

How Observational Entertainment Drives Tourism: Place Placement and Parasocial Interaction

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Abstract

This study examined the effectiveness of place exposure in observational entertainment programs (OEPs) as a form of product placement (PPL) and its impact on viewers' intentions to visit depicted locations. An experimental study found that on-set placement had a greater influence on visit intentions than creative placement, particularly among viewers with high parasocial interaction with characters. The findings suggest that OEPs can enhance immersion and indirectly promote tourism to lesser-known destinations, providing valuable insights for the tourism industry to leverage screen content in attracting visitors.

Keywords: *Observational Entertainment Programs, Place Placement, Parasocial Interaction, Visit Intention*

INTRODUCTION

In the past two years, the COVID-19 pandemic has limited both domestic and international travel, causing many to turn to travel programs to experience distant destinations. This has resulted in an increase in the number of TV programs featuring various domestic locations (Cho et al., 2021). Traditionally, South Koreans (hereafter, Koreans) with a latent desire to travel yet hesitant to travel abroad due to political issues in various countries worldwide, have become noteworthy for their preference for relatively safe domestic tourist destinations. Over time, the demand for travel has been consistently increasing, not only for existing tourist destinations but also for lesser-known domestic islands or marine tourist destinations (Kim, 2022; Ha, 2021).

Despite their reservations, Koreans are deeply interested in visiting foreign destinations showcased in popular entertainment programs. According to data from the travel platform Kayak, 47% of viewers book trips while watching a travel show, demonstrating the media's powerful influence on Korean travel choices. In fact, 47% of viewers reported booking a trip while watching a travel show (Kim, 2018).

As over-the-top (OTT) media services continue to expand, users have the freedom to access numerous movies and dramas on demand through subscription promises (Choi & Ji2023). This content can be streamed on multiple platforms, including smartphones, TVs, tablet PCs, and laptops. The prevalence of OTT platforms has stimulated the development of screen tourism, a new form of tourism (Linden, 2015). As evidence of its popularity, the Korean programme 'Single's Inferno' was ranked 5th in the world TV show category on Netflix, making it the first Korean entertainment show to achieve this status (Lee, 2023). The programme's setting on the remote and relatively unknown island of Saseung Bong sparked a significant increase in viewers' interest, ultimately spurring a desire for tourism (Kim, 2022).

'From the New World', which premiered on Netflix in November 2021, was also filmed on an island named Oe, located in Geoje City in Gyeongsangnam Province. Consequently, the number of tourists visiting Oe increased compared to the previous year (Choi, 2022). Thereafter, an attempt was made to investigate the relationship between the phenomenon of increased visit intention due to entertainment program exposure from the perspective of promoting tourism in specific destinations, such as remote and less-explored countryside areas. Ha (2020) investigated strategies to enhance the restorative benefits of island tourism in the post-COVID- 19 era with a focus on the program 'Three Meals a Day', which was broadcasted as a series on tvN. According to this study, island tourism's biggest drawback, poor accessibility, can surprisingly offer a

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therapeutic escape for tourists seeking a reprieve from the pressures of the intricate and multifaceted human connections that make up today's hyperconnected society.

The places featured in these entertainment programs are uniquely reimagined through YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, and other social media platforms, leading to the creation of new content influenced by available information and trends that has significant social impact and influence. (Kim, 2014).

Screen tourism through entertainment programs has become as influential as screen tourism through dramas and movies. However, to date, research on screen tourism has primarily focused on tourist experience and motivation at movie locations (Kim, 2017; Lee, 2022; Zheng, & Chang, 2016); the promotional effects of video media (e.g. movies and dramas) (Kang & Chang, 2021); and storytelling of tourist destinations through content (Choi, 2018; Park & Lee, 2017). Some studies have aimed to revitalize tourist locations using OEPs. However, research in this field is lacking. Accordingly, since OTT services are widespread globally, and video experiences contribute to the development of diverse tourist destinations, it is essential to examine screen tourism across various media forms beyond its traditional association with movies or TV dramas.

