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Could Television Streaming Sites Lead the Charge for Film-Induced Tourism Post COVID?

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Seeking the "Sites/Sights" Seen on the Small Screen!

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ABSTRACT

By focusing on television film-induced tourists, this chapter will contribute to a better understanding of tourist behaviour in relation to motivations for travel to filming locations. The chapter combines, analyses, and critiques the main debates raised by key authors in relation to identifying the motivational factors that prompt site-specific film tourism as well as providing contributions from this author's 2016 research on television film-induced tourism in Ireland. The chapter is divided into the following sections: a brief history of film and television and a review and discussion on film tourism, a breakdown of the different categories of film tourist and a summation of the various motivations for television induced film tourism, followed by an insight into the concept of authenticity in film tourism studies and the use of technologies such as virtual reality and augmented reality as a means to provide a more immersive experience post COVID-19.

Keywords: television film tourism, tourist motivation, future of film tourism, virtual reality, augmented reality, authenticity, fanatical film tourist, push/pull factors

INTRODUCTION

This chapter comes at a time when managers in tourism and hospitality industries need to look to the future in a dynamic and competitive market and utilise film-induced tourism development to gain competitive advantage. As a result of the world lockdown due to the global Coronavirus pandemic, television viewing and media streaming site subscriptions boomed. Thus, film tourism will possibly be a niche form of cultural tourism that could be a key to rebuilding the tourism industry post COVID-19. Film induced tourism is still a relatively new field of study, and the appeal is not yet fully understood or explored. There have been many studies completed investigating the relationship between film and tourism, but they have primarily dealt with: 1. destination image planning and management; 2. investigating the impacts of film tourism on host communities; 3. authenticity. Subsequently, after identifying gaps in the current literature around the topics of tourist motivation and the experience of being a film tourist, further research was undertaken to identify, characterise and understand both the possible and actual motivations of the film tourist; specifically, from the consumer perspective to examine the effects of film on tourist behaviour.

It is well-recognised that visits to film and television series locations is a growing global phenomenon in the tourism field, and with that comes a growing amount of tourism research. Such research examines the relationships between tourism and popular media (e.g., Beeton,

2016; Busby & Klug, 2001; Connell, 2005, 2005a, 2012; Connell & Meyer, 2009; Kim, 2010; McWha & Beeton, 2018; Reijnders, 2011; Riley & van Doren, 1992; Roesch, 2009; Santos & Kim, 2017; Yen & Teng, 2013). However, consumer demands and behaviour will be permanently altered by the pandemic, and all stakeholders in the tourism industry will need to adapt. As travellers strive for meaningful short breaks and touristic experiences, one way in which destinations can bounce back would be using immersive technologies and the redesigning of tourism offerings. Thus, this chapter will begin by providing a brief history of film and television and a review and discussion on film tourism. The chapter also offers a breakdown of the different categories of film tourist and a summation of the various motivations for film tourism, followed by an insight into the concept of authenticity in film tourism studies and the use of technologies such as Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality as a means to provide a more immersive experience. The objective is to provide a critical overview of film tourism research to date and present the motivational factors that prompt site-specific television film-induced tourism, with contributions from the author's 2016 research on tourist motivation in the context of television film-induced tourism from the television series *Game of Thrones*.

BACKGROUND

History of Film and Television

The origins of cinema began in the late 19th century, when an employee of the American inventor Thomas Alva Edison created a machine called the Kinetoscope in 1894. People could watch short films through a peephole viewer window at the top of the machine; however, the major disadvantage of the Kinetoscope was the fact that the moving pictures could only be seen by one person at a time. In 1895 the Lumière brothers from Paris, France, came up with an improved version of the Kinetoscope, which they called the Cinématographe. This device projected images onto a screen to give the illusion of movement allowing several people to watch a film together.

The first major movie studio was opened in Hollywood, Los Angeles in 1909 (Hellman, 2005). Roughly a decade later cinema was to become a mass leisure time activity, creating popular culture on a scale that had never been seen before. Further developments in 1925 saw John Logie Baird, a Scottish inventor; succeed in transmitting moving silhouette images. In 1926, he demonstrated the transmission of an image of a face in motion via radio; this landmark event is regarded as the world's first true demonstration of television (Baird, 2020).

This meant that film which was once only viewed in the cinema could now be viewed at home through television. Fast-forward to the 21st Century and a sitting room without a television is almost unthinkable because it has become a natural part of our environment and culture. Television has evolved into the most significant tool for mass media communication and changed into our primary source for news, weather, and entertainment. Nowadays, almost all households have ownership of multiple televisions, satellite systems, DVD players and computers. The transmission of televised films, drama and other programmes into the home continues to be a major facet of modern life, through the likes of Netflix, Disney+, Amazon Prime and SKY TV.

Focusing on television series, today's offerings have a much more complex storyline than they used to have, which implies a longer story length. This chapter will be focusing on television-based film tourism, so at this point it is important to note the differences between cinema and television. Roesch (2009) talks about how the cinema movie focuses on an issue

that must be resolved by the end of the film. However, television is based on several episodes in a series, or multiple series with longer drawn out storylines. Therefore, the viewer has more time to become engaged in the plot and develop empathy with the characters, which is important in determining the motivations for film tourism.

2020 was a year like no other, and a year in which the world tourism industry experienced unprecedented losses. Film tourism could be a niche form of cultural tourism that is key to rebuilding this ailing tourism industry post COVID-19. As a result of the global Coronavirus pandemic "by mid-April 2020, a third of the global population was under full or partial lockdown" (Hudson, 2020, p.28). These lockdowns ranged from legally enforced "mandatory geographic quarantines" by Governments to "non-mandatory recommendations to stay at home, closures of certain types of businesses, or bans on events and gatherings" (ibid, p.28). As a result of the world lockdown, television viewing and media streaming site subscriptions boomed. Netflix surpassed 203 million subscribers in 2020 with a net increase of 37 million new subscribers (Netflix, 2021). As of the first quarter of 2021 Amazon Prime Video had surpassed 150 million subscribers (Keyes, 2020), and Disney's direct-to-consumer portfolio including Disney+, ESPN+, and Hulu accounted for more than 146 million global paid subscribers (Walt Disney Company, 2021). A study by Ofcom in the United Kingdom found that adults spent nearly 6 and a half hours a day watching TV and online video and viewing figures for video streaming services were up by 71% on 2019 (Ofcom, 2020). It is clear that the time spent per viewer watching television and online entertainment increased as the spread of COVID-19 worsened.

