

MASTER IN MANAGEMENT OF TOURISM DESTINATIONS

Academic Year 2024/2025

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**From Screen to Destination: The Influence of Film and Television in Shaping
Tourism Intentions Among Millennials and Generation Z**

FINAL MASTER PROJECT

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Date of presentation: September, 15, 2025

Abstract

This study explores the influence of film and television on tourism intentions among Millennials and Generation Z. The focus is primarily on the role of emotional connection, visual appeal, and media exposure in shaping travel behavior. Drawing on concepts such as the tourist gaze, place attachment, and the push–pull motivation theory, the research investigates how on-screen representation of destinations contributes to viewers' awareness and desire to visit filming locations. A quantitative survey of 163 respondents from Sweden, Spain and other countries revealed that more than half of the respondents had looked up real-life filming locations, while over one-third had already visited one. Results show that visual appeal was the most influential factor shaping respondents' intention to travel to filming locations, followed by emotional connection to storylines and characters. The findings demonstrate that film and television can have a meaningful impact on tourism demand, offering a valuable insight for destination marketers aiming to make use of popular media to increase visitor interest.

Keywords: Film tourism; Millennials; Generation Z; Tourist gaze; Place attachment; Push–pull motivation; Emotional connection; Media influence; Destination marketing

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Acknowledgments

I would like to express gratitude to my academic tutor, Prof. Alba Font Barnet, for her guidance and constructive feedback throughout the development of this thesis. I am also grateful to the Master in Management of Tourism Destinations faculty for providing valuable insights and creating an engaging academic environment. Special thanks go to all survey participants who generously contributed their time and to all respondents who not only participated but also helped share the survey with others.

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1. Introduction

In recent years, the influence of film and television on tourism has grown significantly with filming locations often turning into must-visit destinations. The rise of streaming platforms like Netflix and Amazon Prime during the COVID-19 pandemic has created an opportunity for film-induced tourism to grow. The streaming platforms are now a significant way for destinations to gain visibility, sometimes even more than in the traditional way of tourism advertising (Stewart, 2022).

When viewers emotionally connect with a story or setting on screen, they may develop a desire to visit the locations featured, facilitating a transition from viewer to tourist (Flayelle et al., 2017). This emotional engagement increases the likelihood of visiting the places featured, as these destinations become symbolically tied to meaningful experiences or values presented on-screen (Yi et al., 2022).

As the first generations raised in the age of digital technology, Millennials and Generation Z have been deeply influenced by the internet and social media from a young age (Corbisiero et al., 2022). Statistics from 2024 reveal that these two generations are now the two largest generational groups in the world with Generation Z representing 24,6% and Millennials representing 22,9% of the world population (World Data Lab, 2024). Millennials and Generation Z are not only prolific consumers of screen media but also represent key segments in the global travel market, known for seeking unique, experience-driven travel opportunities that enhances their lives (Corbisiero et al., 2022). Increasing interest in generational analysis within tourism studies reflects the growing recognition of how travel

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motivations, preferences, and behaviors differ across different age groups. Previous research has recognized that the values and beliefs from different generations can have a significant influence on tourism demand in for example terms of motivations and destination choices. Understanding the younger generations including Millennials and Generation Z is essential since they represent the future in travel and tourism (Ruspini, 2022).

This study aims to explore:

- How awareness of a filming location (as seen in TV series or films) influences a viewer's intention to visit a destination.
- What mediating factors (such as emotional connection to the content or social media interaction) may strengthen that intention.
- If there are any generational differences (Millennials vs. Gen Z) in film-related tourism interest.

By addressing these objectives, the research contributes to a deeper understanding of how popular media can shape tourism patterns and offers valuable insights for destination marketers looking to leverage pop culture in promotional strategies.

Understanding the influence of film and television on tourism is increasingly relevant in a digitally driven society, especially given the role of streaming platforms in shaping destination visibility. Although existing literature has extensively explored the general connection between screen media and tourism, relatively few studies have examined the specific role of destination awareness. Initially recognizing a

location from screen content, in shaping travel intentions and specifically among younger audiences.

The primary goal of this research is to investigate how on-screen exposure to real-world filming locations influences the travel intentions of Millennials and Generation Z viewers.

Additional research questions:

How do Millennials and Generation Z differ in their interest in film-related tourism?

Are travelers more interested in visiting international or domestic filming locations?

How does emotional connection mediate the relationship between screen exposure and travel intention?

What factors contribute to a stronger intention to visit a film location — emotional connection, visual appeal, familiarity?

2. Literature review

Previous research has demonstrated that film and television can significantly influence tourist behavior by creating emotional connections to locations. For example, Im and Chon (2008) explored in their research how *The Sound of Music* continues to attract visitors to Salzburg decades after its release, emphasizing the long-term tourism potential of memorable productions.

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The research "Millennial Students, Movies, and Tourism" by Jeeyeon Hahm, Randall Upchurch, and Youcheng Wang (2008) explores how movies influence the travel intentions of millennial students. The study's key findings include significant demographic differences in responses, with gender, age, and ethnicity making a difference in the desire to visit movie-related destinations. By the time of this study millennials were mostly 25 and younger while today they are 29-44 (1981-1996). This generational progression highlights the importance of revisiting earlier findings in light of changing life stages, media consumption habits, and travel motivations. As millennials now occupy a different phase of life their responses to film tourism may differ from those observed in the 2008 study. Wong et al. (2017) emphasize that travel motivations are not static but evolve over time. They are shaped by life stages, technological developments, and broader social trends. When examining younger generations like Millennials and Gen Z, whose travel behaviors have been deeply shaped by the rise of social media and streaming platforms, it highlights the need for continuously updated research that considers how digital media transforms travel behavior.

Araújo Vila, Fraiz Brea, and de Carlos (2020) research paper study how watching TV series can influence people's awareness of destinations and their motivation to visit them. Their research focuses on film tourism in Spain and shows that both recognition of a location from a series and emotional connection to the content can play a key role in a person's decision to travel there. This supports the idea how seeing a place on screen can strongly influence travel motivation, especially when viewers feel a personal connection to the storyline or characters.

A recurring theme in film tourism research is the emotional connection viewers form with on-screen content, which can significantly influence their desire to visit filming locations. According to Kim and Richardson (2003), emotional involvement with a film enhances destination image and increases the likelihood of travel intention. When audiences connect with characters or storylines, the location shown in the film can gain symbolic significance, turning into a place of personal or nostalgic importance. It's when tourists feel emotionally connected to a movie or TV show, they are more likely to get involved in tourism activities related to it (Yi et al., 2022). Suryawanshi and Ragde (2023) researched the emotional bond tourists develop with destinations after seeing them on screen. Their findings highlight the deep impact film can have in shaping tourists' perceptions and motivations to visit specific destinations.

3. Theoretical framework

3.1 The tourist gaze

The concept of the tourist gaze presents an understanding of how film and television can influence contemporary travel behavior. The tourist gaze refers to how tourists selectively look at and experience places, often shaped by cultural expectations, media, and guidebooks. Screen media such as films and television series play a key role in shaping how destinations are imagined and experienced. Within this framework there is also the romantic gaze which refers to how tourists often seek

personal, emotionally meaningful, and tranquil experiences in the places they visit (Urry & Larsen, 2011).

In recent years, the tourist gaze has been further developed by the rise of social media and mobile technologies. Today tourists no longer simply look at places, instead they actively capture and share their experiences in real time with others through platforms like Instagram and TikTok. This creates a “social media tourist gaze,” where tourists take on dual roles as both active participants in the experience and as narrators sharing the experience with online audiences (Walsh et al., 2019).

3.2 Place Attachment

Place attachment is explained as the emotional bond between an individual and a location. It's traditionally described as formed through direct experiences and interactions with a destination (Altman & Low, 1992). However, there are researchers that have expanded this theory to include not visited places, illustrating that place attachment can also be a connection generated from symbolic and media-based experiences such as film and television (Cheng & Kuo, 2015; Farnum & Kruger, 2005; Blake, 2002).

In recent years, researchers have begun to unpack the empathy effects and internal mechanisms of film-induced tourism. Emotional identification with characters and narratives can facilitate the transformation of audiences into tourists. By also embedding cultural and emotional narratives in the storytelling, movies and television shows can create deep emotional attachment, thereby strengthening viewers'

psychological connection with the portrayed places and increasing their intention to visit (Yi et al, 2023).

3.3 The Push and Pull Motivational Theory

The push and pull theory was originally introduced by Dann (1977) and has since been expanded and developed further by other researchers. Travel motivation is according to the push and pull theory divided into internal drives (push factors) that encourage a person to travel, such as the need for escape or adventure, and external attractions (pull factors) that draw them to specific destinations, like scenery or cultural landmarks. Motivation is described as the internal force that drives a person to take action. In tourism terms, people feel an inner need to travel and are then guided by specific features of a place when deciding where to go.

In the context of film-induced tourism, Macionis (2004) introduced a new conceptual approach to understanding the actual motivations of the film-induced tourist by connecting it to the push and pull factor. Her research identifies three pull factors in place (the physical appeal of a location), personality (the influence of actors and characters) and performance (storytelling or themes in the film). These are factors shaping the way tourists perceive and emotionally connect with destinations featured on screen. Macionis explains that film tourists can be classified from highly motivated tourists with specific interest in film to unintentional tourists who happen to come across a filming connection unexpectedly. This perspective explains how onscreen media can act as both a psychological push and a tangible pull factor.