Thus, as an extension of screen tourism, this study investigates the effectiveness of location (place) exposure through a unique broadcast format called observational entertainment programmes (OEP) rather than movies or dramas by approaching it from the perspective of product placement (PPL) and indirect advertising effects according to location (place). In addition, we seek to determine whether the way the place is exposed and viewers' interactions with the characters appearing in the programme actually affect their visit intention. In sum, this study's primary objective is to find ways to utilise screen tourism through various media methods and present practical directions for promoting actual destinations through methods that can most effectively induce tourists' visit intention to places viewers are exposed to in actual broadcasts.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Observational Entertainment Programs

Korean entertainment programs began in the late 2000s, and their definition has expanded to encompass various categories of entertainment, including shows, entertainment programs, and comedies. These formats have undergone further development, such as travel, mukbang (eating show) blind dating, and childcare (Seo et al., 2018). Travel entertainment programs now extend beyond providing basic information on destinations, presenting characters' daily lives with an 'infotainment' nature that showcases their workplaces, cuisine, and the history and style of the locales while also offering a comprehensive view of the featured places (Kim & Yang, 2022; An & Han, 2018).

As these entertainment programs evolved into an intricate broadcasting format known as observational entertainment, the places featured or appearing in the programs piqued viewers' curiosity and shaped a favorable image of the locations (Joe, 2021). Multiple studies have confirmed that this tendency encourages more tourists (Seo et al., 2018). Unlike other types of entertainment, observational entertainment is not scripted, allowing characters to create natural situations in a given format. It also has the unique characteristic of allowing viewers to form a consensus more quickly than other genres of entertainment programs (Kim & Kim, 2020). This means that modern viewers prefer to minimise the risks associated with dedicating their limited time and attentional resources to television dramas that require extensive time commitment and high levels of concentration and instead opt for entertainment programs that they can watch quickly and that have easy-to-follow storylines. This trend is responsible for the growing popularity of these shows (Nam, 2018). In addition, according to Kim and Yang (2021), observational entertainment is becoming increasingly popular because of travel restrictions caused by the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). Viewers seek vicarious pleasure in travel, and characteristics of observational entertainment are evident in the current media environment, making it even more popular.

Indeed, Lee (2021) confirmed that visitors who visit filming locations after watching travel entertainment programs are inclined to spend approximately 3.1%–12% more on travel-related expenses than regular tourists. A study conducted by Park and Kang (2013) on the filming locations of '2 Days & 1 Night' confirmed that the programs led to an average increase of approximately 7.6%–8% in the number of visitors to the area, with the

duration ranging from a minimum of two to a maximum of six months. Therefore, regions that aim to boost tourist numbers can sustain growth by showcasing their local destinations on screens. This strategy can significantly impact efforts to revitalise the economy rather than attracting general tourists.

Place Placement from a PPL Perspective

Product placement (PPL), the most prominent form of indirect advertising, involves strategically placing products in various media to create a positive effect on the viewer without their awareness of commercial intent and is a paid advertisement intended to induce purchases (Hornick, 2019; Balasubramanian, 1994; Karrh, 1998).

Existing studies on the PPL effect have primarily focused on the extent to which viewers pay attention to or remember products and brands positioned in different media formats, thus scrutinising the impact of advertising on product and brand recognition and recall (Davtyan et al., 2016; Karrh et al., 2003; Vollmers & Mizerski, 1994). Since then, PPL has been extensively studied with a specific focus on product presentation. Numerous researchers have defined the presentation of products and brands in various ways and continue to explore their effects in various fields (Lee, 2017; Oh & Heo, 2011; Lee & Faber, 2007; Shapiro et al., 1997; Zhao, 2013).