Film Tourism

Film tourism is a niche element of tourism activity and is simply defined as a genre within tourism that provides a link with the location of a film or a television series – during or after shooting. Other definitions include "Film tourism is a specific pattern of tourism that drives visitors to see screened places during or after the production of a feature film or a television production" (Roesch, 2009, p.6) and "film tourism is the effect of both cinema film and of television film on the numbers of visitors coming to the place where the filming is believed to have taken place" (Tooke & Baker, 1996, p.87).

A number of early researchers on this topic highlight the potentially lucrative effects of film tourism for a destination and speculated that the influence of film and television on consumer choice would increase (e.g., Butler, 1990; Cohen, 1979; Happer & Philo, 2013; Urry, 1990). In 1996 Tooke and Baker carried out a study in the United Kingdom, which illustrated that films or television series have a big impact on the choice of tourism destination. According to the study there can be an increase of up to 93% in visitors within a year of a film/television series being released, in comparison to recorded tourism figures pre-filming at the study location. Television film-induced tourism proves itself as a very powerful marketing tool and with long-term effects, for example, as a means of sustainability and an answer to seasonality since visiting filming locations can be undertaken the whole year through (Busby & Haines, 2013; Garrison & Wallace, 2021; Kim *et al*., 2019; Radomskaya, 2018).

There are several aspects that give TV shows some advantages over feature films in terms of their tourism-inducing properties. Destination marketers can assess the tourism-inducing potential of a TV show during the release of the first season, before investing in a marketing campaign accompanying the following seasons. According to Roesch (2018), official imaging media are actively controlled and implemented by tourism marketers. A successful

example being the *Game of Thrones* social media campaign carried out by Tourism Ireland in 2014 and 2015, which sold Northern Ireland as the fictional land of Westeros.

Film-induced tourism can manifest itself in many different forms. For some people, visiting the filming location may be the only goal of their trip, for others it may be part of an organised tour, or the tourist may have happened upon the site incidentally. Some of these locations may have already been tourist attractions, while other locations are turned into attractions only because of their appearance in a film or television series. This is especially the case where film crews leave sets behind after filming finishes.

Connell (2012) devised a clear model as shown in Figure 1, which comprises the scope of film tourism to include:

- Visits to real town and countryside locations that have been employed as film shooting locations, for example, Tollymore Forrest, Downpatrick (NI) – *Game of Thrones.*
- Tours of studio sets, for example, Warner Bros. Studio Tour, California – *Friends.*
- Visits to theme parks and attractions with a link to film and TV, such as *Universal Studios* or *Disneyland*, California.
- Tourists visiting locations where filming is taking place, for example, the flood of tourists that descended on Wicklow, Ireland during the recent filming of *Vikings.*
- Visits to a location marketed as a filmic location. Tourists may not have experienced the television series but interest in the location is brought about by marketing imagery, such as, the *Glass of Thrones* campaign, Tourism Ireland– promoting *Game of Thrones* tours to Northern Ireland.
- Participation in an organised tour of a portrayed location, for example, *Game of Thrones* Tours which are commercially operated tours with tour guides around film locations in Northern Ireland.
- Participation in organised tours of film celebrity homes, for example, Southern California is renowned for its many celebrity estates, and bus tours driving through Beverly Hills looking for the stars' homes is now a time-honoured tradition and a favourite pastime of tourists.
- Visits to film festivals like the *Cannes Film Festival* in France.
- Visits to cities for film premieres, to watch the film or to star spot celebrities on arrival.

Figure 1. The scope of film tourism

Source: Connell, 2012, p1010
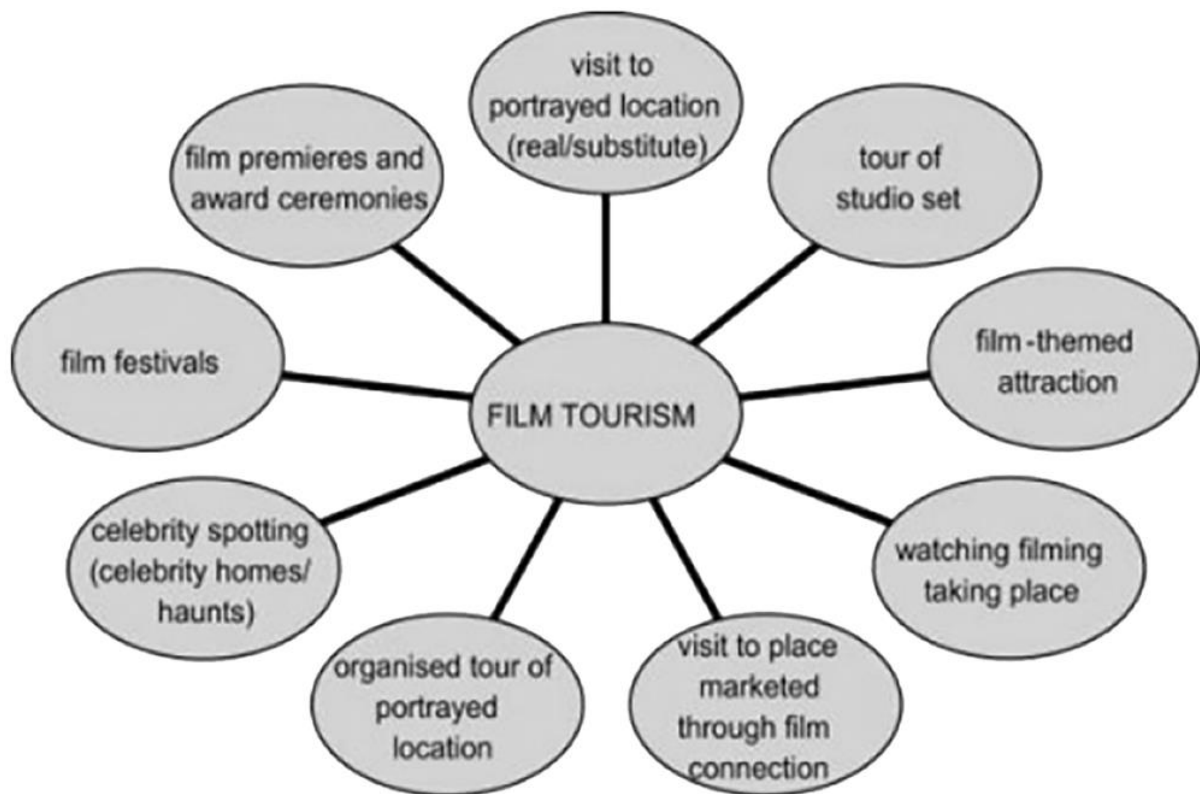
Within the last two decades film-induced tourism has gained increasing attention from academics and the industry alike. Connell (2012, p.1007) claims that several "high-profile tourism destinations utilise film-related aspects in inbound marketing campaigns", for example, the UK, USA, Korea, Australia, and New Zealand. Current worldwide television film induced tourism examples includes: *Outlander* and *Downton Abbey* in the United Kingdom; *Neighbours* and *Home and Away* in Australia; *Parks and Recreation* and *Lost* in the United States etc. Such locations and others have been documented in previous studies examining the effects of film tourism on destinations (e.g., Bakiewicz *et al*., 2016; Butler, 2011; Carl *et al*., 2007; Connell, 2012; Edensor, 2005; Hanefors & Mossberg, 2002; Jones & Smith, 2005; Kim *et al*., 2007; Pearce, 2005). Every day, the film universe captivates people. Films are not commonly made with the purpose of attracting tourists to a destination. However, they do influence viewers indirectly as a secondary element of movie viewing through the use of composition, sets, props, actors, costumes, and lighting (Butler, 1990). The very best films can take on a life of their own in the viewer's imagination. A good film or television series can instil the feeling that we have expanded our circle of friends. Therefore, film tourism has the means and the scope to reach everyone. A visit to a location will take the tourist into the very core of the film's universe where, through their own senses, they will experience a new dimension of the television or film production. Film tourism represents a gateway to new and more intense ways of experiencing destinations. This is where there is vast potential for television film tourism because television series have always played a uniting role within the family. Television is something that interests everyone – across generations (Hudson & Ritchie, 2006; Signorielli & Morgan, 2001; Spigel, 2013; Wheeler, 2015).

