Influence of movies and television on Chinese Tourists perception toward international tourism destinations

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of movies and TV dramas on Chinese tourists' choice of international travel destinations. An online survey instrument was developed and distributed to Chinese consumers through an online survey panel company. Findings indicated many Chinese are highly involved with international travel and were ardent about movies and/or TV dramas. There was a high level of agreement that these media outlets have a significant impact on travel motivations. Foods, fashion, and other elements featured in movies and TV dramas were motivators for the Chinese market. Thailand and Korea were the two top favorite destinations based upon movie and TV drama consumption. Implications for the tourism industry and the movie and TV drama industries are discussed.

1. Introduction

Since the late 1800s, motion pictures have caught audiences' attentions when the Lumiere brothers first mesmerized the world through film (Bolan, Boy, & Bell, 2011; Josiam et al., 2015). Even though inducing viewers to visit the screened locations as tourists was not the primary purpose of most movie producers, beautiful sceneries, landscapes, lifestyles and cultural experiences featured in movies had enhanced the viewers' awareness of the screened destinations and impacted viewers' travel intentions (Bolan et al., 2011; Hudson, Wang, & Gil, 2011). Films, therefore, have served as marketing tools for destination management/marketing organizations (DMOs) across different countries (Beeton, 2005; Ji & Beeton, 2011; Josiam, Spears, Dutta, Pookulangara, & Kinley, 2014; Reijnders, Bolderman, Van Es, & Waysdorf, 2015).

The gross box office in China, the world's second-largest movie-going market, was over $6.78 billion in 2015, with foreign films having a share of 38.4% (Brzeski, 2015). It is also estimated that the movie industry in China will surpass North America and become the top market in the world by the end of 2017 (Brzeski, 2015). In addition, China is the number one country producing TV dramas in the world (Entgroup, 2015). According to a report of a popular social media site in China (i.e., Weibo.com), Chinese viewers watched an average of 52 min of television (TV) dramas per day. Specifically, Korean dramas have increased in popularity in China since the late 1990s (Li, 2014). Even though many Chinese viewers are in favor of TV dramas from western

countries, the government has tightly controlled the media and only a limited number of western dramas can be shown each year on Chinese TV channels (Li, 2014).

The tourism industry in China has experienced rapid growth in the last decade (2017; China National Tourism Administration [CNTA], 2008). In 2006, there were 34,523,600 Chinese citizens traveling outbound to other countries or districts; among these travelers, 5,724,400 traveled outbound for public duty and 28,799,100 went outbound for private purposes; the top five countries that Chinese citizens traveled to were Japan, South Korea, Thailand, Russia, and the United States (CNTA, 2008). In 2016, 1.22 billion Chinese citizens traveled outbound and spent 1098 billion US dollars in other countries or districts (CNTA, 2017). According to these statistics, the number of international travelers from China has increased > 300% during the decade between 2006 and 2016. Outbound travelers in China have created numerous opportunities for the tourism industry in both China and other countries. From an international tourism perspective, the growth of China's outbound tourism market has attracted a great deal of attention and has emerged as a very important export market for many countries worldwide (Byron & Anton, 2008).

Previous research has investigated the impact of movies and TV dramas on international tourism. In India, United States, Korea, and Taiwan research found that movies and TV dramas had motivated viewers to travel abroad (Cho & Agrusa, 2007; Josiam et al., 2014; Josiam et al., 2015; Kim & Wang, 2012; Spears, Josiam, Kinley, & Pookulangara, 2013). Researchers have also discovered that locations

shown in movies or TV dramas had impacted the viewers' decision-making process when selecting travel destinations (Busby & Klug, 2001; Hudson et al., 2011; Josiam et al., 2014, 2015; Spears et al., 2013; Young & Young, 2008). By investigating the impact of Bollywood movies on the activities and behaviors of Indian tourists, researchers identified that Bollywood movies had significantly impacted Indian tourists' perceptions toward European destinations (Josiam et al., 2014, 2015). Movies can be used as an efficient, effective and impactful tool in destination marketing, perhaps more so than traditional marketing approaches (Rajaguru, 2014).

However, no research has been conducted to date that comprehensively explored the impact of movies and TV dramas on Chinese tourists' perceptions of international travel destinations. Results of this research may benefit the tourism industry and the movie and TV drama industry in China and other countries as it investigated the relationships between these two (Movies/TV and Tourism) large segments of the Chinese economy. Therefore, the main purpose of this research was to fill the gap in literature by investigating the impact of movies and TV dramas on Chinese viewers' choice of international travel destinations. The specific objectives of the study were to (1) determine Chinese viewers' movie and TV watching preferences and engagement; (2) identify the impact of movie and TV on Chinese viewers' motivation to travel to international destinations; (3) explore the linkage between movie/TV and the perceived images of international travel destinations among Chinese viewers; and (4) provide recommendations and suggestions to marketing professionals in the tourism, movie, and TV industries.

2. Literature review

2.1. Film-induced tourism

Film-induced tourism can be described as the purposeful visitation of destinations depicted in films and television shows, including visits to film production studios and related theme parks (Beeton, 2005; Hahm & Wang, 2011; St-James, Darveau, & Fortin, 2018). As a form of cultural tourism, film-induced tourism has become a growing phenomenon worldwide, driven by the development of the entertainment and global travel industries (Hudson & Ritchie, 2006). In the global context, a number of film tourism initiatives has been undertaken by destination marketing organizations or local economic development organizations to increase the reputation of filming destination, visitor awareness, and number of visitors (Connell, 2012). Such initiatives were found to be effective as researchers found that these films had changed or enhanced the image of featured destinations in tourists' minds and further increased tourists' engagement toward film-related activities (Volo & Irimiás, 2016). The scope of filming destinations could be very broad, according to Beeton (2005), the destinations include "on-location" – the screened locations and "off-location" – the theme parks, filming studios, or even the filming festivals. Connell (2012) expanded the scope of "off-locations" and added the themed attractions with film themes (e.g., Disneyworld), film celebrity homes (e.g., Beverly Hills), and film premieres into the context. As seen above, film-induced tourism is a complex issue with many facets and perspectives. The literature has evolved by scholars building on older concepts and exploring the phenomena from new angles and through different lenses.