Gupta and Lord (1998) classified PPL according to the level of prominence and mode of presentation, which were subcategorised into two and three categories of prominent and subtle and audio-visual, audio-only, and visual-only, respectively. Russell (1998) classified PPL into three dimensions based on the information format: script, screen, and plot. PPL can also be divided into on-set placement and creative placement, depending on whether the product is intentionally or accidentally exposed. In the case of outdoor or TV advertisements, it has been proven effective in eliciting a viewer's purchase intention to cleverly insert a product brand (Yu & Kim, 2005). In terms of the difference in exposure time and advertising effect dependent on on-set and creative placement, the on-set placement, where the PPL is directly presented or used by a character with a one-time exposure time of 9–12 s has much strong brand recognition power compared to creative placement, where the PPL is presented merely as a background. (Park & Kim, 2015).

Examining specific discussions related to screen tourism from this PPL perspective, various studies have confirmed that the image of areas exposed to video media has a positive effect, leading to more tourist visits. (Jung, 2009; Sohn & Lee, 2001). Jeongdongjin, a setting for Korean drama 'Hourglass' in the mid-1990s, Nami Island, a background place featured in 'Winter Sonata', and Seopjikoji on Jeju Island, depicted in the drama 'All In', which aired in 2003, are all places exposed in television dramas that have proven the effectiveness of indirect advertising through screens by gaining popularity both domestically and internationally (Oh & Heo, 2011). Indeed, owing to their exposure on successful dramas, these locations have become significant tourist destinations, primarily for foreign visitors. Drama scenery, filming locations, and backgrounds provide viewers with positive perceptions, thus influencing the behaviour and attitudes of tourists when deciding on a destination, both directly and indirectly (Jung, 2009; Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; Selby & Morgan, 1996). In sum, prior research has confirmed that areas featuring video media have greater appeal to tourists because of their positive impact on their image. This association between video media, such as drama, movies, and tourism, has been discussed in detail in the academic literature.

As aforementioned, viewers become more interested in places or tourist destinations exposed to video media, such as TV dramas. Non-conscious communication and indirect marketing activities through video media augment the attractiveness of these destinations, a phenomenon known as 'destination enhancement'. Ultimately, this serves as a catalyst for viewers' decision-making process when choosing a tourism destination (Bolan & Williams, 2008). In other words, products or brands displayed in movies or television shows can influence viewers' product purchase intention. Likewise, exposure to filming locations through the media can motivate potential travellers to visit those locations, and this approach has been proven to be highly effective in encouraging people to travel (Riley et al., 1998; Sangpikul, 2018; Tooke & Baker, 1996).

Parasocial Interaction

Parasocial interaction refers to fictional relationships that individuals develop with media characters, as

demonstrated in Horton and Wohl's (1956) experiment on psychotic patients reading magazines and newspapers. The concept suggests that television viewers can form close 'virtual relationships' akin to friendships with characters (Yang, 2011). According to Horton and Wohl's (1956) findings, one of the fundamental aspects contributing to the viewing experience of television is the viewer's interaction with the characters appearing on the screen, which they identified as 'parasocial interaction'. Their study highlights the significance of developing realistic and relatable portrayals of characters in the media to enhance audience engagement.

Just as face-to-face communication on a daily basis promotes intimacy and social relationships with others through natural interactions, such as conversations and dialogue, viewers also interact and form a pseudo-relationship with media characters and TV media. This pseudo-relationship may resemble a genuine human relationship and lead to forming a virtual psychological relationship (Gi, 2005; Horton & Wohl, 1956; Tian & Yoo, 2015). Nordlund (1978) argues that viewers can perceive geographically distant media characters as interpersonal beings with whom they can psychologically identify.