Television series are becoming increasingly interesting from a film-tourism perspective, particularly as tourism reopens after COVID-19. Most citizens around the world have been in lockdown of varying intensities for nearly eighteen months at the time of writing and because television series have a longer life cycle than feature film productions, with most of them

running for several seasons, the level of engagement with the storylines, plots and destinations is much stronger. The main focus of current research remains primarily on "destination marketing, branding and image, destination choice and motivation, and impacts and management" (Kim, 2012, p.387). However, some academics have undertaken research on film site tourist experiences (e.g., Beeton, 2005, 2010, 2016; Macionis & Sparks, 2009; Roesch, 2009). Notwithstanding this exploratory work, there is little research that has investigated the understanding of film tourism experiences and motivations associated with a television series.

Now that the various forms of film tourism have been examined, it is time to move on to the categories of film tourists.
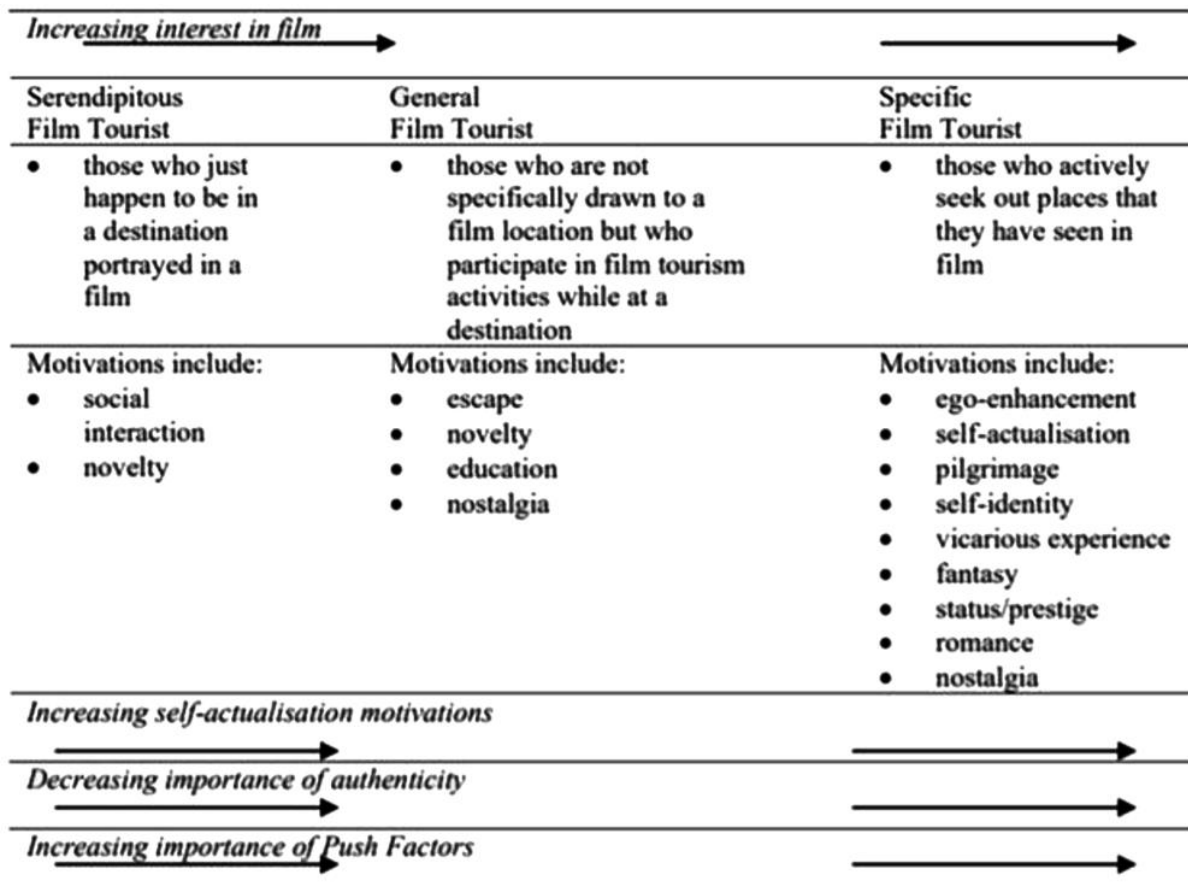
Film Tourists

In the same way that there are various definitions of film tourism, academic researchers have also categorised different types of film tourists - such as, film pilgrims (Riley & van Doren, 1992), film tourists (Couldry, 1998), screen tourists (Kim *et al.*, 2009), elite screen tourists (Connell & Meyer, 2009), and purposeful film tourists (Croy, 2011). Non-film tourists are usually tourists who are travelling to a film site as part of their itinerary during a day trip which includes other destinations. Film tourists are those who take a pilgrimage film trip and are motivated by nostalgia and place identity because of a film (Jewell & McKinnon, 2008). The television film tourist is attracted by the first-hand experience of the locality captured on the small screen. It also must be said that the degree of fanaticism of the television film location tourists can change over time. In the first years after release of the series, the film locations are more likely to be visited by tourists with a very high degree of fanaticism. As time goes by, this degree of fanaticism decreases and film or television series as a main goal for travelling moves slowly to the background.