4. Methodology

This chapter describes the quantitative research method used to investigate how film and television influence travel behavior, with a focus on the motivations and awareness of Millennials and Gen Z travelers. To collect data, a structured online survey using Microsoft forms was created to examine participants' awareness of filming locations, their motivations to visit places featured in media, and general travel habits. This approach made it possible to identify patterns and trends in travel behavior among a larger number of respondents, particularly focusing on Millennials and Gen Z travelers. This method was chosen to generate statistically relevant insights that could inform future strategies in film-induced tourism marketing.

4.1 Research Design

The questionnaire was designed to capture respondents' emotional involvement, behavioral intentions, and media influence in relation to film-induced tourism. The survey included both closed and multiple-choice questions, aligned with the theoretical framework and research questions of this study. A total of 19 questions were included in the survey with some questions being country specific for Spain and Sweden. The survey was designed to take around five minutes to conclude.

Key questions examined actual and intended tourism behavior, including:

- “Have you ever visited or considered visiting a location because it was featured in a movie or show?”

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- Have you ever looked up a real-life location because you saw it in a film or TV show?”

Emotional engagement was measured through statements such as:

- “Do you feel a stronger connection to a place if it’s associated with a film or show you love?”

Additionally, respondents selected up to three motivating factors that would most increase their interest in visiting filming locations. One of these options—“*emotional connection to the story or characters*” was evaluated to see how emotional engagement compares to other key motivators.

Media influence was evaluated using the item:

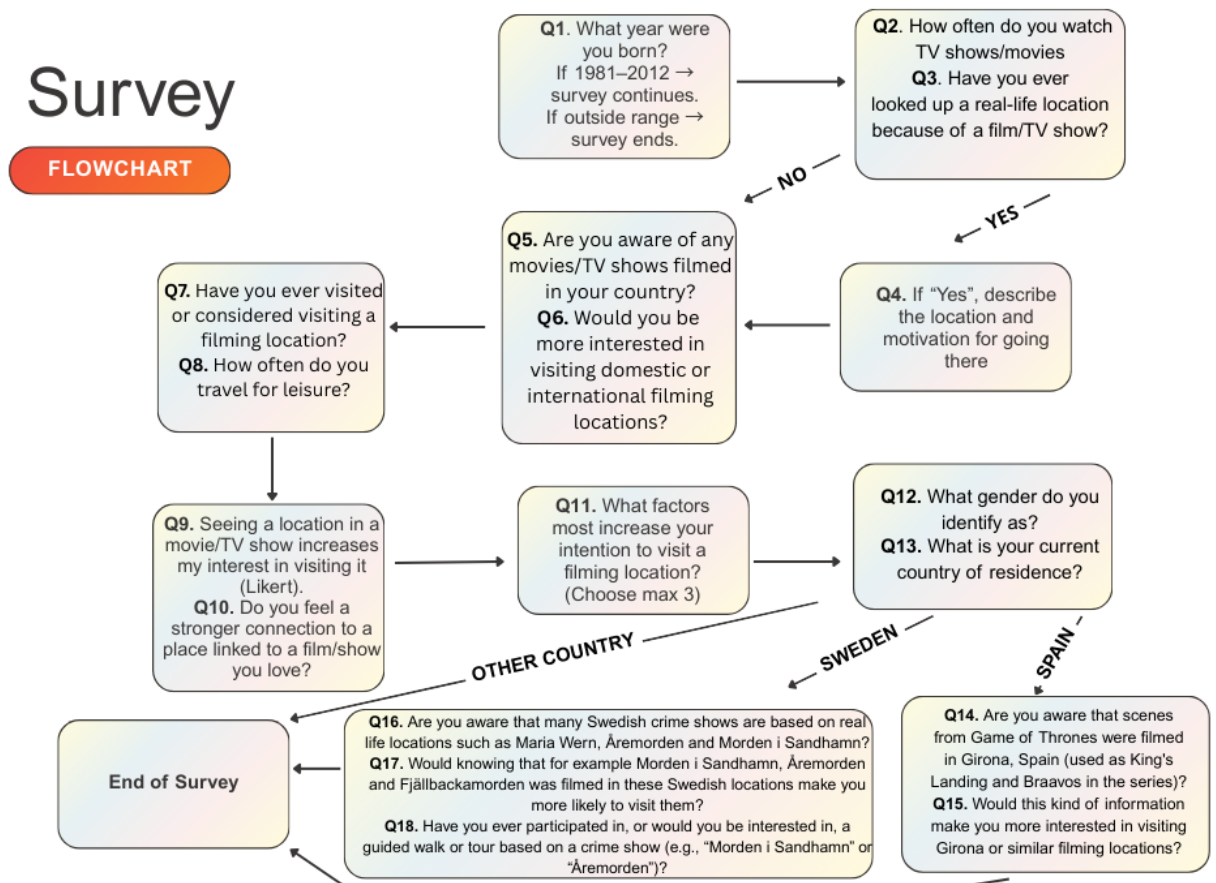
- “Seeing a location in a movie or TV show often increases my interest in visiting it?”

This question was further analyzed by cross-tabulating results with reported TV-watching frequency (daily, weekly, monthly, rarely or never).

Geographic preferences and awareness were assessed using the questions:

- “Would you be more interested in visiting a filming location in your own country or abroad?”
- “Are you aware of any movies or TV shows that were filmed in your country?”

These questions helped explore the role of visibility, destination familiarity, and domestic versus international appeal in film-induced travel behavior.



4.2 Data Collection

The survey was divided into four smaller sections:

The first section focused on media consumption habits and destination awareness. It included multiple-choice and closed-ended questions designed to assess how frequently respondents engage with streaming platforms, their awareness of filming locations, and whether they have been influenced by screen media in their travel intentions.

The second section explored participants' film-induced tourism interest. Questions examined how often they travel for leisure, whether they have considered or visited

destinations because of film or TV exposure, and how much on-screen representation affects their desire to visit specific places.

The third section consisted of destination-specific questions, tailored to measure awareness and interest in filming locations in Spain and Sweden. The question focus on notable series that have been filmed in the respective country and whether this information influenced their interest in visiting those locations.

The final section gathered sociodemographic data, including gender and country of residence, to enable comparisons across different population groups. To avoid wasting participants' time and to ensure relevance, the survey began with a question about year of birth. Only those belonging to Generation Z and Millennials were eligible for the study. The survey remained open for a total of four weeks, providing respondents with sufficient time to participate and allowing the sample to grow organically.

4.3 Sampling

This study used a non-probability snowball sampling method. The survey was initially distributed via Facebook groups and other social media, targeting individuals who consume film and television content. Participants were also encouraged to share the survey with their own contacts, which allowed the sample to grow organically through recommendations.

A total of 165 individuals completed the survey. However, two respondents were excluded from the final analysis as they did not fall within the target age group. This

resulted in a final sample size of 163 respondents. The target population consisted of individuals born between 1981 and 2012, representing Millennials and Generation Z, as these generations are the most active and influential in terms of both media consumption and tourism behavior. Of the final respondents, 38 respondents belonged to Generation Z (born 1997-2012), while the remaining 115 were Millennials (born 1981-1996). Other demographic data collected also included gender, and country of residence.

One limitation of the sample is the uneven distribution between Millennial and Generation Z respondents with Millennials making up over two-third of the sample. Therefore the results may reflect a stronger representation of Millennial perspectives. Additionally, the use of non-probability snowball sampling limits how representative the results are, as the sampling may not be fully representative of the broader population. Most respondents were from Sweden which may have influenced preferences for filming locations and restricts the study's applicability to a global context.

4.4 Data Analysis

The survey data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and cross-tabulations to identify trends in emotional involvement, travel intention, and the influence of film and television content on tourism behavior. Data were processed and visualized using Microsoft Excel to produce pie charts, bar charts, and other graphics.

Key survey items were analyzed both individually and in relation to each other. For example, responses to the question "Have you ever visited or considered visiting a

location because it was featured in a movie or show?" and "Have you ever visited or considered visiting a location because it was featured in a movie or a show?" were cross-tabulated with other variables such as gender, and awareness of filming locations. This allowed for the identification of patterns between media exposure, emotional engagement, and behavioral intention.

Multiple-choice questions with more than one possible response (for example motivational factors in visiting filming locations) were analyzed using frequency counts and percentage of total respondents, rather than percentage of total responses, to avoid misrepresenting results. Visual representations of key findings were included to enhance clarity and provide a more accessible overview of the results.

4.5 Ethical Considerations

Participation in the survey was entirely voluntary, and respondents were informed about the purpose of the study, the anonymity of their responses, and their right to withdraw at any time without consequence. No personal or identifying data were collected and all responses were collected securely and solely used for academic purposes.