Previous studies have investigated the correlation between parasocial interactions and TV viewing variables. Levy (1979) found a positive relationship between higher levels of parasocial interaction between newscasters and viewers and increased TV news viewing. Similarly, the parasocial interaction relationship between TV characters and viewers increases as viewers are exposed to TV for longer periods or they watch more episodes (Jeon, 2013). Thus, continuous exposure to characters increases the likelihood of parasocial interactions. This not only increases viewers' tendency to form intimate connections with characters as media usage increases but also suggests that more diverse psychological relationships exist between viewers and characters than before (Lee & Lee, 2022). In addition, many studies of parasocial interactions have concentrated on characters from diverse programme genres. One suggestion is that subsequent attitude formation can be influenced by both the duration of exposure and by the level of similarity and immersion in the message's target from an interpersonal communication perspective (Kwon et al., 2022; Lee, 2021; Seo et al., 2018; Sood & Rogers, 2000).

Visit Intention

Consumers hold personal beliefs about products, brands, and services, and their subsequent attitudes influence behavioural intentions, which can shape interest in a product, as well as positive or negative experiences. Thus, personal beliefs are a critical factor in determining consumer behaviour (Assael, 2003; Peter & Olson, 1990). In other words, consumers express a 'purchase intention' when desiring to buy a specific product, indicating a future action (Chen & Tsai, 2007), which can be applied to the purchase of general products or to services, as well as tourism-related offerings.

In the field of tourism, consumer intention is a crucial factor dictating individuals' decisions about whether to visit a travel destination, as demonstrated by the desire to visit destinations that they have been to in the past or would like to experience in the future. Word-of-mouth intention, in which consumers share positive aspects of their experiences with others, is a commonly used measure for assessing this intention (Chen & Tsai, 2007). Studies measuring the behavioral intention of tourism consumers have mainly focused on the impact of positive or negative images generated by prior images of the destination or information related to the destination as clues for the evaluation of the destination, tourism products, and tourism quality (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Kim & Kim, 2020). Other studies have focused on the experience of the tourist destination or tourism itself and the subsequent changes in visitors' psychological attitudes (Sangpikul, 2018; Martin & Bosque, 2008).

Studies based on the model of tourist destination choice indicate that visitors' intentions to visit a specific tourist destination result in their cognitive and emotional evaluation of the destination, which is reflected in their overall tourist experience. These evaluations can influence potential tourists' attitudes (Woodside & Lysonski, 1989). In addition, various antecedent variables have been widely studied, such as the impact of tourists' perceptions of the destination image (Whang et al., 2016), the appeal of tourist attractions (Liu & Pratt, 2019), the relationship between feedback from past visitors on their visit intention and its impact on potential tourists' positive or negative behavioral intentions (Adam, 2021; Chen & Chen, 2007), and unfavourable tendencies toward a specific destination perceived by potential tourists and other visitors (Wong & Yeh, 2009). Therefore, visit intention can be considered a crucial factor in the tourism industry, enabling both current and

prospective tourists to anticipate their consumption behaviour when making behavioral decisions, such as selecting a tourist destination.

HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Place Placement and Visit Intention

Generally, when viewers see the brand or logo of a particular item in multiple scenes featured in a TV drama, they interpret the exposed product in corresponding contexts based on the luxuriousness or simplicity of the scene (D'Astous & Chartier, 2000). In other words, when brands feature luxurious scenes, the products themselves are perceived as luxurious, whereas products showcased in simple scenes represent simple brands. Therefore, if a brand and its product are associated with a particular scene on the screen, recalling that scene may increase awareness of the featured product (Park & Kim, 2015). This indicates that the impact of PPL may fluctuate based on its positioning in a film or television show and can be accounted for by utilising the principle of the context effect. Additionally, D'Astous and Chartier (2000) demonstrated that the greater the contextualisation of PPL in a given scenario, the more favourable the outcomes for product placement. Studies investigating placement type indicate that featuring a product or brand significantly improves brand recall (e.g Chan, 2020; Gupta & Lord, 1998; Nam & Lee, 2020; Park & Yang, 2013; Van Der Westhuizen & Mulder, 2019; Yi & Choi, 2004). Yi and Choi (2004) discovered that on-set placement led to greater brand recall than creative placement and resulted in more positive attitudes towards the presented product. Yu and Kim (2011) analysed indirect advertising depicted in commercials and discovered that attitudes towards brands showcased through on-set placement were more favourable than those displayed through creative placement. If we apply this to an OEP, in the case of a format programme featuring unscripted content, the story unfolds based on the daily events of the characters without a predetermined script, resulting in a story that develops solely around what the character does and encounters each day. This approach can be perceived as a mechanism that enables viewers to become more immersed in a programme (Kim and Kim, 2020). Therefore, when viewing a place that appears on the screen as a product, an on-set placement in which the place is naturally mentioned during a character's conversation or the place's name is mentioned in a subtitle, is more effective than a creative placement in recalling and creating a positive image. Hence, it can be inferred that utilising a natural-on-set arrangement is more beneficial for inducing a visit intention. As a result, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H1. An on-set placement of a place will have a greater impact on visit intention than a creative placement of a place.