Research shows that most tourism marketing focuses on the destination and lacks focus on the consumer. Consumers can be greatly influenced by images and may make purchase choices based on what they have seen in the movies and on television. Therefore, the medium of film can have an impact on its audience. Bolan and Williams (2008, p.382) also note "an expanding body of literature suggests that film can influence people's travel decisions and entice them to visit particular destinations they have seen on the cinema screen" or television. (e.g., Araújo Vila et al., 2021; Butler, 2011; Chang, 2015; Hudson & Ritchie, 2006; Ismail et al., 2017; Rittichainuwat & Rattanaphinanchai, 2015)

Macionis (2004) devised an alternative set of categories of film tourists: The Serendipitous Film Tourist; the General Film Tourist; and the Specific Film Tourist. Figure 2 details the distinctions between each type of Film Tourist

Figure 2. Continuum of film-induced motivation

Source: Macionis, 2004, p94

Increasing interest in film		
Serendipitous Film Tourist	General Film Tourist	Specific Film Tourist
• those who just happen to be in a destination portrayed in a film	• those who are not specifically drawn to a film location but who participate in film tourism activities while at a destination	• those who actively seek out places that they have seen in film
Motivations include:	Motivations include:	Motivations include:
• social interaction • novelty	• escape • novelty • education • nostalgia	• ego-enhancement • self-actualisation • pilgrimage • self-identity • vicarious experience • fantasy • status/prestige • romance • nostalgia

Increasing self-actualisation motivations

Decreasing importance of authenticity

Increasing importance of Push Factors

There is a need to better understand film/screen tourist profiles as there is a general lack of research in understanding these travellers, including their socio-demographic characteristics, travel patterns and screen product preference. One question which we must ask is whether understanding the profile of film location tourists helps to understand their motivations for travel? Regarding the primary travel motivations of film tourists, these seem to be quite like those of other tourists.

TOURIST MOTIVATION

Generally, motivation represents the reasons behind peoples' actions, desires, and needs. Tourist motivation is centred on the questions - Why do people travel? and, Why do they choose the holidays and destinations they do? It is closely related to people's needs and wants. This section will utilise previous motivation theories to understand the travellers' desire to visit film locations.

There were early attempts to understand tourism motivation in the 1970's, 1980's and 1990's, the most popular theories adapting Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs concept (Maslow, 1970) by putting forward the notion of a motivational career – with more experienced tourists showing higher needs than less experienced travellers (McIntosh, Goeldner & Ritchie, 1995; Pearce & Caltabiano, 1983). Attempts to categorise motivations related to tourists' choice of holiday destination suggest that these motives can be classified into *push* and *pull* factors (Crompton, 1979; Dann, 1977; McIntosh & Goeldner, 1990; Trimurti & Utama, 2020; Yoo *et al*., 2018;). The Push-Pull framework provides a simple intuitive approach for explaining the motivations underlying tourist behaviour. Push relates to the socio-psychological factors that *push* a person towards travel and have been described as motivational factors, or needs, that arise

due to a state of instability or tension in the motivational system. Whereas *pull* factors on the other hand, have been described as those factors related to the features, attractions, or attributes of the destination itself, that pull a person towards a certain location, such as beaches, recreation facilities and tourist sites, and these differ from one destination to another (Dann, 1981; Dunne, 2009; Iso-Ahola, 1982; Kim *et al.*, 2003; Klenosky, 2002). Destination choice therefore comes from tourists' perceptions of destination attributes and their apparent values.

Push-Pull Framework

For this chapter, the author employs the conceptual framework adopted by Crompton in 1979 which can encompass all the motives for travel. Crompton (1979) identified seven socio-psychological push factors and two cultural pull factors guiding visitors' choice of a holiday destination.

The Socio-Psychological Motives are the *Push* Factors. *Escape from a Perceived Mundane Environment* refers to what Crompton calls "a temporary change of environment" which is "physically and socially different from the environment in which one normally lives" (ibid, p.416). *Exploration and Evaluation of Self* relates to the desire to develop as a person; it may involve the need to challenge oneself, to learn new skills, attain new knowledge or find out about oneself. *Relaxation* refers to a "mental state rather than a physical relaxation" and means "taking the time to pursue activities of interest" (ibid, p.417). *Prestige* refers to when the trip represents a combination of both symbolism and self-expression - often associated with more expensive and exotic holidays. *Regression* relates to the need to "regress to a less complex, less changeable, less technologically advanced environment", for instance, looking for the simple life (ibid, p.418). *Enhancement of Kinship Relationships* relates to the desire to enhance or enrich family relationships. And *Facilitation of Social Interaction* represents a need to "meet new people in different locations" (ibid, p.420), which is about a desire to mix with the locals and other tourists in the area.

Cultural Motives are the *Pull* Factors. *Novelty* represents the things that are different from the traveller's everyday life and environment, such as beaches, recreation facilities, and cultural attractions. *Education* relates to the pull of studying abroad to attain a better or higher level of education or to learn new skills/gain knowledge. If a trip is perceived as the one opportunity in a lifetime to see a cultural phenomenon, and the opportunity is not grasped, then the educational benefits will be lost.

Explanation of underlying motives offers useful insights into understanding the television film location tourists' decision process. Although the push/pull framework is simplistic and dichotomous in design, this author believes that the socio-psychological motives and the cultural motives are not polar opposites, but instead fit together like the pieces of a puzzle to entice the tourist to travel and subsequently form an overall motivation to take a trip. The author proposes that the desire for education is something inherent within the individual and is something you either seek or you do not. Therefore, it is not necessarily dependent on the location and as such should not be classified as a pull attribute of the destination. Similarly, if the pull factor of novelty is "substituted with *curiosity*, then the motive is more like a push factor" (Hsu & Huang, 2008, p.18). Novelty refers to the desire to see new places or do things in a different environment, so changing novelty to curiosity (the desire to know and to understand) makes more sense as a push factor.

