

# VISITORS' VIEWS OF CHINA WEST FILM STUDIO'S TOURIST BUSINESS BASED ON THEIR MOVIE-SOCIAL LIFESTYLE

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**Abstract:** *Film Theme Parks, which combine activities of the film industry with those of the tourism industry, appear to be a thriving new form of tourism in China. Benefiting from the popularity of Chinese movies as well as the growth of tourist activities, the film theme park business is booming, generating significant revenue for China's tourism sector. As it keeps growing, a study on its success and development seem appropriate and may prove helpful to film theme park managers. It may also contribute to the sustainability of this activity as a viable part of tourism in China. With an aim to understand the business factors of film theme parks, this research, a case study, focuses on one specific film theme park, the China West Film Studio in the Ningxia Province, to investigate the relationships between tourists' movie-social lifestyle with regard to business factors. This study adopts a visitors' point of view and uses the factor analysis to categorize the visitors' movie-social lifestyle characteristics. The analysis of the data, obtained through questionnaires, reveal that visitors can be grouped in six clusters, each one showing different aspects of their views on the various business factors offered by China West Film Studio. While the study indicates that studio's business factors on service and movie themes meet with relative success, it also suggests that the studio should pay more attention on the improvement of its facilities, publicity, activities, and prices.*

**Keywords:** *Film Theme Park; Movie-Social Lifestyle; Visitors' Point of View; Business Factors*

## 1. Introduction

Films and television can have an impact on tourists' decision making upon their choices of travel and destination (Grihault, 2003). The power of films and television in promoting destinations and stimulating tourism demand is an international phenomenon (Hudson and Ritchie, 2006). Films make audiences all over the world fall in love with them and attempt to travel to where the films were made, thus enabling film locations to become tourist destinations. Guo and Wang (2008) stated that, both at home and abroad, any film studio involved in the whole process of making movies and anything related to films and television becomes an attraction more and more popular in the tourism industry. They mentioned that only shooting films in a film studio may turn in a loss as once the movie is shown in cinema theatres, the studio will be empty and underused. Therefore, film studios strive to enter the tourist business as film theme parks. Throughout China, over hundreds of TV-Movie towns have been built and turned into theme parks, which carry a certain brand name that appeals to potential tourists (Ting, 2008). One of these is China

West film Studio (CWFS) located in the Ningxia province. This is one of the up-and-coming film theme parks (China West Film Studio, 2011). It is the focus of this case study which will explore its development.

As an inevitable offspring of the film industry development, film theme parks have gradually sprouted and become a kind of special tourist attractions as the film tourism industry developed (Guo and Wang, 2008). The development of film theme parks into scenic spots started in Beijing in 1984 when China Communication and Television (CCTV) turned one of the country's most famous Chinese novels "A Dream of Red Mansions" into a TV series. This TV drama became the most popular television series of its time (A Dream of Red Mansions, CCTV 2008), mostly because it was one of the earliest popular TV series in China. Compared with the same phenomenon in overseas market, the China's film tourism industry started late. For this reason, its development stage is relatively behind its predecessors and the profitability from this industry low as it is still in its infancy.

Film theme parks in China are different from many famous American film theme parks (Shao and Yang, 2010). According to them, most of China's film theme parks can be called 'video production bases,' as their main task is film and TV production services. On the contrary, American film theme parks are seen

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