Moderating Role of Parasocial Interaction

Observation entertainment programs utilise techniques that emphasise the characteristics and reality of existing documentation, thereby expanding viewers' indirect experiences (Ham, 2020). Generally, the casts of such programs consist of famous celebrities whose everyday culture is exposed without filtering. By revealing their overall lifestyle, viewers gain insights into their food, clothing, and shelter selections, resulting in a stronger emotional connection (Kim & Yang, 2022). However, the perceived similarity between viewers and celebrities does not evoke admiration for their everyday appearances. Instead, images projected between the viewer's identified self and others form a consensus (Ham, 2020), enabling viewers to indirectly experience the everyday lives and private moments of the characters, particularly celebrities, and revealing the real lives of human beings other than celebrities. Consequently, viewers feel a somewhat personal connection with the characters through observation, which allows them to establish an interactive connection. This personal interaction (parasocial interaction) makes viewer more immersed than other entertainment programs due to the desire to identify (wishful identification) with the characters, which ultimately leads to increased favourability for everything related to their lives, such as food, accommodations, and the places where the stories are set (Kwon et al., 2020). Viewers can have indirect experiences through parasocial interactions with various characters while watching television. These experiences are characterised by high levels of involvement, active discovery of places, and active discovery without actual exposure to adventure or commercialism on television. This, in turn, promotes the development of friendly images (Kim et al., 2022; Lee & Lee. 2020; Seo et al., 2018).

In this context, rather than being solely influenced by the amount or duration of exposure, the quality of specific relationships and interactions that viewers establish with media characters determines the degree of parasocial interaction (Giles, 2002; Rubin et al., 1985). Thus, it is apparent that future actions, including visit intention, vary depending on the placement type and the level of parasocial interaction with the characters presented in OEPs. Based on this understanding, the following hypothesis was derived:

H2. The effect of place placement on visit intention will differ depending on the level of parasocial interaction (high vs. low).

METHODOLOGY

Experimental Design and Procedures

In this study, a segment of a televised OEP was edited and produced to examine how place placement, background setting, and the level of parasocial interaction with characters affect viewers' visit intentions. To control for extraneous variables, in addition to the independent variables appropriate for the study purpose, the researcher did not generate virtual programs or scenarios directly (Xu & Lee, 2014) and actual broadcast programs were used. In addition, memory level was considered to prevent the recency effect of participants, which could have influenced the results (Richardson, 1996). Therefore, the experiment's stimuli were selected from the programme list Gallup's 'Most popular TV programs in Korea' (www.gallup.co.kr). The top three top shows were 'I Live Alone', 'Unexpected Business 2', and 'My Little Old Boy.' Before commencing the video editing process, we contacted each broadcasting company to obtain the necessary procedures to adhere to copyright laws during experimental video production and confirmed that no production issues occurred when each broadcasting company freely broadcasted the experimental video to the public. However, capturing the screen and presenting it directly in the research content was avoided in this study because of potential issues involving the characters' portrait rights.