Hence, for that reason, the author recommends that to develop the tourist profile, the pull attributes of destinations should be disregarded, and focus should be placed solely on push factors as primary motives for travel. The pull attributes of a destination are secondary to the motive and desire to travel and can be interchangeable between many destinations but the primary motives for travel remain unchanged. Thus, are site-specific motivators *push* or *pull* factors? The term site-specific would lead one to believe that the motivations are linked to *pull* attributes of place; however, is suggested that this is not necessarily the case. In relation to television film induced tourists, the question remains as to what motivates tourists to engage in site-specific tourism and does it align with Crompton's motivation framework.
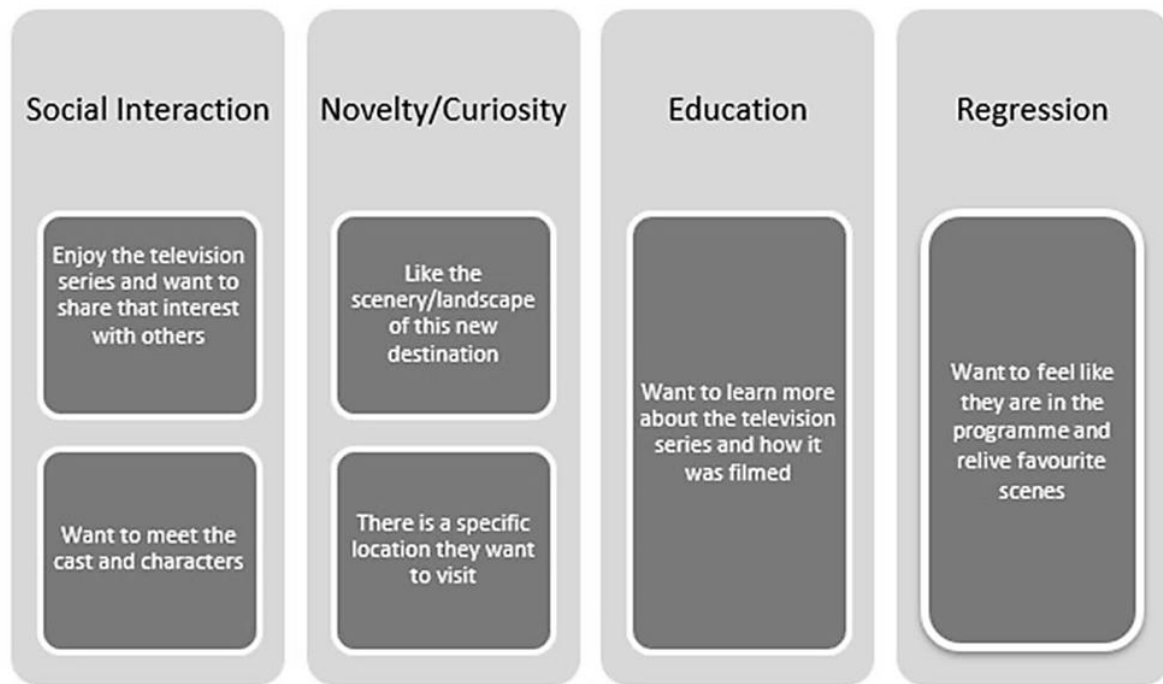
DISCUSSION

To contextualise the discussion, the author conducted a quantitative study of 125 tourists participating in *Game of Thrones* bus tours from Dublin and Belfast over the summer of 2016 at the height of the series' popularity. The tourists were surveyed at 5 of the most popular filming locations – Tollymore Forest Park, Inch Abbey, Castle Ward, Dark Hedges Estate, and Ballintoy Harbour. The author adopted a positivist worldview to conducting the research and the resulting empirical study led to conclusions based on data and specifically collected information using a deductive process as the research is based on prior logical reasoning – Push/Pull Framework. The participants were asked multiple questions about their motivations for visiting the film locations. The survey instrument yielded categorical data, with data analysis building themes and relationships among variables. This non-experimental form of research is of correlational design and the results are incorporated into the following discussion.

Kork, (2016, p.154) suggests that the "core element of a film that affects whether the film will influence the viewer to travel is the portrayal of the destination", and that the plot and characters are less important. However, the author's research findings indicate that most respondents are motivated to take a film location tour because of the performance-oriented storylines of the show. In this instance, the viewers are more motivated to visit a location because of its association with the television series, characters etc., than for its natural visual beauty. The intrinsic place qualities were a lesser stimulator with respondents being marginally motivated by attributes of place such as the scenery and landscape. Yet, it is doubtful if the natural beauty of the location would be enough to draw the tourists to visit if the location were not associated with a recognised television programme. An interesting finding was that respondents were seeking education and knowledge, declaring that they desired to learn more about television programming, for example, how the television series was filmed. The author believes that character association also creates a strong emotional tie to cast members, with respondents specifically travelling in the hopes of meeting the actors on site. The author's research also highlighted visiting somewhere new as a major motivation to travel.

Figure 3 shows a conceptual diagram designed to highlight how the site-specific motivations align with Crompton's motivation theory. This contribution is developed by the author specifically for television film-induced tourism.

Figure 3. Site specific film tourist motivation

Source: Author

Social Interaction	Novelty/Curiosity	Education	Regression
Enjoy the television series and want to share that interest with others	Like the scenery/landscape of this new destination	Want to learn more about the television series and how it was filmed	Want to feel like they are in the programme and relive favourite scenes
Want to meet the cast and characters	There is a specific location they want to visit		

Film Tourist Profile

Connell (2012, p.1016) reports that, "until the mid-2000s, few studies focused on the characteristics, motivations and behaviour of film tourists". Roesch (2009) conducted research about the on-site experiences of film tourists at three different movie locations, specifically Salzburg (Sound of Music), Tunisia (Star Wars) and New Zealand (The Lord of the Rings). Not surprisingly, the profile of visitors varied depending on the locations and the themes of the movies. The age range of the film tourists was diverse and led Roesch to identify three major age groups:

- Gappies are backpackers who have taken a year off before or after college. They are in their early 20s, travel on a tight budget and have more time available at the destination than the other groups;
- Revivals, are people aged between 40-50 years who often travel with their partner or children to see the movie locations; they have less time, but more money available;
- Initials, describe people aged 60 and over

This following section will build on this conceptualisation and concentrate on film tourist characteristics as identified by the author and the *Game of Thrones* tour participants.

Socio-Demographic Profile

It has been observed that film tourists tend to be highly educated, wealthy, middle-aged individuals (Busby & Klug, 2001; Kim & O'Connor, 2011). The author's findings disagree with this assumption because almost half of all respondents were under 30 years of age. Another observation from previous studies is that the majority of film tourists are female (Hudson *et al.*, 2011), the author's research mirrors this, with 35% of the respondents being male and 65% female. With regards to nationality, almost half of the respondents were Irish (45%). British citizens were also well represented at 20%. The remaining 35% of respondents were from various origins including North America (and Canada), South America, Europe,

Asia, and Australia/Oceania. This gave the study a cross-cultural aspect, which is supported by the work of previous researchers. The author's research also corroborates the work of Buchmann *et al*. (2010), confirming that most respondents took the tour as a means of enhancing social interaction with friends and kinship relationships with family. The Irish participants were more inclined to travel with family and spouses/partners while the remaining nationalities were mainly travelling with friends. The younger respondents (18-30) showed the highest propensity for social interaction by travelling with friends, whereas, those classed as middle aged (31-45) were travelling as couples with their spouse or partner, thereby enhancing close relationships by experiencing the location most likely with the person with whom they had watched the series.