As O'Connor, Flanagan, and Gilbert (2008, p. 434) note, "Film-induced tourism is partially based on tourism demands to escape reality to a better world represented in films." From consumers' perspectives, some researchers used push factors (e.g., need for socialization and escape) and pull factors (e.g., landscapes, scenery) as a framework to understand tourists motivations (Hudson & Ritchie, 2006; Macionis, 2004). Some other researchers identified that escaping from routine lives and seeking rewarding personal or interpersonal experience were two motivational forces that stimulate tourists' behaviors to visit

screened places featured in movies (Iso-Ahola, 1983; Mannell & Iso-Ahola, 1987). A study in the United Kingdom found that consumers considered visiting locations filmed in their favorite movies when planning for trips (Hudson & Ritchie, 2006). Singh and Best's (2004) study examined the wave of film-induced tourism to New Zealand after the release of The *Lord of the Rings* trilogy and found that viewers' primary motivation to visit the screening location was to see the scenery as portrayed in the film.

As a result, filming destinations usually experience increased number of visitors after the movie was released (Singh & Best, 2004). Many films have unintentionally, yet substantially influenced tourism trends, such as *The Lord of the Rings, Harry Potter, Slumdog Millionaire,* and *Cidade de Deus* (City of God). These movies have been responsible for increased tourist traffic to their respective filming destinations in different parts of the world. In New Zealand, the filming locations of *The Lord of the Rings* have experienced a marked increase in tourist interest (Suni & Komppula, 2012). In the UK, it is estimated that approximately 20% of international visitors were motivated by the images they had seen in movies or on television (VisitBritain, 2006). The promotion of the Harry Potter series is expected to both increase the number of visits to the UK as well as contribute significantly to the 74-billion-pound visitor economy (VisitBritain, 2006). In India, the release of *Slumdog Millionaire* in 2008 drew unprecedented international attention to the slums of Mumbai, giving rise to "slum tourism" there. After the success of the film, "Indian slums began to appeal more visibly to consumers as new exotic tourist destinations, away from the well-trodden road of so-called conventional tourism" (Mendes, 2016, p. 478). The 2003 release of *Cidade de Deus* (City of God) had a similar effect on Rio de Janeiro, with tours popping up across the city allowing voyeuristic visitors to explore the favelas they had seen on the screen (Freire-Medeiros, 2011).

Though movies increasingly have the power to shape the future of tourism, few studies have explicitly considered its effects on specific markets. The bulk of the film-induced tourism literature has emphasized the importance of this sector on economic growth (O'Connor et al., 2008). In their study of film-induced tourist perceptions of Spain, Mestre, Del Rey, and Stanishevski (2008) found that realistic images presented in films often attract the attention of tourists, subsequently resulting in the creation of a tourist destination. Additionally, Mestre et al. (2008) found that the majority of film viewers accepted the fictional storyline as reality. In a 2004 survey in the United Kingdom, 80% of respondents remarked that their ideas for their vacation destinations had come from movies, while 20% of respondents were planning trips to the filming locations of their favorite films (Hudson & Ritchie, 2006). The financial value of film-induced tourism to the United Kingdom was estimated to be approximately 1.6 billion Pounds annually (Suni & Komppula, 2012). At present, no established methods exist to accurately measure film-induced tourism. However, the influence certain films have on the popularity of the destinations in which they were filmed is readily apparent through increasing visitor numbers.

2.2. Film-induced tourism in China

The history of film-induced tourism in China can be traced back to 1896 when the first imported film show occurred in Shanghai (Liu & Liu, 2004; Zhang & Ryan, 2018b). Rapid growth of film-induced tourism appeared from early 2000s with the development of new media and consumers' growing exposure to different types of online resources (Liu & Liu, 2004; Zhang & Ryan, 2018a). Previous studies have investigated the development stages of film-induced tourism in China, the relationship between films/TV dramas and viewer's tourism motivations, and the impact of film on screened destination's image (Hao & Ryan, 2013; Kim & Kim, 2018; Liu & Liu, 2004; Meng & Yuan, 2006; Pan, 2005; Pan & Ryan, 2013; Wu & Hou, 2006; Jing, 1999). By surveying tourists visiting *Longquan Villa of Tieling*, researchers found that the majority of the tourists visited the destination after seeing it in the

TV drama. Tourists referenced wanting to see the place where Liu Laogen (the leading actor) lived in the TV drama (Wu & Hou, 2006). Using the Chinese film *Hibiscus Town* as a case study, Hao and Ryan (2013) suggested that "film language" served an important role in describing the screened places and shaping the image of a further developed tourism destination. For tourism destinations, the enhanced local image, local communities' development opportunities, increased number of tourists, and the accelerated development of tourist attractions and the local tourism industry were found to have positive impacts brought by films or TV dramas (Pan, 2005). In addition, by developing a drama consumption model in the context of film tourism, Kim and Kim (2018) discovered that Chinese audiences were greatly influenced by the characters and celebrities in Korean TV dramas; however, their emotional involvement did not lead to their visiting intentions. Some other case studies were also published emphasizing the tourism development of film studios in China, such as Zhejiang Hengdian Film Studio and Ningxia West Film Studio (Liu & Liu, 2004; Wang, Li, & Wang, 2006). The above-mentioned studies have provided destination marketers with suggestions toward using film or TV dramas as a tool to promote tourism destinations. However, most of them had focused on the impact of domestic films or TV dramas and inbound travel motivations to domestic destinations. Only one research study has investigated the impact of Korean made TV dramas on Chinese tourists' international travel motivations. Therefore, this study extended the research scope and was aimed to explore Chinese consumers' movie and TV dramas involvement and their perceptions toward multiple international destinations.