5. Results

The first pie chart shows that 55% of respondents have looked up a real-life location after seeing it in a film or TV show, while 45% have not. This result shows that more

than half of participants have already been curious enough to seek out information about on-screen locations (see figure 1)

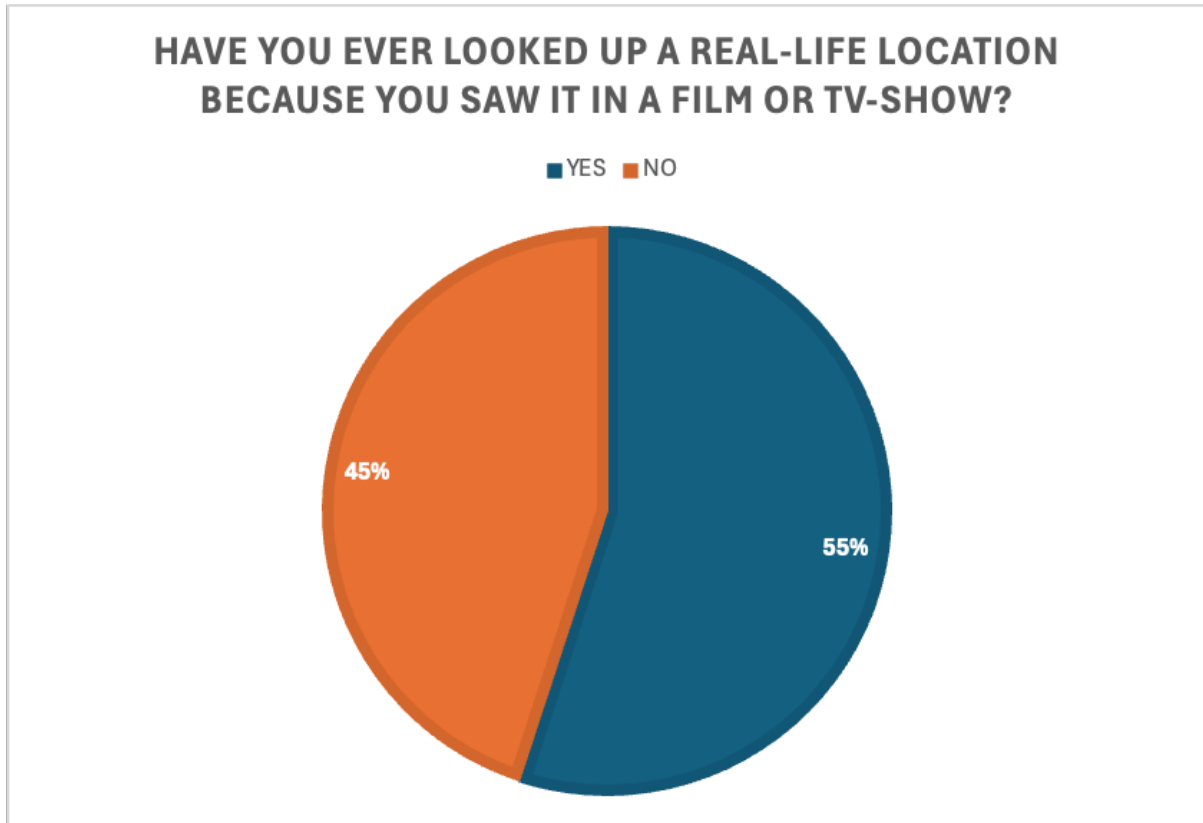


Figure 1

Respondents were asked whether they had ever visited or considered visiting a filming location featured in a film or TV show, 36% of respondents said they had already visited a filming location, 29% had considered visiting, and 21% said they might consider it in the future. Only 14% of all respondents indicated no interest (see figure 2).

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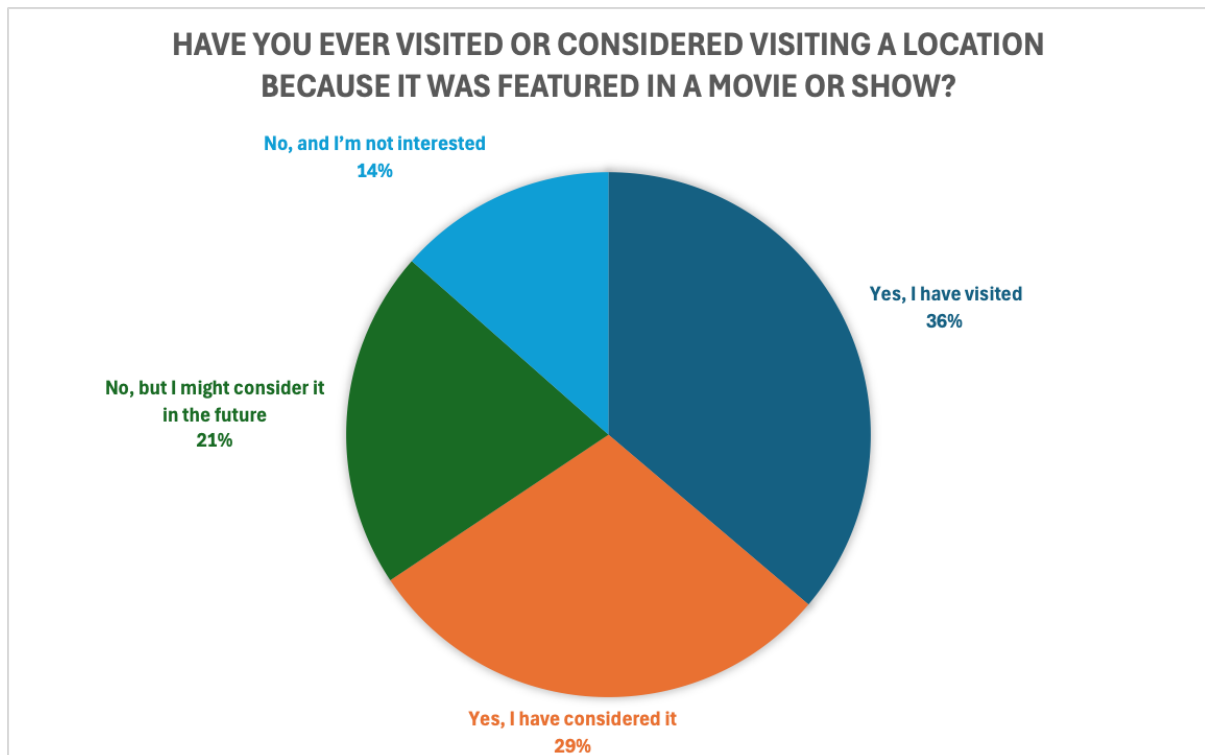


Figure 2

Both Millennials and Generation Z reported having visited a filming location at similar rates (respectively 37% and 35%). In addition, 29% of Millennials and 31% of Generation Z had considered visiting one, and a similar number of respondents said they might consider it in the future (20% of Millennials and 23% of Generation Z). Generation Z expressed a slightly lower disinterest in visiting with 10% compared to Millennials with 15% (see figure 3).

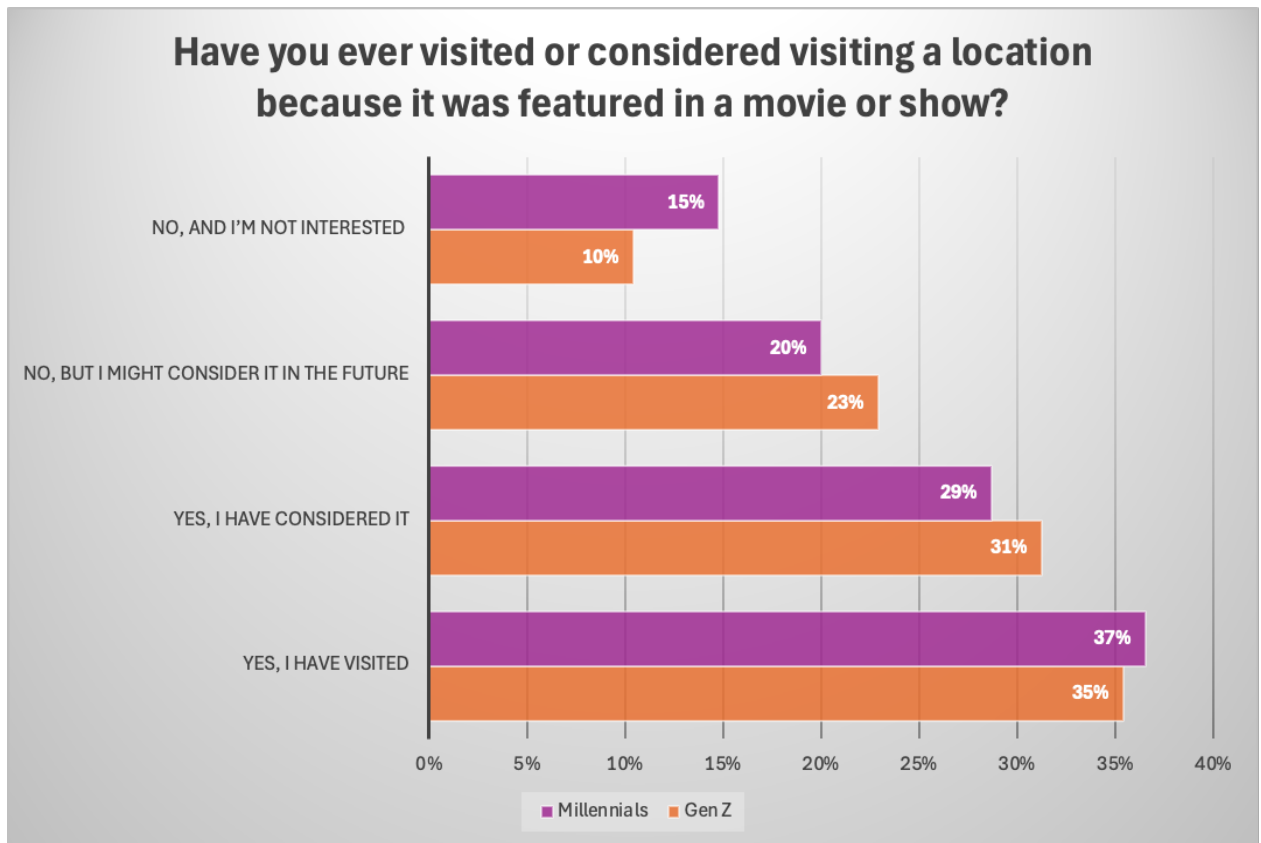


Figure 3

When asked whether seeing a location in a movie or TV show increases their interest in visiting it, 60% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed. Meanwhile, 26% responded neutrally, and 14% disagreed or strongly disagreed (see figure 4).