Types of Film Tourist

Since most bus tours to film-shooting locations use film tourism as the main theme of the tour, the target of such tours is primarily what could be called *fanatical film tourists*. It is the author's opinion that it is highly unlikely that serendipitous or incidental film tourists would be on an organised film location trip. Quite possibly, the tour may catch some general film tourists, but the percentage is too insignificant to record. As expected, *fanatical film tourists* are more likely to take a pilgrimage film trip and are motivated by nostalgia and place identity because of television. Furthermore, for *fanatical film tourists*, the re-enactment and photographing of performances like those acted out by characters seen on the show reinforces their emotional attachment and creates personalised memories by providing tourists with a first-hand experience of the locality. The author's research confirms the evocation that *fanatical film tourists* must physically be at the sites of their favourite films, to stand in the footsteps of their movie heroes and relive special moments from the film.

Figure 4 presents the author's interpretation of existing theories, combined with new information gained from the author's research study and creates a film tourist motivational profile. The primary motivations as identified by Crompton (1979) reveal that the respondents recognise their need for social interaction, curiosity, education, and regression. These motivations manifest themselves as site specific motivators by appearing in the following manner:

- Social Interaction – respondents wish to share their interest with others because they all enjoy the show, and they want to meet the cast/actors because they have formed an emotional attachment to certain characters.
- Curiosity – respondents like the scenery/landscape of the destination or there is a specific location they want to visit.
- Education – respondents want to learn more about the television series and how it was filmed.
- Regression – respondents want to feel like they are in the programme and relive favourite scenes by dressing up in character costumes and performing re-enactments.

The profile also details the main socio-demographic data of gender, age, and travel behaviour, as recorded by the author. The motives recognised were social interaction, novelty/curiosity, education, and regression. The study respondents were primarily Generation Y (the generation born in the 1980s and 1990s, comprising primarily the children of baby boomers and typically perceived as increasingly familiar with digital and electronic technology) and were motivated to take a film location tour because of the performance-oriented storylines of the show, rather than by attributes of the place.

Figure 4. Conceptual fanatical film tourist profile

Source: Author
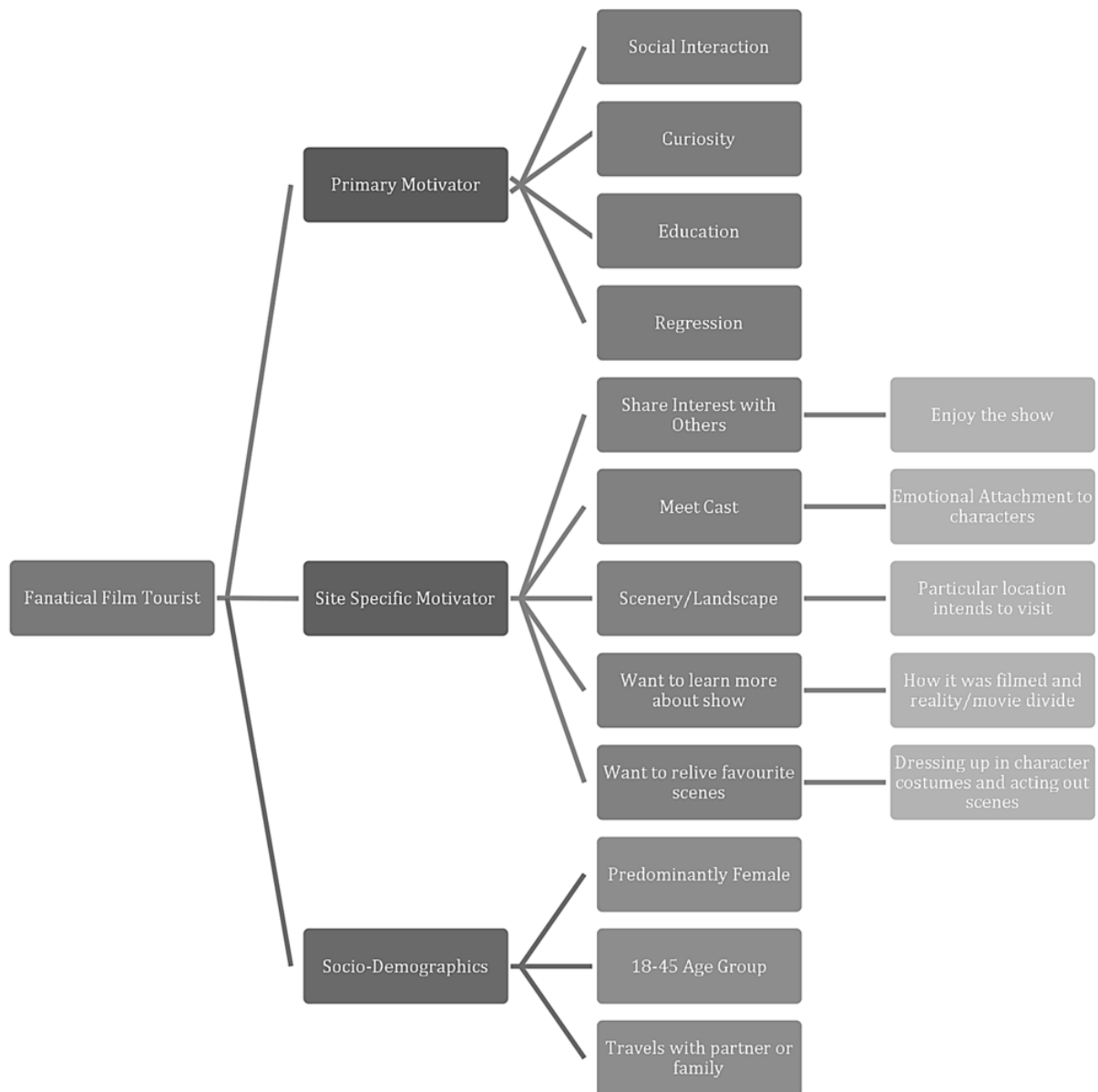
As part of this exploration, tourist motivation research must consider the issue of whether it matters if the location seen in a film is real, artificial or a substitute location to the one portrayed.

