Movie Tourism and Attracting New Tourists in the Post-pandemic Period: A Niche Marketing Perspective

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Abstract. The COVID-19 pandemic turned out to be a huge public health problem with an impact on companies and consumers at the national and international levels. Measures were implemented in Portugal in response to COVID-19: limitations on travel rights, closure of commercial establishments, and prohibition on holding events. Teleworking was also encouraged, and distance learning was promoted. The present manuscript aims to understand the role that film tourism plays in marketing applied to territories and how important it is for segmenting markets and attracting new tourists in the post-pandemic period (covid-19). The movie tourism business incorporates the development of destination marketing campaigns to promote films, while more and more common initiatives are emerging between DMOs and filmmakers to promote films and tourist destinations. The present study will include document analysis and exploratory interviews with some tourism leaders and stakeholders in Portugal and two best practices Portuguese campaigns. The management of territories provides several advantages for the sustainable development of a tourist destination, stimulating exports and attracting more tourism and investment. In particular, film tourism has increasingly established itself as one of the most common leisure activities, and one of the fastest growing in the tourism sector, as it is a segment where tourists have the highest expenditure and, for this has received greater attention from business leaders, policy makers and academics around the world. From an interdisciplinary perspective, this study presents inputs in local development and niche tourism perspective. Some lines of future research will be presented.

Keywords: Movie tourism · Covid-19 · Segmentation · Niche marketing

1 Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic turned out to be a huge public health problem with an impact on companies and consumers at the national and international levels. Measures were implemented in Portugal in response to COVID-19: limitations on travel rights, closure of commercial establishments, and prohibition on holding events. Teleworking was
also encouraged, and distance learning was promoted. Consumers and companies had to adjust their behaviour, the mode of purchase and the place of purchase were changed. The companies took steps to continue the business because there is no knowledge of the end of the pandemic by Covid-19. They were forced to rethink strategies and processes to ensure that they have the necessary tools to remain open after the pandemic. The experience in the digital commerce process by some companies has proved to be a sustainable competitive advantage.

Niche tourism has been asserting itself in recent decades and is strongly associated with the theory of niche marketing [1]. In this sense, and by way of example, cinematographic tourism has recently been considered a leisure activity, in a tourist variant promoted by individuals for whom the purchase of goods outside their usual environment is a determining factor in their decision to travel and make decisions [2]. Thus, there has been a notable growth in this activity, as it is a segment where tourists have higher expenditure and, consequently, deserving greater attention from businessmen, politicians, and academics [3]. However, combining the interests of several stakeholders is not an easy task, making it a very complex process (both for destination management and operational marketing), implying greater experience, knowledge, investment, and partnerships [4]. Movie tourism has assumed itself as a sector of strong growth and of an important nature in research in the Tourism sector. We found that location, performance, personality, and authenticity are crucial factors that interfere with the motivations of tourists in this niche market. To this end, we find that there are success stories, such as the Game of Thrones series and films like Hobbit. Like any niche market in tourism, marketing plays a pivotal role in its success. Consequently, management and territorial identity is the vital element on which a city or region is defined [5, 6], and thus intends to measure, manage and develop a distinct image of the place in order to satisfy their interests by creating a positive international reputation. The present manuscript aims to understand the role that film tourism plays in marketing applied to territories and how important it is for segmenting markets and attracting new tourists in the post-pandemic period (covid-19).