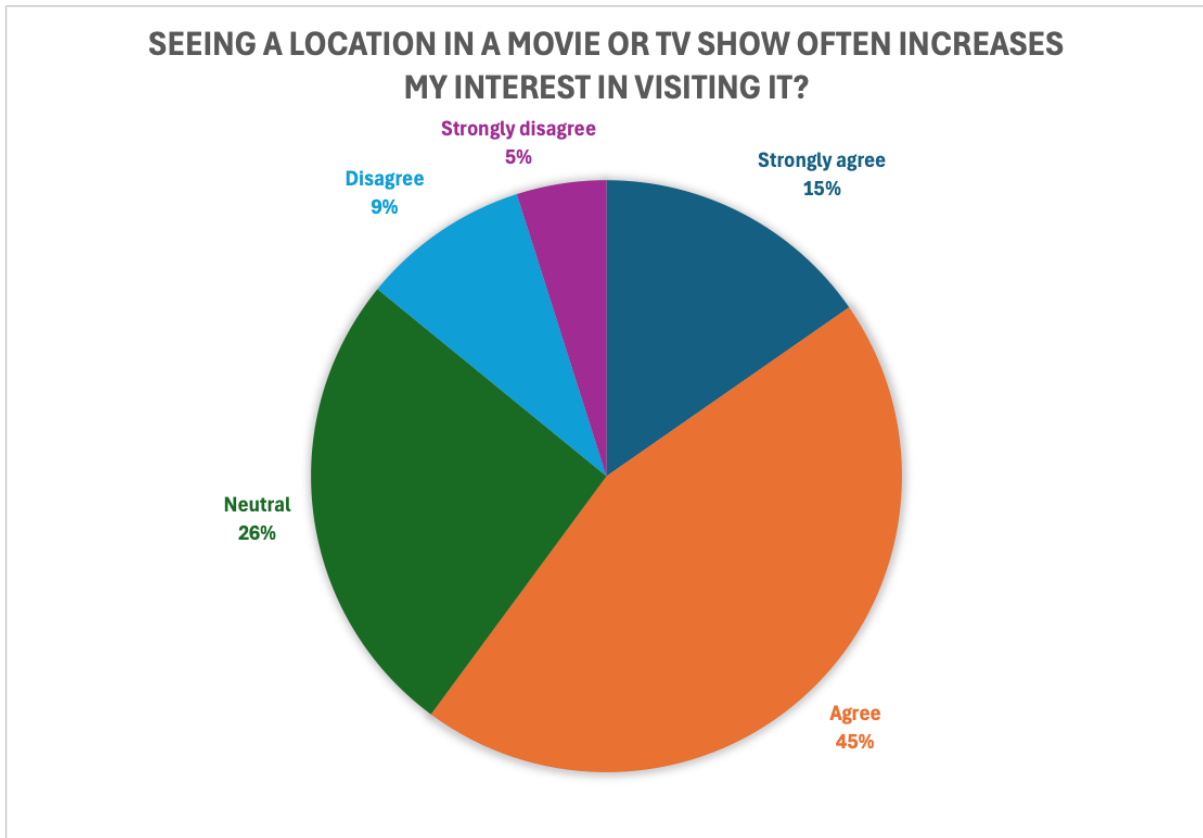


Figure 4

Respondents were asked whether they feel a stronger connection to a place that is associated with a film or TV show they love. 20% strongly agreed 38% agreed with the statement. 27% were neutral, while 9% disagreed and 6% strongly disagreed (see figure 5).

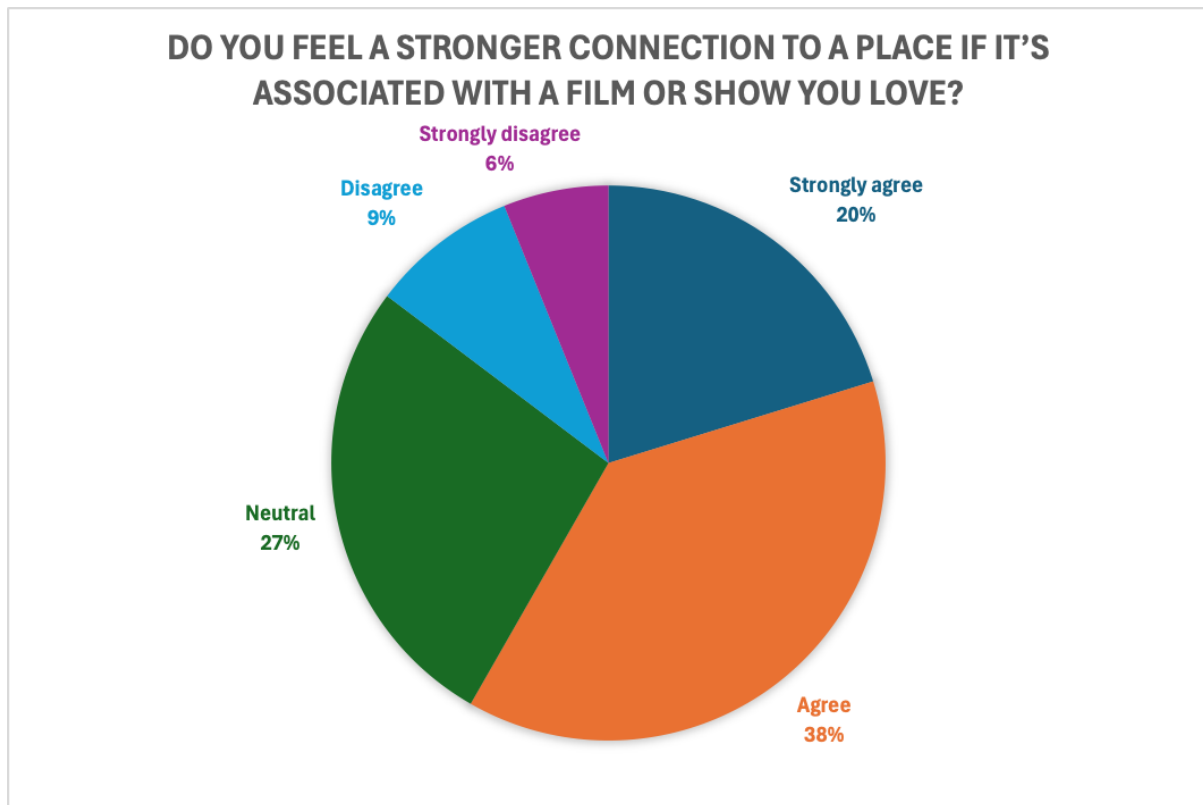


Figure 5

Among respondents who agreed or strongly agreed that they feel a stronger connection to a place if it is associated with a film or TV show they love, 46% reported having already visited a filming location. Additionally, 28% had considered visiting, and 19% said they might consider it in the future. Only 6% indicated no interest (see Figure 6).