Authenticity and the Tourist Gaze

A theme in evaluating and understanding tourist motivations and their on-site experiences has arisen around the concept of authenticity. It is argued that the original form of the authenticity notion has been only partially employed in the work of tourist researchers (e.g., Cohen, 1979; MacCannell, 1999; Pearce, 2005; Rickly & McCabe, 2017; Tiberghien *et al.*, 2020; Torchin, 2002). The major development of the authenticity concept in the tourist literature is that "all

tourists seek authenticity but are frustrated in their attempts because of the creation of front stage, inauthentic environments" (Pearce & Moscardo, 1986, p.122).

Accurate and inaccurate perceptions of authenticity need to be considered, together with tourists' preference levels for authenticity to explain tourist satisfaction. Bolan *et al*., (2011) ascertained that displacement in relation to film-induced tourism refers to when a movie is shot in one location but is representing somewhere else entirely. For example, the Dark Hedges in County Antrim portraying the King's Road in *Game of Thrones,* or various scenes from the movie blockbuster *Braveheart* representing the Scottish fight for independence, set in Scotland but filmed in Ireland. MacCannell (1999, p.14) confirms that the "rhetoric of tourism is full of manifestations of the importance of the authenticity of the relationship between tourists and what they see", however little is known about whether film-tourists have greater, if any, expectations of visiting the real locations of a film when they visit a particular destination.

One way in which tourists perceive the authenticity of the on-site experience is through what Urry calls the Tourist Gaze; he suggests that a "variety of non-tourist practices such as film, TV, literature, magazines, records and videos, construct and reinforce the gaze" (Urry, 1990, p. 3). Urry and Larson (2011, p.2) state that "people gaze upon the world through a particular filter of ideas, skills, desires and expectations, framed by social class, gender, nationality, age and education". These filters are what allow tourists to decide whether what they see is beautiful or interesting, and whether the nature of the scene is real or staged. The impact of film on people's image construction is not a new notion and has been previously documented in the literature (e.g., Happer & Philo; 2013; Riley & van Doren; 1992). Major films often cause a tourist influx to destinations previously unvisited before the location was shown on the silver screen. This is also true for TV series as they can present millions of viewers with substantial information about a destination over a relatively short period of time. As the viewers become more involved and emotionally attached to the characters and plots, an awareness and interest in filming locations and settings is generated, resulting in actual visits. The author's research findings support this argument and show that the images portrayed of locations in films and on television were important to respondents when selecting holiday destinations. The respondents confirm that they have been exposed to various images of destinations from television which led to them being enticed to visit. Thus, the author concludes that television has a substantial role in encouraging tourists to visit a destination and that the main driving force for tourists to travel to the film location may be the complex process of association construction that is caused by watching the television series. The respondents place value on images derived from film as important in choosing a holiday destination.

Fictional versus authentic film locations is one of the more complicated debates around film tourism. Bolan *et al*. (2011) discuss the displacement aspect or in-authenticity of experience for the film tourist and suggest they may become disappointed when they do not see exactly what they saw on screen. Nonetheless, a visit to a television film location can also result in great satisfaction if the viewer understands that, by nature, a film or television production is only make-believe, and is therefore content to be at the location without expecting an exact replica of what they saw on screen. So, this begs the question, does authenticity actually matter?

The author's research asked the respondents if their trip had met their expectations regarding the image they had of the location. Most stated yes, they were satisfied that what they saw

was the same as what they had seen on the small screen. However, a small percentage of respondents were not satisfied and claimed that the location was not the same as was shown on television. The imagined destination was not the same as the real destination, thereby creating disappointment in the in-authentic experience. The authenticity of experience depends on the motivations of the tourist, the type of film tourist and their expectations, and whether they feel they have been duped.

The Future of Film Tourism

Consumer demands and behaviour will be permanently altered by the global COVID-19 pandemic, and all stakeholders in the tourism industry need to adapt to this 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. Research has also shown that the new generation of television film induced tourists are interested in the performance-oriented storylines of the show and want to feel like they are part of the action.

Alternative reality or immersive technology – which encompasses virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), and mixed reality (MR) – could become the next big phenomenon in tourism (Bec *et al*., 2021; Beck & Egger, 2018; Beck *et al*., 2019; Yung & Khoo-Lattimore, 2017). These technologies replace or expand the physical world by the creation of 360-degree space, allowing users to look in any direction and see content. It can take a variety of forms, from virtual reality which shuts out real life spaces to augmented reality, which superimposes a layer of digital content over the physical world. In VR, the user is immersed in an entirely artificial world. In AR, the user sees the real world overlaid with digital data. Virtual Reality enables travel to places that would otherwise be difficult to reach in the current climate. Destination Management Organisations could develop apps or programmes for use with devices such as HTC Vive, Oculus Quest, PlayStation VR, Samsung Gear, Google Daydream Viewer or even Google Cardboard. Enthusiasts then have the option of experiencing film locations virtually in their own home environment rather than travelling to the original site. On the other hand, Augmented Reality allows the user to see the real world overlaid with a layer of digital content. This digital content layer can include sensor-based data, sound, video, graphics, GPS information, or other datasets. For the fanatical film tourists that are more motivated to be present physically in the locations and walk in the footsteps of their favourite characters, to feel part of the programme, AR can transport them into the show at the actual site where it was filmed.

The tourism industry is highly competitive, so companies or destinations wishing to differentiate themselves from the competition and attract a larger number of customers (particularly younger, tech-savvy ones) should invest in AR or VR tools to bring novelty to the decision-making process. The fast pace of technology advancements, and numerous ICTs used in tourism destinations is having the effect of providing tourists with more real and immersive virtual environments, which convey strong social presence. The less which technology users perceive artificial or mediated experience, the more strongly social presence occurs. With the use of this technology DMOs and tour companies can create a whole new environment for a tour. Immersive technology could transport tourists to destinations across the world using virtual reality, and immersive environments can be generated with augmented reality overlays. Today's society revolves around technology, even more so

during the Covid dictated lockdowns over the past year and a half; therefore, it is vital for the tourism industry to keep up. Immersive Technology could have a major impact on the future of destination marketing. It can enhance the experience for tourists and aid in the selling of the overall product. Numerous destinations are now marketing what they have to offer through the means of 360 virtual reality videos. VR shows huge promise for destination promotion due to the immersive sensations it can present, and its ability to communicate the way a distant destination or experience feels. As a promotional tool it has the potential to reduce perceived risks, helping travellers make more informed decisions with more realistic expectations (Griffin *et al.*, 2017; Klein, 2003). Particularly during this time of global crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic, with cultural activities and tourism restricted by stay-at-home quarantine orders, film tourism has the potential to rise to this challenge by exploiting AR and VR technologies.