This study utilised a within-subjects design to examine the impact of two factors: place placement (on-set vs. creative placement) and parasocial interaction (high vs. low). Parasocial interactions were divided into two groups based on the median. Before conducting the experiment, a preliminary survey was conducted with 30 employees of a small-to medium- sized company located in Busan to verify the validity of the video stimuli. Participants in this trial study watched videos of on-set t and creative placement and were asked whether they could recognise the differences in each experimental stimulus. The results showed that on-set placement ($N = 16$, $M = 4.821$) and creative placement ($N = 14$, $M = 4.018$) exhibited statistically significant differences ($t = 4.923$, $p < .05$), confirming that the places featured in the OEP were successfully manipulated.

Later, the main study was conducted on adult men and women aged 20 and above residing in Gyeongsangnam Province including Busan. The study included 195 participants and lasted approximately four weeks, beginning on August 4, 2023. First, participants for the experiment were recruited through Internet, and the study was conducted every Friday from 11:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. in the same classroom to minimise the effect of exogenous variables. The study lasted for approximately 30 min. Before commencing the experiment, a brief orientation was provided for approximately five min. Two videos were edited so that they were approximately three minutes each. Given that this experiment followed a within-group design, to prevent an experimental effect in which viewing the first video may impact the second video, participants viewed the video edited in the initial on-set-place placement, completed a questionnaire, and took a 10-min break. Generally speaking, the duration of short-term memory for advertisements and brief messages is approximately 15–18s. In other words, short-term memory information disappears if it is not transferred to one's long-term memory. Newly introduced information frequently erases the information stored in short-term memory. When a small amount of information is presented, it tends to be stored for longer periods. However, when the amount of information increases, the information in the middle of the list is more likely to disappear from memory owing to the recency effect, which can make recall challenging (Kim, 2000). Thus, the experiment was conducted with a 10-min interval between the first and second videos. Participants who viewed the second video completed the questionnaire and were provided with Starbucks coupons as a gesture of appreciation for their participation.

Operational Definition and Measurement of Variables

Placement, which was the independent variable in this study, was modified and supplemented to suit this study based on Russel (1998) and Babin and Cader (1996). On-set placement is defined as ‘a place or location mentioned by a character or in subtitles’, while creative placement involves ‘the natural exposure of a location alongside the character's movement, establishing a connection and integrating within the programme’. Next, following Horton and Wohl (1956), parasocial interaction is defined as ‘the degree to which viewers perceive and maintain a familiar relationship with distant media characters’. Three items were extracted from these studies, and modified and supplemented for this study. Lastly, visit intention is defined as ‘an emotional evaluation of a particular destination or tourist destinations based on trust in that location’. Three items based on Assael (2004) were revised and supplemented for this study.

RESULTS

Sample Characteristics

Initially, 101 (54.59%) male and 84 (45.41%) females participated in the survey, indicating a slightly larger proportion of male. There were 5943 in their 20s (31.89%), 58 in their 30s (31.35%), 43 in their 40s (23.34%), 15 in their 50s (8.11%), and 10 over 60s students (5.41%). Among them, the proportions of 20s and 30s were slightly higher. In response to the query about the frequency of watching entertainment programs on TV or other media platforms during a week, 23 individuals (12.43%) responded once a week, 96 individuals (51.89%) responded 24 times a week, and 66 individuals reported five times or more. Most subjects watched entertainment programs a minimum of 2–4 to times per week.

Manipulation Check.