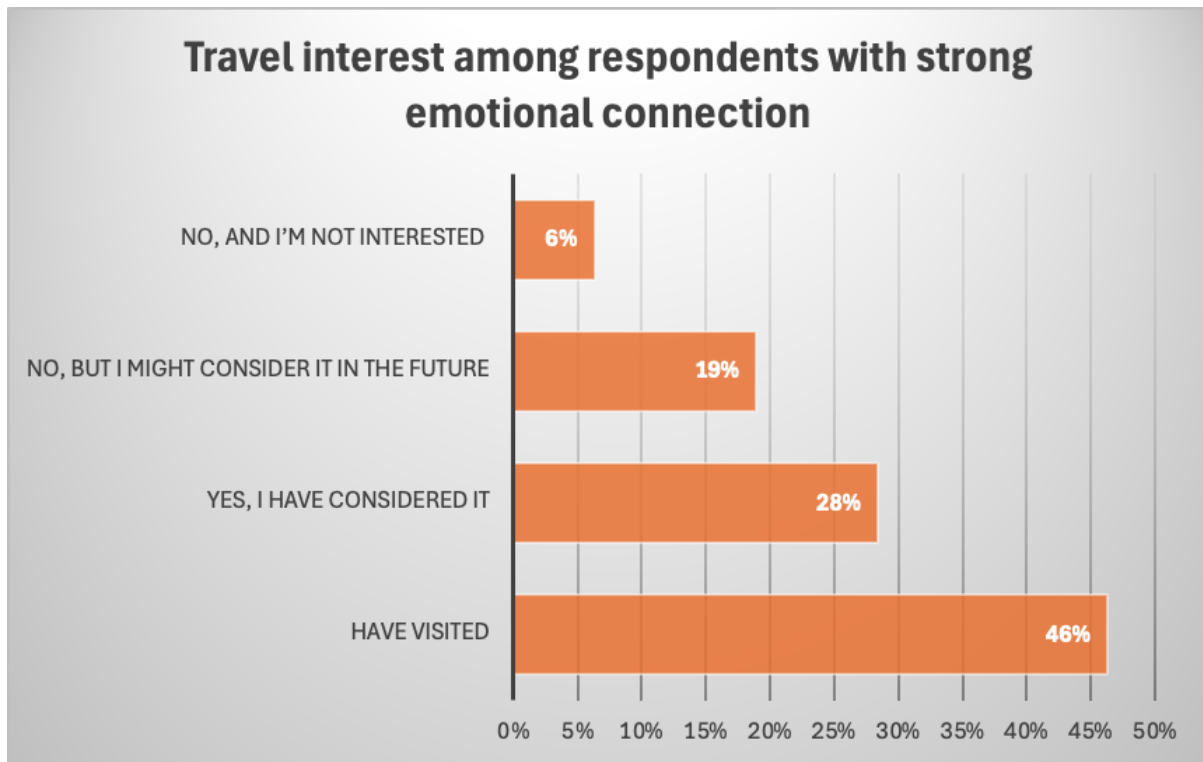


Figure 6

Regardless of how frequently respondents travel for leisure, a majority across all groups agreed that seeing a location in a film or TV show increases their interest in visiting it. Among people who travel a few times a year 56% strongly agreed or agreed that seeing a location in a movie or TV show increases their interest in visiting it, 31% were neutral while 13% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Out of respondents who travel once a year 62% strongly agreed or agreed, 21% were neutral while 17% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Similarly, among those who travel occasionally, rarely, or never, 65% agreed or strongly agreed that seeing a location in a film or TV show increases their interest in visiting it, 21% were neutral, and 14% disagreed or strongly disagreed (see figure 7).

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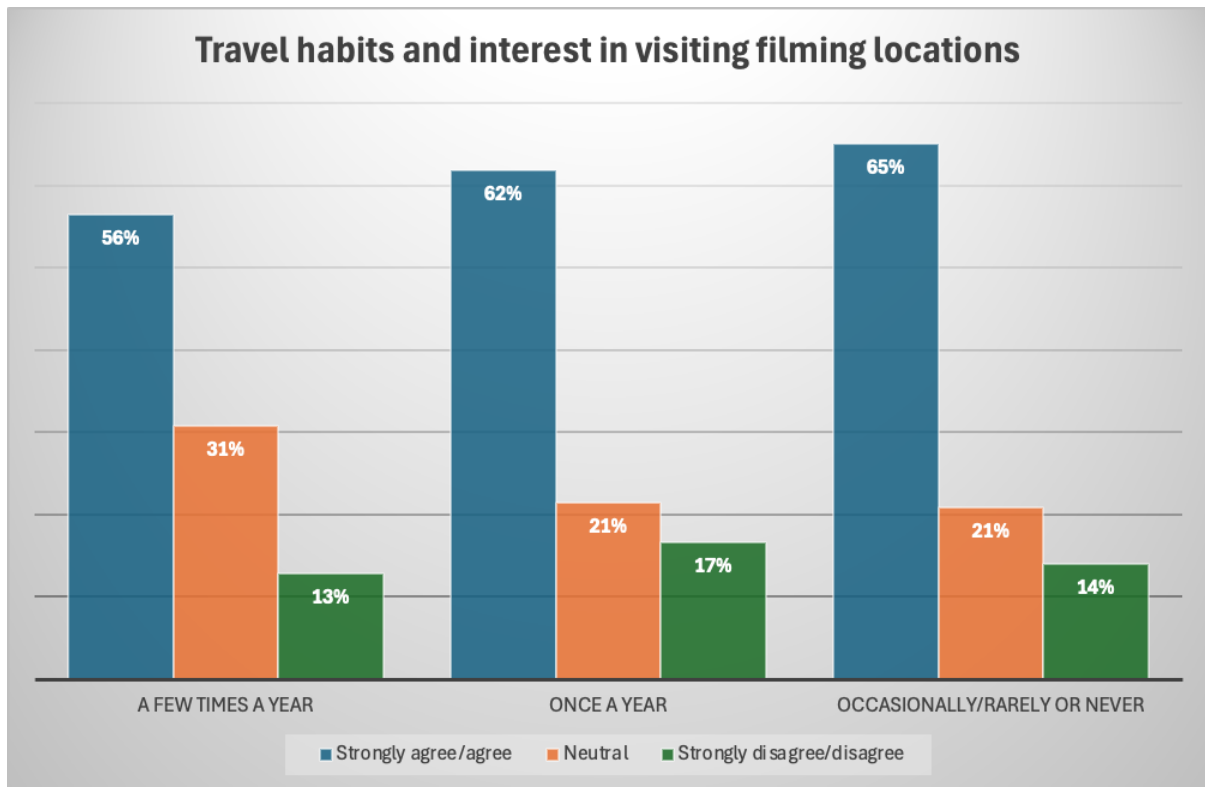


Figure 7

Respondents who watch TV daily are also more interested in visiting film locations with 67% agreeing that seeing a location on screen increases their interest in visiting it. The percentage decreases to 57% among weekly viewers and 38% among those who watch monthly, rarely, or never. Disagreement is highest among infrequent viewers with 33% while among weekly viewers 15% disagreed and for daily viewers the results was 9% (see figure 8).

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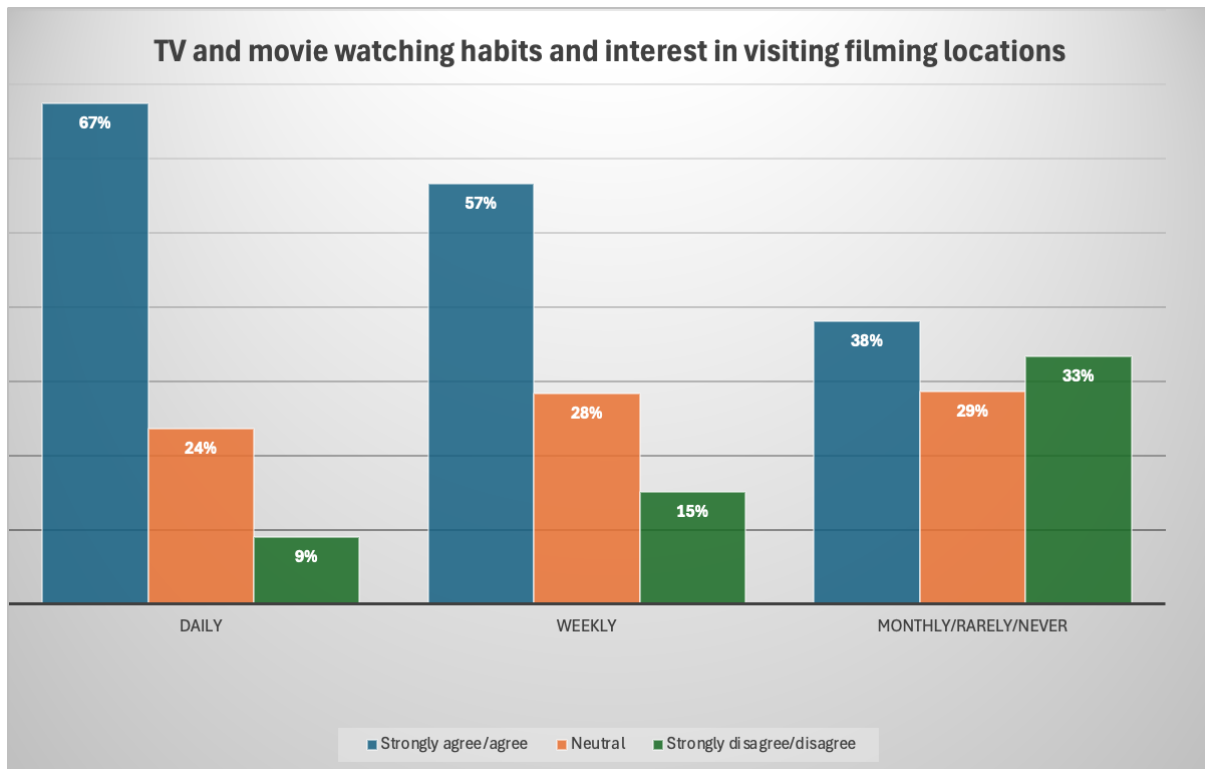