2.3. Viewers' engagement with movie/TV and perceived destination image

Individuals nowadays are increasingly exposed to different types of media, which plays important roles in sharing their social and cultural activities (Kim, 2012). As a form of media, movies and TV had become major types of entertainment from the mid-twentieth century that their impact on tourism and destination image had become particularly significant (Beeton, 2016). In specific, movies and TV dramas can act as "pull" factors (Riley & Van Doren, 1992) to impact a potential tourist by generating awareness and interests in the filming locations. The consumption of visualized images featured in movies or TV dramas, therefore, influences viewers' understanding and perceptions toward a filming destination, and forms their expectations toward what they may experience when they become tourists visiting (Kim, 2012).

The screening location of a movie/TV usually influences viewers' perceptions toward a potential tourist destination as the movie/TV serves as a channel of communication to inform viewers' of a specific destination (Cohen, 1986). How the location is featured in the movie/TV and how the screening location is presented would specifically affect the viewers' perceptions (Spears et al., 2013). The cultural image, which affects the storytelling in a fictional movie/TV, would ultimately affect viewers' engagement toward a movie/TV. Movie/TV, therefore, plays an important role in the formation of a destination's image (Spears et al., 2013). On the other hand, a movie/TV can attract tourists to the screening location, help build stronger destination image, and as a result increase tourist visitation and bring positive economic impacts (Hudson & Ritchie, 2006).

Considering viewers' engagement with movies and the effects that movie/TV has on viewers' perceived images of featured destinations, Destination Management/Marketing Organizations (DMOs) in different countries have been found taking advantages of the market created by movies/TVs. Croy (2010) found that there is a strong link between "the Lord of the Rings" and the international tourism image of New Zealand and the movie had increased viewers' awareness and familiarity of the locations featured in the movie. On the other hand, researchers have found that movie/TV viewers' engagement toward a destination can be further enhanced after being exposed to destination-related information repeatedly (Josiam et al., 2014; Spears, Dutta, Pookulangara, & Kinley,

2013). Thus, the collaboration of DMOs and movie/TV producers can help create a potential tourism destination. One of the most famous movie directors in China, Yimou Zhang, has demonstrated successful examples of collaborations between local government and movie producer in promoting tourism destinations (Ji & Beeton, 2011). Aware that most scenes featured in his films had become famous tourism destinations, Yimou Zhang started to team up with DMOs of local governments in tourism imaging and promotion (Ji & Beeton, 2011). With the financial support from Shiqiu town government in Nanjing, Zhang's movie "Thirteen Jingling Hairpin" had make Shiqiu town a famous tourism destination for both domestic and international movie viewers (Ji & Beeton, 2011).

2.4. International tourism destinations for Chinese travelers

As reported by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), China has become the largest outbound travel market in the world in 2014, in regards to the total arrivals generated and the travel expenditures (UNWTO, 2015). Asia and Pacific (excluding Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan), Europe, and the Americas are the three largest destination regions for Chinese outbound tourists, receiving 63%, 26%, and 8% of all Chinese arrivals (UNWTO, 2015). For Europe, the historical culture and heritage are key assets in attracting Chinese tourists (Croce, 2016). Researchers also argued that the more recent culture references, such as movies, had helped creating emotional connections with Chinese outbound travelers (Croce, 2016; European Travel Commission, 2014; UNWTO, 2015). As the strongest competitors of European destinations, the U.S. and Australia had delivered outstanding tourism products and services to Chinese travelers in the tourism destinations (European Travel Commission, 2014).

Many factors have been found driving Chinese tourists' international travel motivations, including the increasing disposable income, the increasing public holidays throughout the year, the relaxation of travel restrictions, and the tourists' desire of experiencing different cultures and activities (Croce, 2016; Matthew, 2017; Sparks & Pan, 2009; UNWTO, 2015). On the other hand, the Chinese government had established initiatives and policies to actively support the development of outbound tourism markets (Croce, 2016). Considering the fact that the growth of China's outbound tourism market has attracted a great deal of attention and has emerged as a very important export market for many countries worldwide (Byron & Anton, 2008), this study aimed to explore the impact of movies and TV dramas on Chinese viewers' choice of international travel destinations.

3. Methodology

The research methods and survey instrument were reviewed and approved by the university's Institutional Review Board (IRB) prior to data collection. The population of this study was movie/TV drama viewers (18 years or older) in China. The survey sample was recruited by an online survey research firm (i.e., Sojump.com) in China.

3.1. Instrument development

An online survey instrument was developed based upon an extensive review of literature and previous movie-induced tourism studies conducted in other countries (Josiam et al., 2014, 2015; Josiam, Kinley, & Kim, 2005; Spears et al., 2013). The survey instrument consisted of five sections, including questions about participants' (i) preferences/engagement with movies/TV, (ii) movie/TV induced international travel motivations, (iii) movie/TV induced tourism destinations, (iv) perceptions toward the images of multiple tourism destinations in the world, and (v) demographic information. Questions about Chinese viewers' preference/engagement with movies/TV dramas and their movie/TV induced international travel motivations were adapted from the movie engagement scale and international travel motivation scale

developed by Spears et al. (2013)." The movie engagement scale used by Josiam et al. (2014) was derived from the "Fashion Leadership Scale" developed by Goldsmith, Freiden, and Kilsheimer (1993). This scale has been derived by Goldsmith et al. (1993) from the scale used by Gutman and Mills (1982) to measure a variety of attitudes toward fashion and clothing purchases. Both these scales have been used in numerous studies of consumer behaviors and were extensively cited in the literature. In Josiam et al.'s (2014) study, researchers modified some of the scale items from the fashion consumption context to the movie consumption context. For example - "I am the first to try new fashion," "Many people regard me as being a fashion leader" have been modified as "I watch movies on the first day of release in theaters," "Friends and Family ask me to recommend movies". Participants were asked to rate the items using 5-point Likert scales from "1-Strongly Disagree" to "5-Strongly Agree." For movie/TV induced tourism destinations, participants were asked to name up to three movies/TV dramas that have inspired their choice of travel destinations abroad and name up to three countries that they would like to visit after seeing them in movies/TV dramas. In section four, participants were provided a table with a list of countries (vertically) and perceived images (horizontally) and were asked to check their perceived images of those countries listed. The list of countries was adapted from the list of countries used in a previous study (Josiam et al., 2014) and added with other countries that frequently visited by Chinese outbound tourists (UNWTO, 2015).