2 Tourism Segmentation and New Trends

Tourism is a phenomenon that moves millions of people around the world, taking as a major driver of the global economy. Every year, much due to the frequent changes in the tourism environment, fosters competition between and within tourist destinations. It is multifaceted and geographically complex activity, where different services are ordered and delivered in different stages, from origin to destination [7]. To set Special Interest Tourism (SIT) in a broader overall tourism context, [8] suggest a "Tourism Interest Continuum". Although they have similar characteristics, they differ to some extent [9]. The term niche, in a marketing perspective, refers to two key interrelated ideas: that there is a place in the market for the product, and that there is an audience for that same product. This refers to a specific product capable of keeping up with the needs of a specific market segment. Therefore, one should not look at the market in a simplistic and homogeneous way, since it represents a group of individuals with specific characteristics and needs. In this way, market niches emerge as a response to
the growing sophisticated and specialized tourist demand, as is the case of cinematographic tourism. According to [10] and [11], film tourism is a tourist activity induced by the visualization of a moving image, also seen as a comprehensive film, television, pre-recorded products (for example, video/DVD/Blu-Ray) and currently extends to digital media. Some distinction must be made between its shape, that is, a film or television program and the medium through which the image is transmitted, in which there are numerous ways of viewing cinematographic images and viewing can occur in an increasing multiplicity of environments. This distinction may have implications for the way in which we perceive and relate to the outcome of a cinematic experience. Film tourism seems to be the generic term adopted in most studies and, although there are some debates about the differences in images perceived via film and television in the media literature, the term is undoubtedly more important than the concept.

There is a variation in the terminology used to define the concept of film tourism. The most basic differentiation is cultural/geographical, that is, some countries tend to favor the term “movie tourism”, while others use the term “film tourism”. The two terms are used interchangeably in tourism research, but essentially the “film” refers to the vocabulary of early American cinema of the “moving image”.

2.1 Perspectives and Impacts of Movie Tourism

Film tourism can take many forms and activities, as identified, and discussed by some authors (e.g. [12, 13]):

- Visits to locations portrayed in a specific film/television production. These locations are real, from cities, villages, fields and other environments that were used as locations for filming films (e.g. Barwon Heads, Australia and Sea Change);
- Visits to groups of studios: eg. the Rua da Coroação complex [14];
- Visits to theme parks and specific film/TV attractions, such as Dae Jang Geum Theme Park, the first cinema-related attraction in Korea [15], and, Hengdian Film Industry Park, Dangyang City, Zhejiang, China, a popular tourist attraction that received more than 8.4 million visitors in 2010;
- Visits to themed attractions with a movie theme - the world's most popular tourist attractions and theme parks are directly related to films, (Disneyworld in Orlando received nearly 17 million visitors in 2010). According to Themed Entertainment Association, there were significant increases in visitor numbers at Universal Studios in Orlando (by 6% to almost 6 million visitors) and in Hollywood (by 26% to just over 5 million visitors) in 2010 for new related films (The Wizardry of Harry Potter in Orlando and King Kong 3-D in Hollywood). [16] (p. 344) emphasize that “the most profitable destinations are those created in association with the studio's facilities”;
- Visits to locations where filming is taking place: for example, the 2011 filming of The War Horse in the UK, attracted a lot of media speculation about the secret locations and made visits, hoping to see Steven Spielberg;
- Visits to locations that are marketed as cinematographic locations;
Participation in excursions organized in the locations where the filming took place: for example, tours organized in the locations where film recordings were made, such as LOTR, in New Zealand;

Participation in tours organized to see the homes of celebrities, such as bus tours, in Beverly Hills;

Visits to Film Festivals: e.g. Cannes attracts more than 29,000 visitors, while the Edinburgh International Film Festival received around 54,000 in 2010 (Film Festival World Network 2011);

Visits to destinations for film premieres, that is, to see or watch the arrival of film celebrities.

The film tourism business incorporates a series of activities, such as [11], the development of destination marketing campaigns to promote films, while, increasingly, common initiatives between DMOs and filmmakers to promote films and tourist destinations. The existence of units dedicated to the promotion of films is, in many places, well established [17] in order to promote the adaptation of places and spaces such as filming locations, as well as the provision of resources to provide or find studio spaces. In addition to that, they provide incentives to filmmakers regarding tax benefits and incentives [16]. Great cinematographic films can provide the locations, objects and people for the look and motivation of various people and, for some, films can induce these same people to travel specifically to the places where those same films were shot. Although some of these great films are not primarily intended to induce people to visit the sites in question, it appears that they can enhance the awareness, appeal and profitability of the sites through the power of the imagination, image and fantasy of films in question.

