, thus indicating the level of importance that these three attributes exert upon these students’ desire to visit the film locations.

Hypothesis 3

The third hypothesis suggested that the destination attributes of “safe place to visit,” “good value for the money,” and “local food appeal” would vary by gender, age, and ethnicity and therefore exert a significant influence upon the respondents’ desire to visit the film locations.

Influence of Gender. The regression analysis indicates some difference between female and male respondents (Table 4). Female millennial students ranked the attribute of “safe place to visit” ($\beta = 0.338$), ahead of “good value for the money” ($\beta = 0.261$), and “appealing local food” ($\beta = 0.205$). In contrast, male students ranked the attribute of “safe place to visit” ($\beta = 0.347$) ahead of “good value for the money” ($\beta = 0.267$) and

Table 3
Aggregated Regression for Interest in Visiting Film Location

	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ²	<i>R</i> ² Change	<i>F</i> Change	Sig. <i>F</i> Change
1	0.537(a)	0.288	0.288	97.882	0.000
2	0.597(b)	0.357	0.069	25.698	0.000
3	0.613(c)	0.376	0.019	7.298	0.007

Beta Coefficient ^a	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients:		
	B	SD	Beta	<i>t</i>	Sig.
(Constant)	0.499	0.279		1.793	0.074
Safe place to visit	0.443	0.074	0.359	6.016	0.000
Good value for the money	0.296	0.075	0.246	3.962	0.000
Appealing local food	0.162	0.060	0.157	2.701	0.007

(a) Predictors: (Constant), Safe place to visit. (b) Predictors: (Constant), Safe place to visit, Good value for the money. (c) Predictors: (Constant), Safe place to visit, Good value for the money, Appealing local food.
^aDependent variable: Interest in visiting film location.

“appealing local food” ($\beta = 0.072$). As such, the beta coefficients for males were slightly higher on two of the three destination attributes while “local food appeal” beta ratings were significantly lower for males. Therefore, all destination attributes (independent variables) are significant at $p < 0.01$ with the exception surrounding the “appeal of local food” as noted by males.

Using the R^2 as the indicator of variance the female cohort noted that the three independent variables accounted for a stronger influence (3.1%) on their decision to visit the film locations (38.3% vs. 35.2% as noted by males). This finding indicates that gender differences do indeed exist, thus implying that marketing messages and images are influenced by differing value systems for males and females relative to an identified tourist destination.

Influence of Age. The regression analysis indicated the presence of significant differences when

the respondents were segmented by age (Table 5). Students less than age 19 ranked the attribute of “good value” ($\beta = 0.300$), ahead of “appealing local food” ($\beta = 0.224$), and “safe place to visit” ($\beta = 0.216$). Students 19–25 years old ranked the attribute of “safe place to visit” ($\beta = 0.490$) ahead of “good value for the money” ($\beta = 0.189$) and “appealing local food” ($\beta = 0.112$). Those students 26 or older ranked the attribute of “safe place to visit” ($\beta = -0.521$), “appealing local food” ($\beta = 0.483$), and “good value for the money” ($\beta = 0.424$).

The beta coefficients indicate that a shift in priorities occurs with these age cohort groupings with the most noticeable shift being on the attribute of the film locations as a “safe place to visit.” This noticeable difference is highlighted by the fact that all three of the predictors are significant for the less than 19 year olds (safe place to visit = 0.031; good value for money = 0.005; and appealing local food

Table 4
Regression: Interest in Visiting Film Locations by Gender

	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ²	Adjusted <i>R</i> ²	Model Predictors	Beta	Beta Sig.
Female	0.628	0.395	0.383	a. Safe place to visit	0.338	0.000
				b. Good value	0.261	0.001
				c. Appealing local food	0.205	0.004
Male	0.593	0.352	0.327	a. Safe place to visit	0.347	0.004
				b. Good value	0.267	0.028
				c. Appealing local food	0.072	0.508

Table 5
Regression: Interest in Visiting Film Locations by Age

	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ²	Adjusted <i>R</i> ²	Model Predictors	Beta	Beta Sig.
<18	0.577	0.333	0.311	a. Safe place to visit	0.216	0.031
				b. Good value	0.300	0.005
				c. Appealing local food	0.224	0.021
19–25	0.669	0.447	0.435	a. Safe place to visit	0.490	0.000
				b. Good value	0.189	0.017
				c. Appealing local food	0.112	0.132
26+	0.481	0.232	-0.230	a. Safe place to visit	-0.521	0.444
				b. Good value	0.424	0.425
				c. Appealing local food	0.483	0.420

= 0.021), two of the three predictors are significant for the 19–25 group (β sig. level: safe place to visit = 0.000; good value for money = 0.017; and appealing local food = 0.132), and none of the predictors are significant for the 26 and older group (β sig. level: safe place to visit = 0.444; good value for money = 0.425; and appealing local food = 0.420).

The variance (R^2) associated with the three predictor variables differs vastly between these three age groupings. Students less than 19 years of age attributed 33.3% of the influence of these three independent variables upon their desire to visit the film locations; the 19–25 year old group attributed 44.7% to these predictor variables, and the 26 and older group found these three predictors to account for only 23.2% of the total variance concerning their decision to visit the film locations portrayed in the movie.

Influence of Ethnicity. When the respondents were segmented by ethnicity differences materialized concerning the influence of the three predictor variables upon the dependent variable (Table 6). African American students ranked “safe place to visit” ($\beta = 0.391$) ahead of “good value for the money” ($\beta = 0.258$) and “appealing local food” ($\beta = -0.204$). The Hispanic students ranked “safe place to visit” ($\beta = 0.504$) ahead of “value for the money” ($\beta = 0.112$) and “appealing local food” ($\beta = 0.024$). The American Caucasian students ranked “safe place to visit” ($\beta = 0.359$) ahead of “good value for the money” ($\beta = 0.271$) and “appealing local food” ($\beta = 0.168$).