3.2. Data collection

A pilot test was conducted before the final data collection and the survey instrument was revised based on feedback from the pilot testing. To ensure the inter-item reliability of measurement scales, Cronbach's alpha was calculated. All scales in the survey instrument were found to have alpha levels higher than 0.70, indicating that no further revisions were needed (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). The final revised survey instrument was then uploaded onto the survey platform of SoJump.com and distributed to randomly selected panel members who were 18 years of age or older.

3.3. Data analyses

SPSS (Version 23.0) was used to analyze the survey data. Descriptive statistics, such as frequencies and means, were used to summarize survey respondents' demographic characteristics. Independent sample t-test and ANOVA were used to compare the differences between and among groups. Correspondence analysis was conducted to explore the relationships between destinations and consumers' perceived images. Correspondence analysis was often used to analyze categorical or nominal data and simultaneously compare the relationship among objects and related attributes. A perpetual map was plotted to display the association of destinations and perceived images graphically in a joint space (Hair Jnr, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010).

4. Results and discussion

4.1. Sample profile

A total of 525 valid responses were collected by Sojump.com in November 2016. Nearly half of the sample was female and the other half male, making it a good reflection of the Chinese gender distribution (Countrymeters, 2016). About 50.9% of the participants were between 30 and 41 years old and nearly 37.5% of participants were between 18 and 29 years old. The majority of participants were employed on a full-time basis, having Bachelor's degrees and married. When asked about previous international travel experiences, 99.3% of the participants reported that they've travel to other countries. Among these, 434 (82.7%) participants had been to other Asian countries, 228 (43.4%) participants had traveled to Europe, 135 (25.7%) participants had

Table 1
Demographic characteristics of survey respondents.

Demographics	N	%	Demographics	N	%
Gender			Annual Income (US dollars)		
Male	254	48.4	< 3500	20	3.8
Female	271	51.6	3500 to 6999	51	9.7
Age			7000 to 10,499	115	21.9
18–29 years old	197	37.5	10,500 to 13,999	143	27.2
30–41 years old	267	50.9	14,000 to 17,499	97	18.5
42–53 years old	55	10.5	17,500 and above	99	18.9
54–66 years old	6	1.1	Marital Status		
Employment Status			Single	106	20.2
Full-time	473	90.1	Married	412	78.5
Part-time	5	1.0	Others (e.g., divorced)	7	1.3
Unemployed	24	4.6	Have Traveled to[a]		
Others (e.g., student)	23	4.4	Other Countries in Asia	434	82.7
Level of Education			Europe	228	43.4
High School/Below	18	3.4	Australia/New Zealand	135	25.7
Associate Degree	35	6.7	North America	100	19.0
Bachelor's Degree	406	77.3	Middle East	35	6.7
Master's	57	10.9	Africa	26	5.0
PhD	9	1.7	South America	13	2.5
			Never been to other countries	56	10.7

[a] Participants may have traveled to more than one continent.

traveled to Australia or New Zealand, and 100 (19%) participants had traveled to countries in North America. The participants' previous international travel destinations were consistent with reports from CNTA that Asian countries were the top outbound destinations for Chinese tourists (CNTA 2016; CNTA, 2008). Overall, the profile of the sample clearly indicates their interest and ability to travel internationally and hence contributes to the validity of the findings of this study (Table 1).

4.2. Movie/TV preferences, engagement, and travel motivation

Results of the survey indicated that Chinese tourists were overall highly engaged with movies and TV dramas (Table 2). On average, participants watched 3.6 movies per week either in theaters, on TV, or online, and spent 3.2 h per day watching TV dramas on TV or online. Specifically, 60.2% of participants reported that they watched at least three movies per week, and 48.4% of participants spent at least three hours per day watching TV dramas. In addition, most participants would actively seek information about new movies before release, recommend movies to friends or families, watch TV drama online, and watch TV drama on the day when they were premiered. Participants were most motivated to travel to the countries shown in movies or TV dramas (Table 2) because they wanted to know more about the countries' foods or fashion and/or to experience the lifestyles illustrated in movies or TV dramas. Results were consistent with previous studies that audience tended to visit the filming locations in order to re-enact the scenes from the movies or TV dramas (Kim, 2010; Roesch, 2009; Spears et al., 2013) (Table 3).

Table 2
Participants' movie/TV preferences ($N = 525$).

Item	Mean	SD
I seek information/gossip about new movies before release	3.91	0.755
Friends/family ask me to recommend movies	3.86	0.897
I am a movie "buff," or "super-fan"	3.56	0.986
I watch movies on the first day of release in theaters	3.09	1.052
I watch movies as soon as released in theaters (if not the first day)	3.78	0.850
I wait until the movie comes out online	3.69	0.813
I seek information/gossip about new TV dramas before release	3.76	0.799
Friends/family ask me to recommend TV dramas	3.75	0.969
I am a TV drama "buff," or "super-fan"	3.71	0.965
I watch TV drama on the day they premiere	3.83	0.877
I watch TV drama later on TV (replay time)	3.48	0.922
I watch TV drama online	3.87	0.786

Table 3

Participants' movie/TV-induced international travel motivations (N = 525).