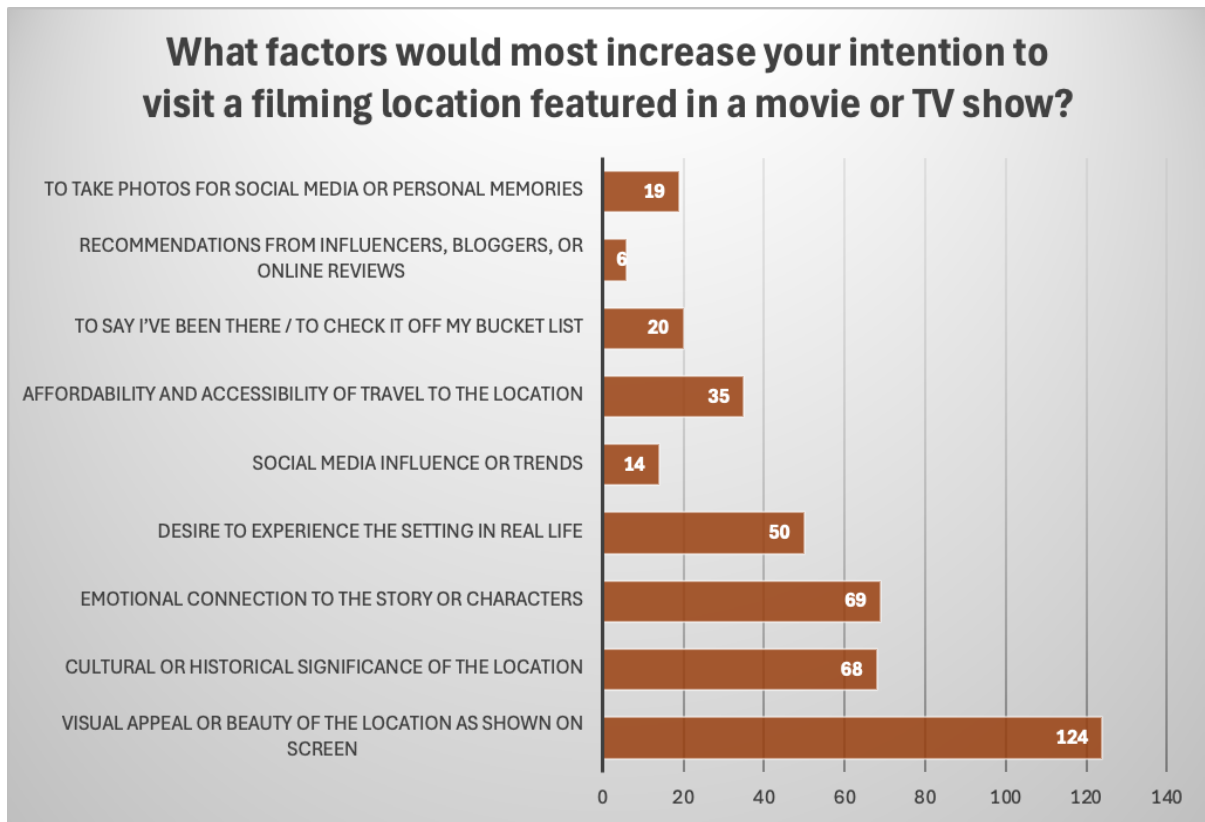
Figure 8

The survey results indicate that visual appeal or beauty of the location is the strongest factor influencing intention to visit filming locations (124 respondents). Followed by emotional connection to the story or characters (69) and cultural or historical significance (68). These results are supported by the qualitative data collected from the question "can you briefly describe the location you looked up and what motivated you to do so?", where responses frequently emphasized the visual appeal of locations, with descriptions such as "beautiful location" or "because the setting was so beautiful." Other common themes in the write in responses was desire to see the place in real life and emotional connection to the story or characters with respondents describing feelings of special attachment to the stories and characters associated with the locations. Multiple respondents mentioned popular tv shows and movies such as Game of Thrones, White Lotus, Mamma Mia, Outlander and James Bond as key inspirations for looking up or planning to visit film locations. These

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examples reflect common themes identified in the data, including visual appeal, cultural or historical significance, and emotional connection, which appear to influence respondents' intentions to visit (see figure 9).



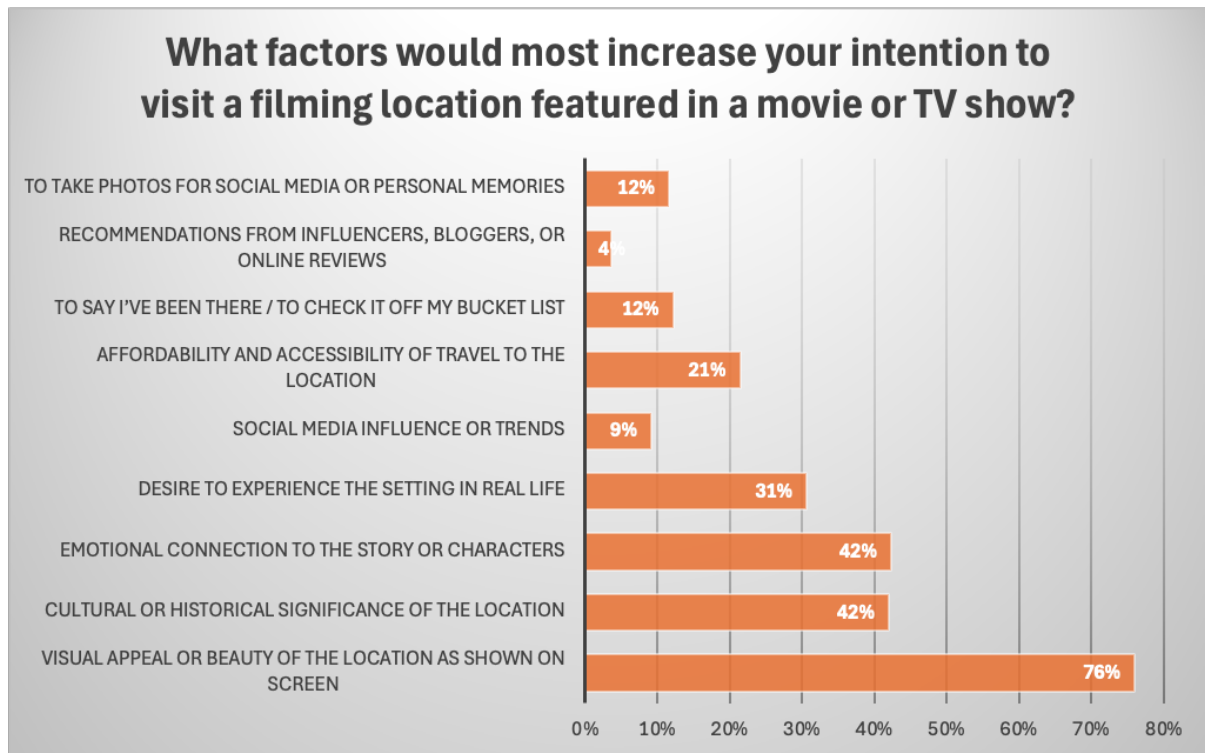


Figure 9

When asked whether they would prefer to visit filming locations in their own country or abroad 23% indicated a preference for international filming locations while only 5% preferred domestic locations. Notably, 30% responded that their interest depended on the specific film or show, and 26% were equally interested in both domestic and international locations. 17% showed no interest at all in visiting filming locations (see figure 10).

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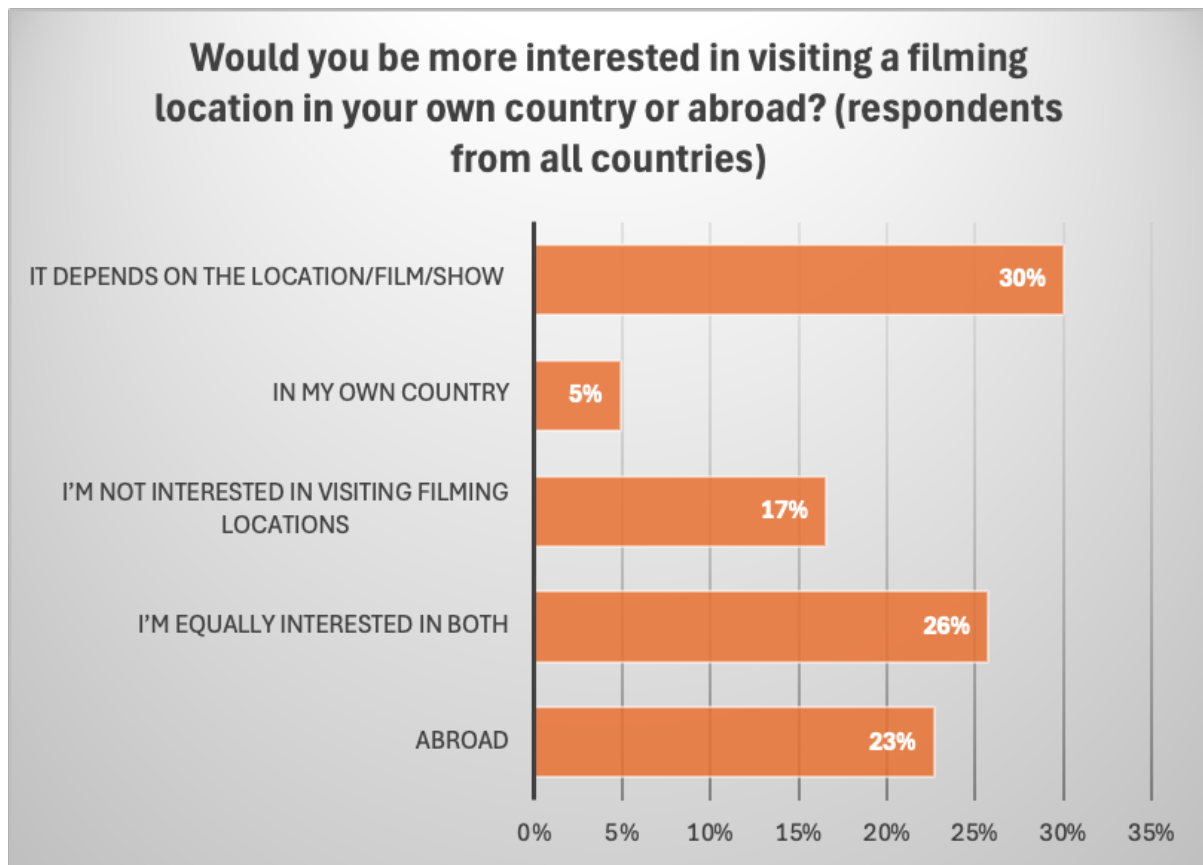


Figure 10

Among Swedish respondents, preferences regarding filming location shifted a little. A strong 31% indicated a stronger interest in international locations compared to 4% expressing a preference for domestic locations. The majority (34%) reported that their interest depended on the specific film or show, and 16% were equally interested in both domestic and international sites. Meanwhile, 15% stated that they were not interested in visiting filming locations at all (see figure 11).