IMPLICATIONS FOR INDUSTRY

The information presented in this chapter is important at a practical level for DMOs and tourism suppliers. Film locations are more likely to be visited by tourists with a very high degree of fanaticism, immediately following the film's release or the television series airing. As time goes by, this degree of fanaticism can decrease, and the film or television series is no longer a main motivation for travelling. Thus, there needs to be a greater recognition of film induced tourism, and by using the *Fanatical Film Tourist* profile, DMOs can target the relevant market segments via their socio-demographic or behavioural/motivational characteristics, thereby keeping their product placement firmly in the interest of consumers. It is recommended that film locations should be equipped with the tools and knowledge to develop a strategy to manage the visitor influx caused by film tourism in a sustainable, but financially rewarding way, and this will most likely include investing in technology such as VR and AR to create more meaningful and immersive experiences.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

This chapter has contributed to the existing knowledge of film tourism from the perspective of a television series filmed in Ireland via the author's empirical research, and it would certainly be advantageous to build on this through further research. Specifically, research that would study whether the main findings identified here are more widely representative would be of value. For instance, are the site-specific motivations transferable to other mediums and genres within film tourism? Would a study of *Star Wars* film tourists in Ireland illicit similar site-specific motivations? It would have been interesting to carry out a comparative study exploring contrasts between the medium of film and that of television series induced travel, examining the motivations of tourists, in an Irish and global context. Further study would involve in-depth interviews, increased numbers of questionnaire participants and focus groups. Longitudinal research could examine whether the socio-demographic characteristics, or site-specific motivations of the *fanatical film tourist* change, and measure lasting on-location tourism effects. Outlying external factors that can facilitate destination awareness and motivation to visit a location seen in a TV series have also not been addressed here. These factors would include destination marketing activities or other *pull* attributes of a destination. Other influences on the consumer decision making process could be word of mouth and reference groups. Future studies should develop the theoretical and practical contributions by testing the role of these influences and other possible mediators.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has explored current debates around film tourism. Film tourism is a niche product and offers potential for destination marketers and tour operators via special interest tours. There is a great awareness of the phenomenon of film tourism within the area of Tourism Studies as can be demonstrated by the literature. It has been shown that film tourism has a motivational role in the tourism destination decision making process and several researchers have attempted to identify the range of impacts arising from film tourism via destination and film case studies. A thorough review of secondary information sources revealed that necessary academic attention has not been given to researching and understanding what specific aspects motivate a viewer to participate in television film tourism, such as, the scenery or scenic landscape in the movie, the narrative storyline, the music / film score, identification with the characters, or the actors themselves.

Therefore, this chapter has aimed to further develop a range of themes that identify elements of interest from the film tourism consumer, and has addressed gaps in the current literature around the topics of tourist motivation and the experience of being a film tourist - particularly the understanding of film tourism experiences and motivations associated with a TV series. A film represents a one-off opportunity, whereas a television series creates and encourages interest in the destination over its longevity, and can act as an advert for the location, which in turn, serves to entice the tourist to the destination. People travel because they are pushed by their own internal forces. Characters somehow establish a connection with the viewer, and when this is heightened further by the effect of an emotional or gripping storyline, beautiful scenery and music; films help to market destinations to the tourism consumer in an open and engaged way. Television film induced tourists are more highly motivated to take a film location tour because of the performance-oriented storylines of the show, than by the attributes of place. Research shows that these motivations can be aligned with the underlying primary motivations for travel, as identified by Crompton (1979). The main findings of the author's research combined with theories from literature led to development of a new film tourist profile, the *fanatical film tourist* as shown in figure 4. The profile details the tourists' primary (push) motivations culminating in the need to take a trip. Next the secondary motivations or site-specific television induced motivations for the film tourist were identified, and these were amalgamated with the primary motivations to provide a more in-depth look at film tourist motivation. Furthermore, the pull attributes of a destination are secondary to the motive, and desire to travel and can be interchangeable among many destinations, but the primary motives for travel remain unchanged. It is clear from a range of viewpoints that film-induced tourism has something novel to offer. It has been proven that locations instilled with the magnetism of some of the lead characters make attractive places to visit because of this association. Throughout filming, the destination will have the opportunity to attract attention and therefore tourists to the region. The long-term affiliation between the viewer and the television series creates an emotional attachment that draws the viewer back to the filming location for many years.

A major difficulty when dealing with motivation theory is that the principal classification frameworks are very broad and general. Unfortunately, every film tourist is different, and every film trip is different. However, this chapter recommends that the pull attributes of destinations should be disregarded and focus should be placed on push factors as primary motives for travel in motivation theory research; by eliminating the extrinsic factors and concentrating on intrinsic motivations the *Fanatical Film Tourist* profile should be

transferable to other locations and studies, and particularly developed with regard to television film tourism.

The notion that the whole audience for any film or television series will react by deciding to visit the location is unlikely. However, if some viewers are strongly influenced by the image and character association revealed through films or television series, then there must be more focus on the consumer and the impact of such media on their travel decisions. This chapter has revealed the influence of film and television media as a means of igniting people's curiosity for former filmed locations and stimulating tourism motivation and demand for filmed destinations. As previously noted, immersive technology, such as VR and AR, could have a major impact on the future of destination marketing for this product segment - it can enhance the experience for tourists and aid in selling the overall product.

The main concern for the future is to guarantee that each and every tourist that visits a filming location has a positive overall impression of what they have seen and leave happy and satisfied.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Fanatical Film Tourist: Specific dedicated film tourists or purposeful film tourists, as they are taking part in an organised tour exclusively for a specific television programme and its film locations.

Film Tourism: Tourist visits to a destination or attraction because of the destination being featured on television, video, or the cinema screen.

Primary Motivators: Initial socio-psychological motivations that create a need within people to travel – exploration and evaluation of self, escape from a perceived mundane environment, relaxation, health and fitness, enhancement of kinship relationships, facilitation of social interaction, novelty, cultural experiences, education, prestige.

Secondary (Site Specific) Motivators: An expansion of the primary motivators in the way that they relate to site-specific film tourism. A primary motivator may be facilitation of social interaction, whereas the secondary motivator (site specific motivator) may be enjoying the television series and want to share that interest with others or want to meet the cast and characters of the show.

Site-Specific Film Tourism: Tourism to one particular location because it featured on television.