Item	Mean	SD
Wanting to see the scenes shown in Movies/TV dramas	3.77	0.806
Wanting to experience the lifestyles shown in Movies/TV dramas	3.91	0.961
Expecting the similar stories happen in the life	3.54	1.036
Wanting to know more about other countries' food or fashion	4.02	0.766

Table 4

Top movie/TV dramas that have inspired participants' travel intention.

Name of the movie or TV drama	Filming year	Location	N	%
Lost in Thailand (Movie)	2012	Thailand	132	25.1
Lost in Hong Kong (Movie)	2015	Hong Kong	41	7.8
Dreams Link (TV Drama)	2007	France	28	5.3
Finding Mr. Right / Anchoring in Seattle (Movie)	2013	United states	26	5.0
Detective Chinatown (Movie)	2015	Thailand	24	4.6
Roman Holiday (Movie)	1953	Italy	23	4.4
My Love from the Star (TV Drama)	2013	Korea	22	4.2

4.3. Movie and TV induced tourism destinations

Open-ended questions were included to explore the impact of movie/TV on participants' travel motivations. Participants were asked to name up to three movies that had inspired them to travel to outbound destinations. Table 4 summarizes the most influential movies or TV dramas that have motivated participants to travel. According to their responses, "*Lost in Thailand*" was the most frequently mentioned movie with 132 (25.1%) participants wanting to travel to Thailand after watching the movie. "*Lost in Hong Kong*" ranked the second with 41 (7.8%) respondents wanted to travel to Hong Kong after watching the movie. The "Lost" series of movies have been successful in China not only because of the high gross box-office revenue, but also because of the impact on they have had on viewers' travel intentions. According to Untong, Ramos, Kaosa-Ard, and Rey-Maquieira (2015), the movie "*Lost in Thailand*" was one of the major reasons leading to a growth rate of 61.3% among Chinese tourists visiting Thailand from 2010 to 2013. In addition, China became the main country of origin market for the tourism industry in Thailand by the end of 2013 (Untong et al., 2015).

Apart from the names of movies, participants were asked to name up to three countries that they would like to visit after watching movies or TV dramas. As indicated in Table 5, Korea, Thailand, and the United States were the top three outbound destinations that Chinese tourists would like to travel after watching movies or TV dramas. Korea was the most popular destination among Chinese tourists due to a large number of different TV dramas mentioned by participants such as "*My Love from the Star*," "*Descendants of The Sun*," "*Dae Jang Geum*," "*Full House*," "*Autumn in My Heart*," "*Winter Sonata*," and the movie "*My Sassy Girl*." According to researchers, the popularity of Korean TV dramas has been growing since 1997 (Kim, Long, & Robinson, 2009). The popularity of Korean TV dramas together with Korean pop music was named as the *Hallyu* phenomenon (Kim et al., 2009). The *Hallyu* phenomenon

Table 5

Top countries Chinese tourists want to visit after watching movies/TV dramas.

Country	N	%
South Korea	165	31.4
Thailand	158	30.1
United States	148	28.2
France	117	22.3
Japan	103	19.6
United Kingdom	46	8.8
Italy	36	6.9

attracted international tourists from neighboring countries, including China, and has already had a great impact on the development of the tourism industry in Korea (Kim et al., 2009). Participants in our study further indicated the impact of Korean dramas on viewers' international travel intentions. Thailand is second on the list mostly because of two movies: "*Lost in Thailand*" and "*Detective Chinatown*." Compared with Korea that attracted tourists due to multiple TV dramas, Thailand was appealing to Chinese tourists mainly because of two movies. On the other hand, these two movies were both Chinese productions, while Korean TV dramas were produced by Korean organizations. In addition, Chinese tourists also wanted to visit the United States due to the impact of some American movies such as "*The Fast and the Furious*," "*Transformers*," and "*Sleepless in Seattle*" and some Chinese movies such as "*Finding Mr. Right/Anchoring in Seattle*" and "*Beijinger in New York*." By exploring the destination image of the United States among Chinese tourists, researchers have identified that some tourists identified "Hollywood movie stars" as iconic symbols (Li & Stepchenkova, 2012).

4.4. Chinese tourists' perceived images of international destinations

A film usually has the power to create, reinforce, or change a tourism destination's image (Beeton, 2005). In order to explore Chinese tourists' perceived images of different international destinations and these images' potential linkage with movies/TV dramas, participants were asked to indicate the attributes of each country as listed in Table 6. The majority of participants considered France as a "romantic" country (N = 329, 62.67%). By interviewing Chinese tourists in Paris, researchers have identified that tourists formed an image of a romantic atmosphere about Paris before their visits; this was mainly due to the impact of movies (Dung & Reijnders, 2013). The most frequently mentioned movies included "*Amélie*", "*Paris, I love you*," "*Before Sunset*", "*The Da Vinci Code*" and "*Moulin Rouge*" (Dung & Reijnders, 2013). These movies mostly were featured romantic comedies that illustrated the city life of Paris (Dung & Reijnders, 2013). Different from previous studies, in our research, Chinese participants who wanted to visit France after watching movies/TV cited the TV drama "*Dreams Link*" as the one that motivated their travel intentions. "*Dreams Link*" was a romance dramatic series produced by the Chinese in 2007 and featured beautiful sceneries in France. It is noteworthy that in a previous study conducted in India, respondents perceived Switzerland as the most romantic destination (Josiam et al., 2014). Switzerland was considered as a romantic destination mainly because of the impact of Bollywood movies (Josiam et al., 2014).