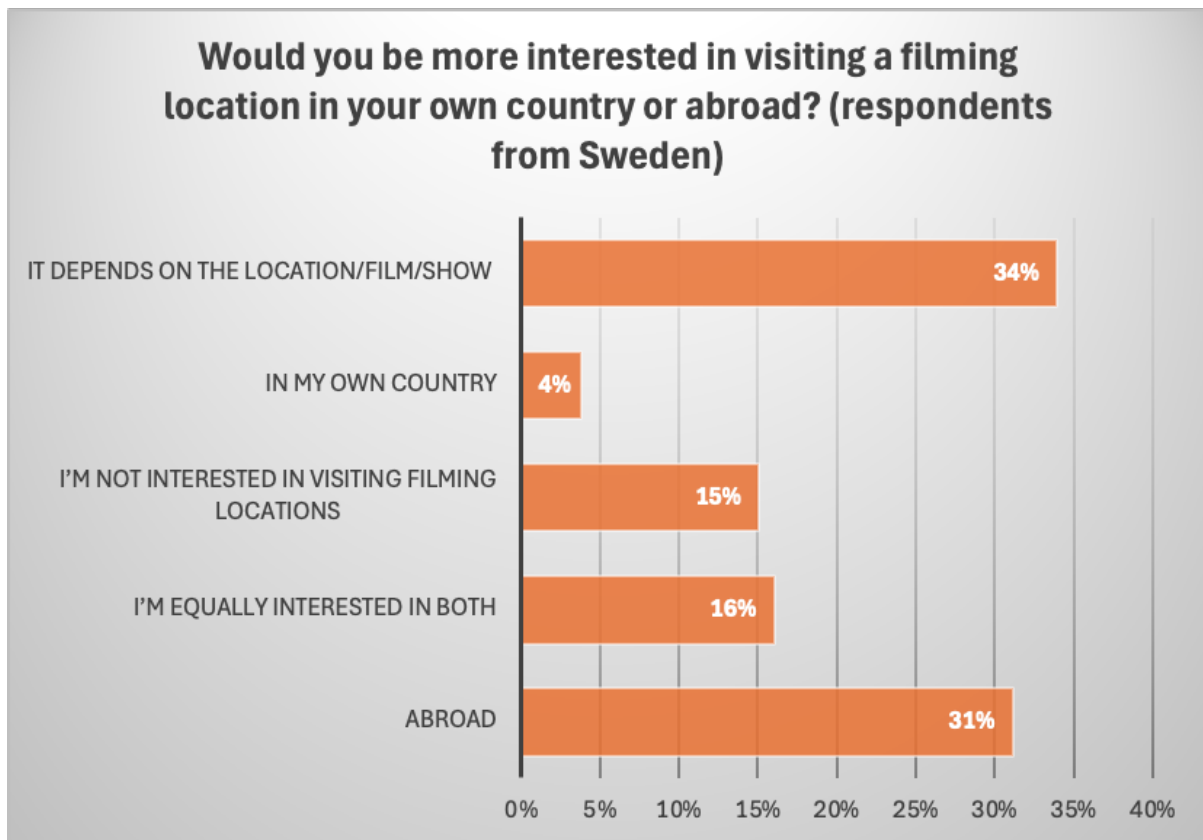


Figure 11

Among respondents from countries outside of Sweden, 44% indicated that they were equally interested in visiting both domestic and international filming locations.

Furthermore, 23% stated that their interest depended on the specific film or show.

7% expressed a preference for visiting filming locations in their own country while an equal percentage preferred international locations. Additionally, 19% reported no interest in visiting filming locations (see figure 12).

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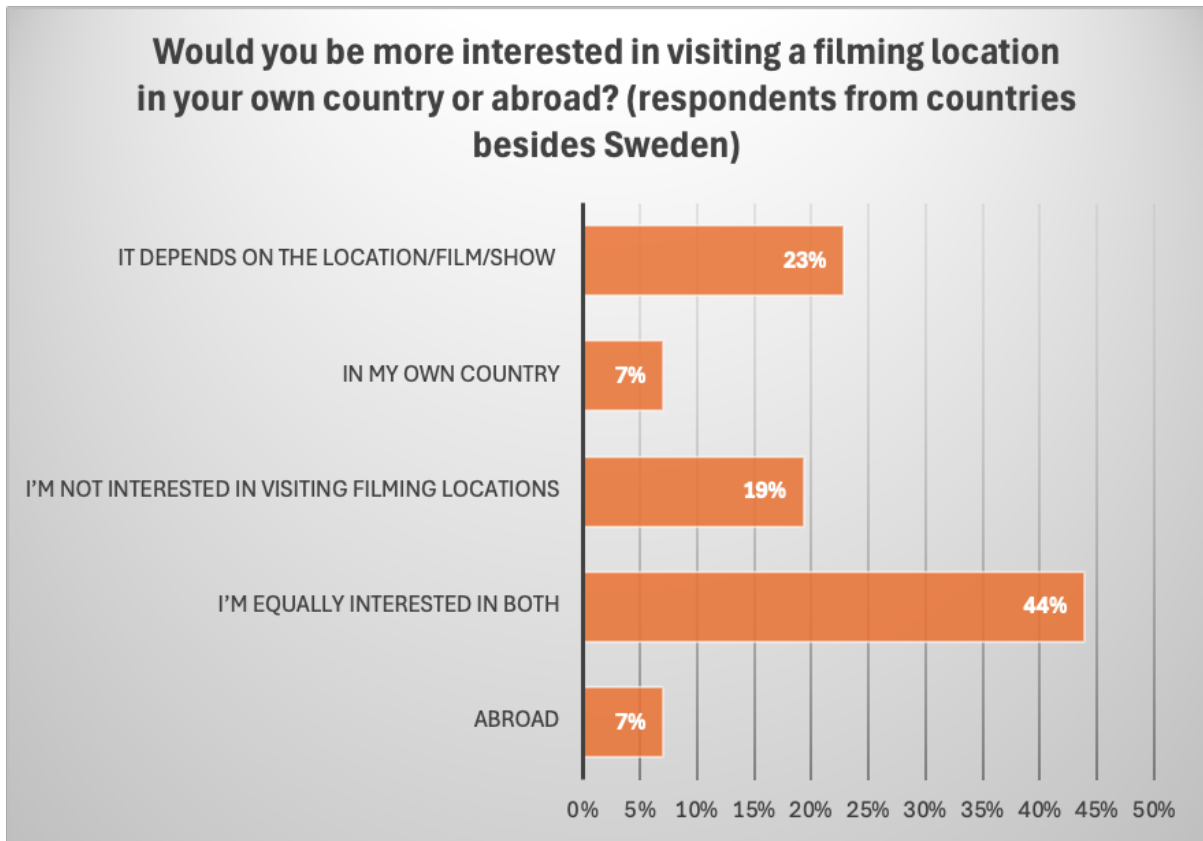


Figure 12

6. Discussion

Respondents who reported a strong emotional connection to a film or series were more likely to consider or visit filming locations. Among respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with feeling emotionally connected to screen content, 46% had already visited a filming location. This indicates that emotional connection might contribute to translating screen exposure into travel behavior, potentially influencing their decision to visit places seen on screen. It is further supported by the fact that nearly half of those who reported an emotional connection had already visited a filming location, compared to just over a third in the overall sample. Emotional

engagement may therefore not only increase intention but can also translate into actual behavior.

Additionally, respondents who reported watching films or TV series daily showed a higher interest in visiting filming locations than those who watched less frequently. 67% of the respondents who reported watching films or TV series daily agreed or strongly agreed that seeing a location in a movie or TV show often increases their interest in watching it. In comparison, those who watch monthly, rarely or never 38% agreed or strongly agreed. A frequent media consumption may reinforce familiarity and emotional attachment, making viewers more receptive to traveling to locations they've seen on screen.

From a theoretical perspective, these results align with the concept of the tourist gaze which refers to how media representations shape the way people perceive and desire places (Urry & Larsen, 2011). Regular exposure to on-screen media may influence what viewers come to see as attractive or meaningful destinations leading to influencing where people want to travel.

In line with this, the beauty and visual appeal of a location emerged as the most influential factor driving respondents' intention to visit filming places. This reinforces the visual nature of the tourist gaze, where destinations are often consumed through the lens of cinematic aesthetics (Urry & Larsen, 2011). Film and television productions frequently romanticize landscapes, architecture, and scenery, shaping the viewer's expectations about a place. This was demonstrated in both the quantitative and qualitative responses, where participants cited "beautiful locations", "the environment was so beautiful", "how it was presented cinematically" and similar

answers as key motivators. The strong emphasis on aesthetics suggests that viewers are not only emotionally drawn to narratives but are also visually drawn to the way places are portrayed on screen.

The interest in visual appeal also connects to the idea of the social media tourist gaze, tourists are motivated by what they see onscreen but also by the opportunity to capture and share their experiences online (Walsh et al., 2019). For generations such as Millennials and Generation Z posting travel experiences on social media platforms has become an integral part of traveling. The excitement that starts from watching a movie or a TV show is kept alive and spread by posting about it online and the desire to visit film and TV locations can grow even stronger through online sharing.