The beta significance levels indicate that ethnic preferences do vary in importance for this group

of students. In particular, for the African Americans and Hispanic cohort groups all three beta coefficients were not significant, whereas all three predictor variables were significant for American Caucasian students (β sig. levels: safe place to visit = 0.000; good value for money = 0.000; and appealing local food = 0.009).

Furthermore, the amount of variance (R^2) associated with these three predictor variables indicates that these ethnic groups do place differing degrees of importance on the predictor variables of “safe place to visit,” “good value for money,” and “appeal of local food” on their decision to travel to the film locations. Therefore, the presence of ethnic preferences implies that movie content can be modified to attract and influence ethnic consumer behavior.

Discussion and Implications

The major finding of this study indicates that interest in visiting a tourist destination as expressed in a movie film is significantly impacted by the underlying value system of an individuals’ generational cohort group, and that movies can serve as a medium to appeal to these values.

The impact of movies as a form of mass media and popular culture on people’s image formation has been widely acknowledged in the literature (Butler, 1990; Gartner, 1993; Gunn, 1988; Iwashita, 2003; Kim & Richardson, 2003; Schofield, 1996). This experimental field study indicated a pattern that movies do have an impact upon the millennial consumer’s image formation process, which is an interesting notation seeing that impressions formed

Table 6
Regression: Interest in Visiting Film Locations by Ethnicity

	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ²	Adjusted <i>R</i> ²	Model Predictors	Beta	Beta Sig.
Asian or Pacific Islander	1.0	1.0	—	a. Safe place to visit	-0.645	—
				b. Good value	0.217	—
				c. Appealing local food	1.420	—
African American	0.485	0.236	0.101	a. Safe place to visit	0.391	0.099
				b. Good value	0.258	0.369
				c. Appealing local food	-0.204	0.459
Hispanic	0.615	0.379	0.307	a. Safe place to visit	0.540	0.093
				b. Good value	0.112	0.671
				c. Appealing local food	0.024	0.933
American/Caucasian	0.618	0.382	0.372	a. Safe place to visit	0.359	0.000
				b. Good value	0.271	0.000
				c. Appealing local food	0.168	0.009
Other (American Indian, etc.)	0.894	0.800	0.500	a. Safe place to visit	0.241	0.557
				b. Good value	0.492	0.307
				c. Appealing local food	1.106	0.109

within an hour long exposure. This study, therefore, supports conclusions forwarded by Gartner (1993) in that (a) autonomous image formation agents—popular culture and news can change an individual's image of a destination and (b) visual mass media is very powerful in altering perceptions with media exposure. Second, this study supports conclusions by Schewe and Nobel (2000) that consumption behaviors do vary by cohort groups, thus illustrating the value of segmenting markets.

From a destination marketer's perspective the findings of this particular study imply that it is plausible to target specific consumer groups based on gender, age, and ethnicity preferences. Clearly this student case study highlights the fact that the power of the movie medium should not be discounted as a viable tourist destination marketing tool. This is indeed challenging in that the initial intent of making the movie is for corporate profit and entertainment and often scripting a story line has very little to do with marketing a specific tourist destination. As such, the spillover effects are often ancillary to the primary objective of producing the movie. Therefore, it is quite unrealistic to assume that destination marketers can in general convince movie producers to portray their country or location in a given manner. Instead, what is more realistic is that destination marketers can leverage interest by analyzing and capturing both

positive and negative images portrayed in a movie so as to appeal to respective generational markets. It is important for marketers to take the exposure generated on a specific geographical destination as an opportunity to reposition their destination image management strategy depending on how their destination was represented in the film and to take into consideration the fact that this generation of consumers assimilates information from a variety of technological distribution channels (wikis, blogs, discussion boards, Google chats, etc.). As such, marketers should be aware of the content of the movie and identify how the destination was depicted in it *and* they should be keenly aware of generational differences that may exist. By doing so, the production of marketing literature (brochures, pamphlets, news releases), websites, blogs, wikis, and other forms of electronic or print media will certainly differ as well the message being conveyed. Basically what this implies is that marketers need to be aware of generational differences so that appropriate messages can be crafted to attract the appropriate audience or audiences (Liu & Wei, 2003).

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

It is apparent that further research is necessary. A number of issues were not clarified by this study due to some limitations. First, this study

used a convenience sample that was homogenous in terms of generational characteristics. It would be worthwhile to apply similar studies to a sample in which differing generations are represented in order to better understand the phenomenon. Second, this study did not measure a preconceived desire to view the movie because the present study was not a voluntary movie-going situation. In most cases, movie viewing is done in a voluntarily and self-initiated manner so as to seek out entertainment, which might affect viewers' emotions and degrees of involvement in the film (Kim & Richardson, 2003). Therefore, a field experiment conducted in a natural setting, such as a commercial theater, would be able to accomplish the goal of measuring the desire to see a movie. Finally, because of limited time, only one movie was used in the experiment. It is not difficult to conceive that different types of movies could attract different audience segments. It would be interesting to see the difference in different types of movies, such as movies of different genres or movies with a destination that is part of the storyline and movies with a destination that serves just as a backdrop. One last suggestion would be extending this study into a longitudinal research by testing actual travel behavior and their travel motivations to a filmed location. This could provide better understanding of the impact of movies on tourism. Despite these limitations, this study has provided strong evidence about the impact of movies on destination image formation, which may engender more research in the area.

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