Previous research has found that shopping is one of the most important tourism activities for Chinese outbound tourists (Li, Lai, Harrill, Kline, & Wang, 2010; Xu & McGehee, 2012). In the current study, more than half of the participants perceived that Korea (56.38%), the United States (55.05%) and Japan (51.43%) were pronounced among destinations for shopping. The Korean fashion products featured in TV dramas have been so appealing for Chinese tourists that shopping for the unique fashion was one of their major tourism activities. For the United States, it is hard to tell the impact of movies and TV dramas on tourists' shopping activities. A study conducted by Xu and McGehee (2012) found that Chinese tourists love shopping in the United States because they can find products with similar quality and lower prices than in China. Tourists in different countries have different shopping preferences as in Josiam et al.'s (2014) study it was found that Indian travelers considered the United Kingdom, France, and Italy to be the best places for shopping.

For Thailand, participants' perceptions varied. In general, more than one third of the participants perceived Thailand as country with beautiful scenery (39.24%) and cultural and historic sites (38.67%). These perceptions may be explained by the most influential movie that motivated Chinese tourists to visit Thailand – "*Lost in Thailand*." The movie was filmed in Chiang Mai and featured many cultural activities (e.g., street markets) and historic sites (e.g., temples). For other

Table 6
Participants' perceptions toward different countries.

Countries	Beautiful natural scenery	Cultural & historic sites	Great shopping	Many things to do and see	Great recreation	Relaxing	Romantic	No opinion	Total attributes cited
France	254 (48.38%)	235 (44.76%)	193 (36.76%)	113 (21.52%)	154 (29.33%)	202 (38.48%)	**329 (62.67%)**	9 (1.71%)	1480
United States	233 (44.38%)	203 (38.67%)	**289 (55.05%)**	182 (34.67%)	224 (42.67%)	193 (36.76%)	111 (21.14%)	20 (3.81%)	1435
Japan	230 (43.81%)	211 (40.19%)	**270 (51.43%)**	137 (26.1%)	154 (29.33%)	171 (32.57%)	105 (20%)	43 (8.19%)	1278
Korea	195 (37.14%)	180 (34.29%)	**296 (56.38%)**	137 (26.1%)	160 (30.48%)	180 (34.29%)	127 (24.19%)	21 (4%)	1275
Italy	202 (38.48%)	234 (44.57%)	173 (32.95%)	148 (28.19%)	159 (30.29%)	167 (31.81%)	175 (33.33%)	23 (4.38%)	1258
United Kingdom	177 (33.71%)	259 (49.33%)	199 (37.9%)	155 (29.52%)	175 (33.33%)	162 (30.86%)	110 (20.95%)	20 (3.81%)	1237
Australia	**274 (52.19%)**	174 (33.14%)	149 (28.38%)	111 (21.14%)	142 (27.05%)	219 (41.71%)	140 (26.67%)	27 (5.14%)	1209
Thailand	206 (39.24%)	203 (38.67%)	155 (29.52%)	149 (28.38%)	163 (31.05%)	185 (35.24%)	125 (23.81%)	40 (7.62%)	1186
Taiwan	217 (41.33%)	186 (35.43%)	191 (36.38%)	129 (24.57%)	158 (30.1%)	195 (37.14%)	86 (16.38%)	47 (8.95%)	1162
Switzerland	226 (43.05%)	170 (32.38%)	158 (30.1%)	108 (20.57%)	136 (25.9%)	200 (38.1%)	124 (23.62%)	24 (4.57%)	1122
Greece	204 (38.86%)	**266 (50.67%)**	97 (18.48%)	121 (23.05%)	133 (25.33%)	147 (28%)	139 (26.48%)	34 (6.48%)	1107
Singapore	194 (36.95%)	144 (27.43%)	201 (38.29%)	126 (24%)	137 (26.1%)	173 (32.95%)	87 (16.57%)	45 (8.57%)	1062
Holland	231 (44%)	170 (32.38%)	106 (20.19%)	116 (22.1%)	144 (27.43%)	179 (34.1%)	85 (16.19%)	41 (7.81%)	1031
Spain	166 (31.62%)	162 (30.86%)	101 (19.24%)	173 (32.95%)	155 (29.52%)	155 (29.52%)	103 (19.62%)	68 (12.95%)	1015
Germany	162 (30.86%)	241 (45.9%)	130 (24.76%)	144 (27.43%)	118 (22.48%)	159 (30.29%)	55 (10.48%)	38 (7.24%)	1009
Portugal	156 (29.71%)	155 (29.52%)	86 (16.38%)	137 (26.1%)	123 (23.43%)	165 (31.43%)	77 (14.67%)	100 (19.05%)	899
India	112 (21.33%)	197 (37.52%)	84 (16%)	139 (26.48%)	111 (21.14%)	108 (20.57%)	75 (14.29%)	123 (23.43%)	826

Bold indicates attributes cited by more than 50% of participants.

countries, participants associated Australia with its beautiful natural scenery (52.19%) and Greece (50.67%) with its cultural and historical sites (Fig. 1).

The total numbers of attributes cited by participants for each country were calculated. France, the United States, Japan, Korea and Italy were the top five countries cited with the most attributes. These five countries were also listed as the top countries that Chinese tourists wanted to visit after watching movies or TV dramas (Table 5). In regards to the countries that were perceived as "No Image," India, Portugal, and Spain were three countries participants could not relate to with any attributes (Fig. 2). These figures illustrated that our findings where destinations frequently seen in movies/TV shows do have a strong impact on tourism intentions as well as perceptions. It is noteworthy that India is a neighbor of China – yet, it is nowhere near "Top of Mind" for outbound Chinese tourists. Interestingly, Spain is consistently among the top 5 countries visited by international tourists – yet, Chinese tourists in our study had no mental image of Spain as a destination with interesting activities/attributes for tourism.