The influential factors encouraging people to visit film locations can also connect to the push and pull motivation theory. The pull factors are the things that attract people to a destination, for example beautiful scenery. While push factors are the internal reasons people want to travel, such as the need for emotional connection or escape (Dann, 1977). In the survey, emotional connection to the story or characters placed second in factors driving respondents' intention to visit filming places. In this context, the visual appeal functions as a strong pull factor while emotional connection shows the importance of personal feelings and the push factor. These emotional connections often come from identifying with characters or stories. Earlier research demonstrated how place attachment can develop even if the person hasn't been to the place before and can form from watching movies and television (Cheng & Kuo, 2015; Farnum & Kruger, 2005; Blake, 2002). The results in the survey shows that

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both the way a place looks and how it makes people feel can influence someone's decision to visit a filming location.

The comparison between Swedish and non-Swedish respondents reveals some differences in interest in visiting domestic or international filming locations. Swedish participants showed a stronger preference for international filming locations (31%) and only minimal interest in domestic ones (4%). This may reflect a perception that foreign destinations offer more cinematic appeal, or that Swedish filming locations are less widely associated with internationally recognized productions. Swedish respondents ranked "visual appeal or beauty of the location as shown on screen" (82 of 106) and "emotional connection to the story or characters" (45 of 106) as the most important factors in influencing their intention to visit filming locations. These results indicate an importance of aesthetic appeal and narrative over geographic proximity.

In contrast, respondents from other countries demonstrated a more balanced view with 44% who were equally interested in both domestic and international locations, and only 7% preferred international sites exclusively. Notably, a significant portion of both groups selected "It depends on the film or the show" (34% of Swedes and 23% of non-Swedes), suggesting that other factors rather than geographical location can be key factors in motivating film-related travel. This also indicates that people are willing to travel to visit places they have seen on screen when the story, characters, or setting resonates strongly with them.

While the survey suggests that film and TV locations are a motivator for many people, around a quarter of respondents remained neutral and some expressed no interest at all in visiting film related locations. However, the survey also shows that

the interest in visiting filming locations is widespread across different travel habits. Regardless of how frequently respondents travel for leisure, a majority in all groups agreed that seeing a location in a film or TV show increases their interest in visiting it. For instance, among those who travel a few times a year, 56% agreed or strongly agreed, while 31% were neutral. Similarly, 62% of annual travelers and 65% of occasional or rare travelers reported increased interest after seeing a location on screen. This demonstrates that even for less frequent travelers, film and TV exposure can spark curiosity and motivate potential visits, highlighting the broad appeal and potential of film tourism.

While this study may contribute valuable insights, several limitations should be noted. The heavy representation of Swedish respondents limits the global generalizability of the findings. The reason Swedish respondents are more interested in international filming locations may be because the domestic locations may not feel “special” since they are Swedish and therefore familiar while international productions are more exciting and exotic. International filming locations also have the appeal of being part of larger internationally celebrated narratives that create widespread publicity. Urry and Larsen’s (2011) concept of the tourist gaze describes how tourists are motivated to seek out places that contrast with their ordinary surroundings and are visually or symbolically constructed as desirable through media. For Swedish viewers visiting these international locations it is more than a regular vacation, it may feel like stepping into a world far removed from their daily reality.

In contrast, Spain, which was the second most reported country of residence in the survey, has popular international filming locations for Game of Thrones and Money

Heist. Spanish residents showed more interest in visiting domestic locations than Swedish residents. With being able to attract both international and domestic visitors, Spanish filming locations gain a competitive edge in tourism. The notable proportion of respondents who answered "it depends on the film or show" if they would rather visit a domestic or international filming location also show that the specific narrative and characters can outweigh geography when making a travel decision.

Performance-based factors, such as the narrative or characters along with place-based factors such as the physical appeal of a location can outweigh geographical location as motivation (Macionis, 2004). In these cases, the emotional resonance of the story becomes a dominant motivator, demonstrating that the symbolic and narrative dimensions of film tourism may transcend the physical distance of the destination itself.

Another limitation to the study was the uneven generational distribution with Millennial making up two thirds of the sample. This imbalance restricts the ability to draw firm conclusions about the differences between the two generations, as the perspectives of Generation Z are comparatively underrepresented. As a result, any comparisons should be interpreted with caution, since they may reflect the dominance of Millennial voices. Since previous research proved some generational differences in travel motivations and media consumption between the generations, having a stronger representation of both Millennials and Generation Z would be important for drawing more reliable comparisons (Corbisiero et al., 2022; Wong et al., 2017).

7. Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings in this study highlights how both emotional and visual factors play a central role in people's desire to visit filming locations. The results from the survey also suggest that media exposure increases the desire to travel to places seen onscreen. Rather than being seen as a niche market, film tourism has the potential to influence a wide spectrum of travelers, from those who travel frequently to those who rarely do. This shows that destinations can strategically use film and television exposure as powerful marketing tools by displaying the beautiful landscape or incorporating emotional narratives to attract visitors.

From a theoretical perspective, the results in this study support existing frameworks in tourism studies. Visual appeal ranking as the most popular factor driving respondents' intention to visit filming places aligns with Urry and Larsen's concept of the tourist gaze, showing that cinematic representations strongly shape perceptions of what an attractive destination is. The role of emotional connection demonstrates how people can feel attachment to places they haven't physically visited before (Cheng & Kuo, 2015; Farnum & Kruger, 2005; Blake, 2002). The balance between visual appeal and emotional connection being voted as the most influential factors explain the relevance of Dann's (1977) push and pull theory. While visual appeal is a strong pull factor, emotional connection can be the internal push factor that drives individuals to seek meaningful travel experiences.

Beyond the role of emotional and visual factors, the study also analyzed broader questions about the influence of media on tourism behavior. The results showed that seeing a destination onscreen often increases travel interest, even among those

who travel less frequently. Preferences for domestic and international filming locations varied, with Swedish respondents displaying more interest in international locations. Many respondents answered "it depends on the film or show" indicating how other factors than geographic location can have importance when choosing a destination.

Finally, Millennials were overrepresented in the sample in this study however the results indicate that both Millennials and Generation Z are influenced in similar ways by on-screen content. This may indicate that the interest in film tourism goes beyond generational distinctions. Although, further research is needed to better capture generational nuances. Future studies could also explore how different genres in media can influence place attachment.

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Appendix 1 - Questionnaire

1. What year were you born?

This survey is aimed at Millennials and Gen Z — anyone born between 1981 and 2012.

2. How often do you watch TV-shows or movies on TV or stream (e.g. Netflix, Disney+, Amazon Prime)?

Daily

Weekly

Monthly

Rarely

Never

3. Have you ever looked up a real-life location because you saw it in a film or TV-show?

Yes

No

4. If yes, can you briefly describe the location you looked up and what motivated you to do so?

5. Are you aware of any movies or TV shows that were filmed in your country?

Yes

No

6. Would you be more interested in visiting a filming location in your own country or abroad?

In my own country

Abroad

I'm equally interested in both

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It depends on the location/film/show
I'm not interested in visiting filming locations

7. Have you ever visited or considered visiting a location because it was featured in a movie or show?

Yes, I have visited
Yes, I have considered it
No, but I might consider it in the future
No, and I'm not interested

8. How often do you travel for leisure (not for work)?

A few times a year
Once a year
Occasionally
Rarely
Never

9. Seeing a location in a movie or TV show often increases my interest in visiting it?

Strongly agree
Agree
Neutral
Disagree
Strongly disagree

10. Do you feel a stronger connection to a place if it's associated with a film or show you love?

Strongly agree
Agree
Neutral
Disagree
Strongly disagree

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11. What factors would most increase your intention to visit a filming location featured in a movie or TV show? Choose up to 3 factors.

- Emotional connection to the story or characters
- Visual appeal or beauty of the location as shown on screen
- Desire to experience the setting in real life
- Social media influence or trends
- Cultural or historical significance of the location
- Affordability and accessibility of travel to the location
- To say I've been there / to check it off my bucket list
- Recommendations from influencers, bloggers, or online reviews
- To take photos for social media or personal memories

12. What gender do you identify as?

- Woman
- Man
- Non-binary
- Prefer not to say

13. What is your current country of residence?

- Spain
- Sweden
- Other

14. If you replied "Other", what is your current country of residence?

Question 15 + 16 specific for respondents choosing "Spain".

15. Are you aware that scenes from Game of Thrones were filmed in Girona, Spain (used as King's Landing and Braavos in the series)?

- Yes
- No

16. Would this kind of information make you more interested in visiting Girona or similar filming locations?

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Yes

Maybe

No

I've already been there because of the show

Question 17, 18 + 19 specific for respondents choosing "Sweden".

17. Are you aware that many Swedish crime shows are based on real life locations such as Maria Wern (Gotland), Åremorden (Åre) and Morden i Sandhamn (Sandhamn)?

Yes

No

18. Would knowing that for example Morden i Sandhamn, Åremorden and Fjällbackamorden were filmed in these Swedish locations make you more likely to visit them?

Yes

Maybe

No

I've already been to one of these places because of the show/movie

19. Have you ever participated in, or would you be interested in, a guided walk or tour based on a crime show (e.g., "Morden i Sandhamn" or "Åremorden")?

Yes, I have participated in one

Yes, , I would be interested

Maybe

No