These cinematographic images can influence consumers' decisions regarding their motivations to visit the places where the films were recorded. However, it is necessary to ask the question: do films really have an impact with respect to consumer choice in relation to the tourist destination?

In relation to the previous question, it is proposed that a distinction between the three concepts of place, personality and performance and how different motivations play a role regarding consumer behaviour. Perhaps there is a vast number of influencers and indicators that make it possible to distinguish different groups of tourists, starting with the typical tourist influenced by films, who seeks to visit certain places because he saw them in films, even the tourist who allows himself to be influenced by films in a different way. Economically, film tourism has a big impact. The territorial marketing that the film / series develops in the viewer a great interest in visiting the space. This impact causes governments to start supporting and investing in sets as the main point of development for destinations, eventually improving various structures in the city. It therefore ends up “strengthening service infrastructures in the region, creating new jobs and a growth in tourism” [18] (p. 62).

This tourism niche is still analysed individually according to the destination, as it was investigated that not everyone suffers the same impact. Disney and New Zealand are the most successful spaces. Disney for the experience it gives visitors to feel like the characters in their films, and New Zealand for the contradiction between reality and fiction. Thus, it can be considered that the tourist's motivations result from the affinities
created. “The mythology of the place, transformed and communicated through films, may be what attracts tourists, and not the destination itself” [15] (p. 179), thus being able to remember the feeling when are in place. The impact of marketing on the production and dissemination of the film must be very careful so that the tourist does not suffer any disappointment with the location as it is not identical to what is broadcast, as it is through the viewing of the films that tourists build their aspirations, desires and expectations about tourist destinations. All of this shows that “popular cultural forms of media can promote, confirm and reinforce images, views and specific identities of destinations in a powerful way” [19] (p. 706).

We have an example of the case of the film “Night train to Lisbon” (2013), which was shown internationally before the 63rd film festival in Berlin. This ended up being published in “The New York Times” and “The Guardian”. It has been proven that the media are really an essential factor as they promote the destination in question, which sometimes does not have the financial capacity to invest. In view of these filming, some dinners were held with the actors within the scope of the “Prove Portugal” project, with the aim of promoting gastronomy and the locals.

Questionnaires were carried out to assess the motivations of tourists on trips, proving that films, series, and television programs are really a strong reason. “Harry Potter books and films resulted in a 100% increase in visits to one of the locations”. In addition to questionnaires, calculations are used to assess the amounts spent on advertising and the community where the event was held, the audience, the number of tourists, the respective expenses in the region, new jobs and state and municipal taxes. It is possible to study that the number of tourists arriving increases with the television impact and that it always ends up decreasing, however the general impacts on the economy are difficult to assess [15].

The CGE model (computable general equilibrium) is a model used to evaluate these various parameters and concluded that not all countries are able to exploit this niche, as is the case in Kazakhstan, with the film “Borat”, which even increasing the number of tourists had a loss in GDP of $ 2.78 million. A set of useful definitions has been provided, there is also a diverse set of names for this concept. However, this niche tourism refers to a postmodern experience of a place that was represented in any type of media, that is, an experience that was highly personalized and unique for each individual based on their own interpretation and media consumption [19].

Film-induced tourism was defined as a set of tourist visits to a destination or attraction because of showing that same destination on the cinema or on television. Movies, television, and literature can influence people’s tourist choices, exposing them to the characteristics and attributes of the destinations shown. Long-term films are usually filmed in historical locations and are easily identified and end up gaining enormous notoriety, which ends up being reflected in the choice of these locations as a tourist destination. In fact, some of these sites have only become known after the film that showed them. It is also important to note that this type of tourism does not only occur and only in well-known and historic places, there are also structures built for the purpose of exploring this market niche such as Movie World, QLD and Universal Studios. There are four very important factors that interfere with the motivations of tourists in this niche market: location, performance, personality, and authenticity.
2.1.1 Location
The location involves attributes of the filmed location, such as spectacular scenery or magnificent landscapes that are easily identified and attractive to the viewer. There is no doubt that the development and promotion of a location through films and any other type of media. The concept of place is related to an area that has a distinct internal structure, the meaning of which is considered an attribute and evokes certain responses on the part of the people who are placed before it. It is through the film that the sense and meaning of the film can be created, as well as altered and reinforced. The development of cinematographic promotion in these locations, such as the Maps of the films, which identify locations that appear in films, is an example of the power that films have in territorial dissemination [15]. Many of these destinations have turned their “cinematographic sites” into tourist attractions, becoming known worldwide as sites to be visited (e.g., Lord of the Rings: New Zealand).