Correspondence analysis was further conducted to explore the relationships among different international destinations and Chinese tourists' perceived images of these destinations. Results indicated that Chinese tourists' perceived images of different countries were significantly different ($\chi^2 = 1385.41$, p < 0.001). The relationship among international destinations (i.e., country) and perceived images were plotted in the perceptual map (Fig. 3). The perceived images dots located close to the country dots explained the outstanding perceived images of the country (Hair Jnr et al., 2010). For example, France is largely characterized by the image of "Romantic," while the United States and Korea were perceived as great places for "Shopping." The perceptual map serves as a tool to help identify the most important images of the movie/TV that induced travel to international destinations among Chinese tourists. Thailand, as the number two movie/TV drama induced international destination, was closely associated to the perceived image of "Beautiful Natural Scenery," "Relax," "Cultural & Historic Sites" and "Many Things to Do and See." In sum, these three countries are appealing to Chinese consumers with no one country standing out as the "one" most prevalent movie/TV drama induced destination. All of them have other important images that were well perceived by Chinese tourists. These multiple perceived images along with the impact of movie have made these countries ideal international travel destinations to Chinese tourists. On the other hand, countries such as India, Portugal, and Spain, which were characterized mostly as "No Image", do not have any movies/TV dramas that inspired Chinese tourists to visit these countries.

5. Conclusions and implications

Findings of this study suggested that a large segment of the Chinese population were highly involved with international travel and were passionate about movies and/or TV dramas. A strong level of Chinese consumers' engagement with movies and TV dramas did have a significant impact on their international travel motivations. The foods and fashion featured in movies and/or TV dramas and the lifestyles of people in the destinations filmed were attractive to movie/TV viewers and had motivated them to travel to the destinations featured in the movies/TV dramas. "*Lost in Thailand*" was on top of the list and has motivated many Chinese tourists to visit Thailand. In addition, South Korea was the country that most Chinese wanted to visit, due to a large number of popular TV dramas. As for destination image, the top five countries in terms of number of attributes cited by Chinese tourists are mostly consistent with the top countries that Chinese tourists wanted to visit after watching movies or TV dramas. Specially, France was perceived as a romantic destination, Korea, the United States and Japan were considered as best places for shopping, while Thailand was known for the beautiful natural scenery and cultural and historic sites. Similarly, countries most often cited as having "No Image" were those that Chinese
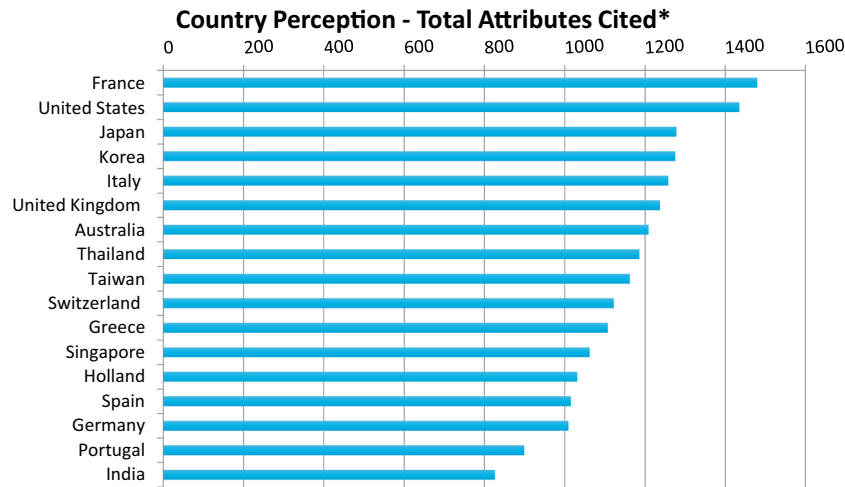
Country Perception - Total Attributes Cited*

Fig. 1. Total attributes cited by country. *Refers to the total number of attributes cited for each country by participants.

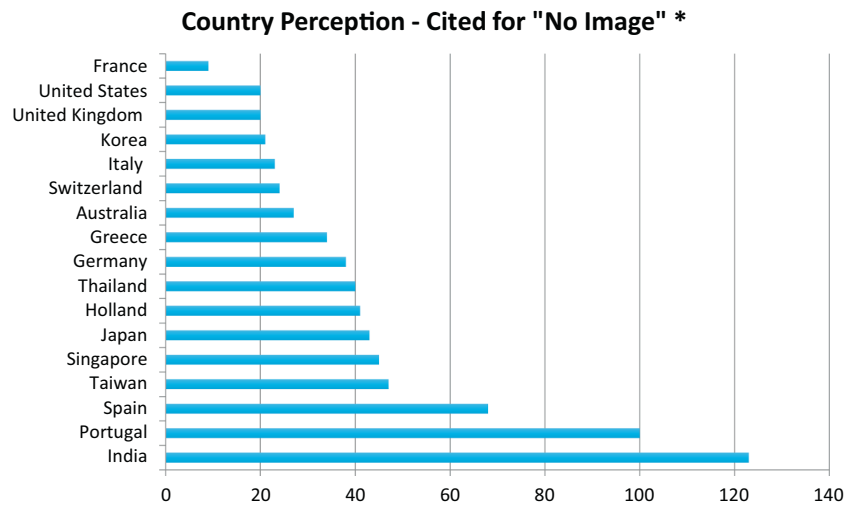## Country Perception - Cited for "No Image" *

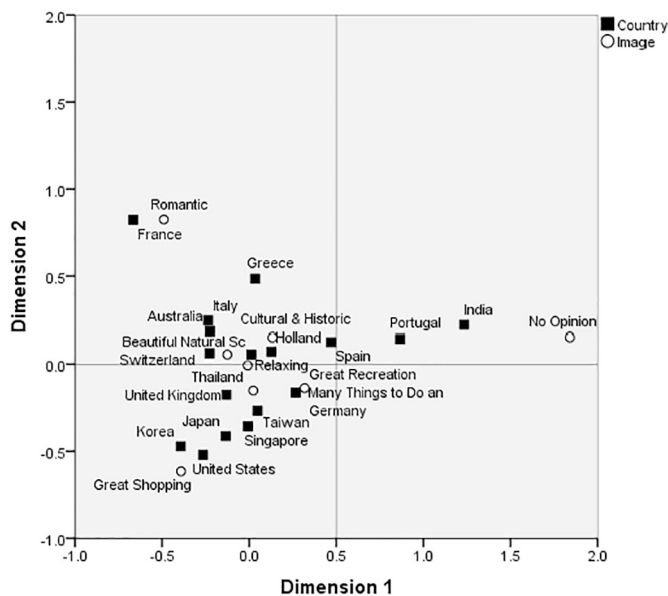**Fig. 2.** Countries cited for "No Image". *Refers to the number of participants who cited this country as "No Image".