2.1.2 Performance
The cinematographic performance has a fundamental role in the unfolding of a film, which can lead the tourist to go to a place to fill a fantasy of escape and romance through a lived experience. People are not only attracted to a specific place only and only by the landscapes and the unique characteristics of the place. There are tourists who visit a place in search of stories, the drama of the script, the experiences that the actors lived during the film, that is, they seek the experiences lived by the characters. It is quite possible that certain people develop a set of connections with the action of the film and are determined to physically visit the place that was used as a setting for carrying out these actions. Another perspective on this theme relates to action and adventure films, where dangerous and adventurous stories are the main attraction. As a result, a set of structures was developed to fill this gap, places like Deliverance, Vertical Limit and All the Rivers Run Wild.

2.1.3 Personality
The characters of certain films may have a strong influence on the choice of tourist destinations by the demand. Indeed, one cannot deny the tourist power that Hollywood and the celebrities themselves have. Movie stars, actors and celebrities are powerful “ingredients” of “mass media”, being able to assign powerful meanings derived from the roles they play [19]. It is hoped that the feelings associated with a celebrity can be transferred to any type of advertisement and industry, much in part due to its high status and the association that is made of the product with that same celebrity. It is precisely because of this that the marketing institutions linked to tourism put several resources to use celebrities as a way of promoting their regions [15].

2.1.4 Authenticity
Authenticity is one of the key factors for tourists and film tourism, on the one hand it allows people to live out the fantasies of their favorite films or actors in some mythical locations. Visitors associate personal meanings with certain places, and authenticity thus becomes a subjective experience, a combination of the visitors' experiences and the interactions inherent in them. Literature-related tourism is defined as an experience carried out by tourists as a way of celebrating associations with authors and books.
This type of tourism is a desire to experience a version of the past or an attempt to experience a version of the future and make a connection between the past and the future, fact, and fiction [18]. This tourism establishes a correlation between the images and the expectations of specific people, places, and historical periods. Indeed, literature tourism has focused on the main precursor of tourism mentioned above, cinema tourism.

2.2 Internal Motivations

The strongest internal motive in cinematographic tourism concerns the look of the tourist in relation to the construction of the film and its interpretation. The look of the tourist is very important for tourism as there are several places that become known to the detriment of the films made in these places and that later on the tourist sees them as a cultural and historical attraction derived from the film he viewed. Cinematographic tourists can be motivated by direct involvement and through an identification with the places explored in the cinematic scenarios that allows the formulation of a personal meaning for the tourist. In certain types of films oriented and approached directly to a specific location, audiences can learn about the destination by participating directly in the “experiences” lived on the spot by the characters [20].

It is evident that cinematographic images have a fantastic power to alter, create and reinforce the image of certain tourist destinations and there is no doubt that films have become a dominant force in relation to the information and image of a given location. The three concepts of location, characters and cinematographic performance were introduced as a framework to carry out the investigation of how certain motivations influence tourist behavior. The impact of a film on the image of a tourist destination is enormous. The promotion and marketing that comes from exposing certain locations in films is an appealing tool for promoting the tourist destination. As mentioned above, the consumer sees the film and wants to be visiting the cultural and natural landscapes of the place, that is, a film has the power to increase the number of visits to the filming location.

There is a significant economic and social impact caused by the appearance of certain locations in world-famous films. There is an increase in notoriety about the destinations as they manage to capture the attention and the desire to visit the places through the film. Subsequently, certain tourist destinations take advantage of cinematographic products in their promotion, as is the case in Scotland due to the film “Braveheart” (1995) and New Zealand, due to the trilogy “The Lord of the Rings” (2001–2003). The perspective of New Zealand in this trilogy “Lord of the Rings” and “Hobbit” (2001–2003), based on fantasy-themed books written by J.R.R. Tolkien, draws great attention to fans of visiting the place and fantasizing about it. “It was found that 6% of 120,000 and 150,000 people indicated that films were one of the main reasons for choosing to visit New Zealand” [15]. In conjunction with the release of the films, several marketing campaigns were developed that created relationships “with the creative industry and carried out various international activities.” The “100% Pure New Zealand” campaign was developed in 2000 which resulted in a good tourism marketing award at the “World Travel Awards 2012”.

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In this case study example, they decided to approach econometric models that assess the causal relationships between tourism, prices and income, and the CGE that simulates the total impacts related to production, capital, labour, governments, exports and imports. After analysing the data, they found that the film “Hobbit” contained much more impact than the Lord of the Rings, which was practically insignificant. “The Hobbit increased tourist revenues by $771.80 million which contributed to welfare gains of $186.24 million in New Zealand.” [15]. They justified this cause as probably a failure in terms of marketing, because with the release of the film “Hobbit” advertising strategies emerged that indicated New Zealand as the country “100% (pure) Middle Earth”. Conclusion, this third film, was to strengthen the image already created by the Lord of the Rings from Middle Earth, saying that the success of the “Hobbit” cinematic tourism is due to the first two Lord of the Rings films. In addition to the success obtained through of filming in New Zealand, another success story is the Game of Thrones series, a George Martin television series from the saga “A Song of Ice and Fire” launched in 2011. “King’s Landing”, the capital of the seven kingdoms, is one of the most important places in all history and is filmed in Dubrovnik (Croatia), where it highlights the walls and the historic centre of the city. This phenomenon resulted in an “increase of almost another 2045 tourists, one and a half million overnight stays and almost 126 million euros in foreign currency revenue from travel” [19] (p. 706).

3 Methodology and Best Practices

Preliminary research was conducted to develop the research instrument. Details of the preliminary research are given below. After the collection of the preliminary data, empirical data would be collected through fieldwork. This study discusses the importance that film tourism plays in marketing applied to territories and how important it is for segmenting markets and attracting new tourists in the post-pandemic period (covid-19). The movie tourism business incorporates the development of destination marketing campaigns to promote films, while more and more common initiatives are emerging between DMOs and filmmakers to promote films and tourist destinations.

The global pandemic scenario, marked by the new coronavirus (covid-19), makes evident the need for companies to react in their strategy (communication, distribution, and sales). In this sense, this study aims to understand the value proposition by investing in the quality of the online sales process in the food sector based on the dimensions of service quality, identifying attributes that customers recognize value. Technological evolution is the great cause for most of the changes that have occurred, from cultural, social, political, economic, personal, and even psychological changes, all of them on a global scale. The environment and the relationships that are built in it stopped happening only in physical space, happening also in a space without defined location: the virtual space (e.g. film tourism). The development of technology has brought with it innumerable positive aspects: the global communication that today is fundamental; the democratization of knowledge throughout the world, made possible through the connections that information systems have acquired; the medicine that attended to great evolutions; the very world that has become a small town where
everyone is connected, and endless other advantages. The present study will include
document analysis and exploratory (semi-structured) interviews with some tourism
leaders and stakeholders in Portugal. However, in this preliminary phase, two movie
tourism campaigns promoted in 2020 by Portugal are presented, to attract new tourists
in the period of recovery from the pandemic (covid-19). These examples are under-
stood as good practices to articulate film production in tourism contexts and local
tourism promotion, for the benefit of regional and local development in Portuguese
territory.