Fig. 3. Perceptual map of Chinese viewers' perceived images of international destinations.

respondents could *not* recall having seen in movies or TV shows.

5.1. Theoretical implications

This study being among the first to be conducted in China, filled the gap in literature by exploring the impact of movies and TV dramas on Chinese tourists' choice of international travel destinations. Film-induced tourism studies were widely conducted in the United States, Europe, Australia, India, Korea, and Taiwan (Cho & Agrusa, 2007; Connell, 2012; Hudson et al., 2011; Josiam et al., 2014; Josiam et al., 2015; Kim & Wang, 2012; Spears et al., 2013). However, for the very few studies conducted in China, most of them focused on domestic film locations. In addition, this study identified the movies/TV dramas that had greatest impact on Chinese viewers' intention to travel to the screened international destinations. Future studies may further use scales to quantify the impact of each movie/TV drama that induced the most intentions. Compared with a previous study which explored Indian Bollywood movie viewers' motivations to travel to European destinations, this study did not find a strong link between the countries featured in popular movies/TV dramas and Chinese viewers' perceived images of the international destination featured in these popular movies/TV dramas. Future studies may also examine whether there's a link between screened destinations and viewers' perceived images of these destinations in other countries.

5.2. Implications for national and local destination management/marketing organizations (DMOs)

This research has provided several implications for the tourism industry. Tourism destination managers/marketers are suggested to collaborate closely with the movie and TV drama industry in order to motivate Chinese tourists to travel to their destinations. It was also recommended that DMOs establish marketing plans for movie/TV drama induced tourism destinations before, during and after the production of movies/TV dramas (Kim & Kim, 2018; Spears et al., 2013). As indicated in Croy's (2010) study that a strong link was found between *"the Lord of the Rings"* and the international tourism image of New Zealand. DMOs may establish plans to increase viewers' awareness and familiarity of the locations featured in movies/TV dramas (Croy, 2010) or even to transfer a destination from being the screened location of films to the place that is seen by viewers on the screen (Buchmann, Moore, & Fisher, 2010). Such efforts are believed to bring economic developments and increase visitors' awareness toward screened destinations in the global context (Connell, 2012). Specifically, marketing professionals can include local foods, fashion and lifestyle in related scenes into the movies and TV shows filmed in their countries to promote their destination to Chinese tourists. DMOs need to aggressively target movie/TV show producers and directors and inform and incentivize them to film in their locations featuring local attractions, history, environment, culture, fashions, food and drink. Research has shown that tourists' identification, familiarity and engagement toward a destination can be further enhanced after being exposed to destination-related information repeatedly (Josiam et al., 2014; Spears, Dutta, Pookulangara, & Kinley, 2013). Thus, destination marketers should effectively use these sources to expose potential travelers with target information.

5.3. Implications for the hospitality, tourism and movie/TV industries

In this study we identified that Korea and Thailand are the top two countries that Chinese consumers wanted to travel after watching movies/TV dramas. However, Thailand was appealing to Chinese tourists mainly because of one movie "Lost in Thailand" while Korea was attractive due to a large number of TV dramas over several years if not decades. By understanding the relationship between movie/TV dramas and viewers' travel intentions, local hotels, restaurants and tourist attractions may use findings of this research to better promote the destination and arrange trip activities for Chinese tourists. For example, with the impact of the specific movie "*Lost in Thailand,*" travel agencies may organize trips focusing on the sceneries and historic sites featured in the movie and include the cultural activities such as visiting temples. In addition, travel agencies may include some "free" time for tourists to experience the destination on their own (St-James et al., 2018) because tourists may want to experience the lifestyle that had shown in the movie/TV drama from a different perspective.

Travel agencies could collaborate with movie theaters and customize their travel package promotions to be shown as advertisements with specific movies that feature the promoted destinations and activities. Movie and TV show producers could solicit funds from DMOs and local hotels, restaurants and attractions for "Product Placement" in their movies. Moreover, with the impact of movies, destination marketers may collaborate with filmmakers and embedded natural and historic snapshots into big-budget movies in order to attract more tourists from the target market. Joint marketing between the tourism industry and TV/Movie industry may turn out to be win-win cooperation.

5.4. Limitations and future studies

There are several limitations in this study. Firstly, the sample of the survey was recruited from an online survey panel company. Therefore, results of this study may not be generalized to the Chinese population who do not have access to computers or the Internet. Secondly, this study employed a self-reported survey instrument that may have been impacted by social desirability bias. Future studies may use different research methods to explore the impact of movies or TV dramas on tourists' perceptions of international travel destinations. For example, individual interviews or focus group studies may help researchers identify the in-depth perceptions of international destinations among movie/TV viewers. Researcher may also conduct experimental design studies to identify the impact of movie/TV dramas on viewers' motivations to travel to screened locations. This study was only conducted in China; future studies could utilize a replicated or similar research methods and study outbound international tourists in other countries.

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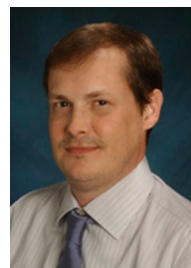
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