3.1 “Tu Podes, Visita Portugal”: Portuguese Campaign

#TuPodes, Visita Portugal is the new campaign by Turismo de Portugal that challenges
the Portuguese to travel through the Best Tourist Destination in the World and converts
VisitPortugal into VisitaPortugal. The campaign, in the form of a territorial film, started
in June 2020, represents an investment of two million euros and will be on display until
the end of this year, in digital media, television, radio and national and regional press.
In a second phase, it will be the tourism professionals who invite the Portuguese to
experience their offer. Be it a guided visit to a museum, a surf lesson, a walk in a
natural park, the descent of a river, a mountain hike or activities on a farm or wine
tourism (Fig. 1).

![Fig. 1. Tu Podes, Visita Portugal Campaign Source: Turismo de Portugal (2020)](image)

The film seeks to position tourism in Portugal as #TuPodes, visit your sea, your
heritage, your culture, your gastronomy, these are some of the messages that tourism
professionals will address to the Portuguese. The recovery of national tourist activity, a
key sector of the Portuguese economy, will depend, in a first phase, on domestic
tourism which, in 2019, represented close to 40% of the total number of guests. To this
extent, in the short term, a plan will be implemented to boost domestic demand that
satisfies the motivations of the Portuguese in the context of the post-pandemic and that
allows the beginning of the tourism recovery in Portugal. A country where tourism
employs around 400 thousand workers, represents 14.6% of GDP (Gross Domestic Product) and is the main export economic activity. It accounts for 52.3% of exports of services and 18.6% of total exports of goods and services. In this sense, the use of territorial films of a tourist nature is a strong bet to attract visitors.

3.2 “Chegou O Tempo!”: Turismo Do Centro Campaign

Last March, Turismo Centro de Portugal launched a message of hope through its “Haverá Tempo” campaign, at a time when all Portuguese had to live a period of confinement. In May 2020, Turismo Centro de Portugal launched a message of confidence, because “the time has come” to believe again (Fig. 2).

The campaign, entitled “Chegou o Tempo!”, aimed to show the Portuguese that the Centre of Portugal is the most suitable destination to overcome the difficult days of confinement to which they were subjected: a destination + Safe, + Authentic, + Personal and + Sustainable. The message conveyed by the “Chegou o Tempo” campaign, in videos, spots and promotional ads, is that “Chegou o Tempo” to live again and rediscover the Centre of Portugal as if it were the first time.

4 Final Considerations

The companies took steps to continue the business because there is no knowledge of the end of the pandemic by Covid-19. They were forced to rethink strategies and processes to ensure that they have the necessary tools to remain open after the pandemic. The experience in the digital commerce process by some companies has proved
to be a sustainable competitive advantage. In this context, and in specific, the film tourism business incorporates a series of activities, such as, the development of destination marketing campaigns to promote films, while, increasingly, common initiatives between DMOs and filmmakers to promote films and tourist destinations. The management of territories provides several advantages for the sustainable development of a tourist destination, stimulating exports and attracting more tourism and investment. In particular, film tourism has increasingly established itself as one of the most common leisure activities, and one of the fastest growing in the tourism sector, as it is a segment where tourists have the highest expenditure and, for this has received greater attention from business leaders, policy makers and academics around the world. The present manuscript aimed to understand the role that film tourism plays in marketing applied to territories and how important it is for segmenting markets and attracting new tourists in the post-pandemic period (covid-19). Two movie tourism campaigns promoted in 2020 by Portugal were presented, to attract new tourists in the period of recovery from the pandemic (covid-19). These examples were understood as good practices to articulate film production in tourism contexts and local tourism promotion, for the benefit of regional and local development in Portuguese territory. This study is a preliminary contribution; however it is expected that in the future a quantitative study will be developed with questionnaires among consumers (tourists) to assess the impact of the television campaigns that have been developed. In an interdisciplinary perspective, the present manuscript presents inputs for tourism (film tourism) and for territorial development (specifically, in the post-pandemic recovery period).

Acknowledgement. “This work is financed by national funds through FCT - Foundation for Science and Technology, IP, within the scope of the reference project UIDB/04470/2020”.

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