In this study, we aimed to verify the adequacy of the experimental manipulation of the two types of place placement (on-set vs. creative placement) and parasocial interaction (high vs. low) in the context of an OEP by conducting an independent sample t-test on the two types of place placement (on-set vs. creative placement), based on the research of Babin and Cader (1996) and Xu and Lee (2014). First, to assess the manipulation point of the on-set placement and determine whether the place is mentioned by a character in the programme, or the name of the place appears in subtitles, two categories were established: 1) The mention of the place was very unrecognizable. – The mention of the place was very perceptible. and 2) I could not recognise the place much with the subtitles. – I could recognise the place a lot with the subtitles. Items were measured on a 7-point Likert scale. The results showed that the inter-item reliability (Cronbach's alpha) was 0.88, and the t-test results indicated that on-set placement effectively emphasised a character's mentions and script in the programme, suggesting suitable manipulation.

Creative placement should be integrated into the OEP by naturally exposing the locations that appear in the programme, along with the characters' movement lines. To confirm this, the following two statements were measured on a 7-point Likert scale: 1) It does not suit the character's movement very well. – It matches very well with the character's movement and 2) It is not very natural – It is very natural. The reliability (Cronbach's α) between questions was 0.84, and the t-test results showed that the creative placement was naturally exposed in the program, indicating that it was manipulated appropriately.

Validity and Reliability

Next, to verify the validity of parasocial interaction, the moderator in this study, and visit intention, the dependent variable, they were extracted through principal component analysis, and the loading values of the factors were simplified using the orthogonal rotation method (varimax). The analysis utilised questions with eigenvalues of 1.0 or greater and factor values of at least 0.5. Three questions were selected for the analysis based on previous research. Furthermore, all Cronbach's α values exceeded 0.6, confirming internal consistency. Table 1 presents the findings of the examination of parasocial interactions and visit intention. The obtained analysis was deemed suitable, as shown by the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test value of 0.956, Bartlett's sphericity test value of 5363.625, and a significance p-value of 0.000.

Table 1. Results of the validity and reliability analyses of psychological distance and visit intention

Factor	Measurement items	Factor loading	Communalities	% of Variance	Cronbach's α
Parasocial	The extent of familiarity with the	0.89	0.88	52.93	0.88
Interaction	characters				
	The extent to which a character feels like a friend	0.88	0.86		
	The extent of identification with the character	0.81	0.79		
Intention to visit	I would like to visit a location that has been featured on television.	0.80	0.76	47.06	0.81
	I would like to go with my family and friends and explore these popular spots.	0.77	0.73		
	I would like to visit a location that has been featured on television.	0.75	0.69		

KMO=.956 Bartlett's sphericity = 5,363.625, $p = 0.000$)

Hypothesis Testing

First, a t-test was conducted to verify the difference between the groups for H1, 'There will be a difference in visit intention depending on the placement of the place (on-set placement vs. creative placement)', and we discovered a difference in visit intention based on place arrangement, as shown in Table 2 ($t = 7.768$, $p < 0.01$). Specifically, visit intention was higher for on-set placements ($M = 4.68$) than for creative placements ($M = 3.13$). Thus, H1 was accepted.

Table 2. Differences in visit intention according to place placement

Dependent variable	Types of place placement	N	Mean	t	p
Visit intention	On-set placement	91	4.68	7.768	.001**
	Creative placement	94	3.13		

** $p < 0.01$

Next, we conducted a two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) to test H2, 'The effect of the place placement on visit intention will differ depending on the level of parasocial interaction (high vs. low)'. Table 3 provides the results. As can be seen, the effect of placement type on visit intention may vary depending on the degree of parasocial interaction. Specifically, respondents who reported higher levels of parasocial interaction with characters expressed greater interest in visiting the on-set location ($M = 4.45$, $SD = .87$) than in the creative placement condition ($M = 3.89$, $SD = 1.11$), suggesting that creative placement ($M = 3.49$, $SD = 1.06$) resulted in significantly higher visit intention than on-set placement ($M = 3.23$, $SD = 1.10$) for viewers with lower parasocial interaction. Thus, H2 indicated the moderating effect of parasocial interaction. Additionally, Table 4 and Figure 1 show that the interaction effect between location type and parasocial interaction was statistically significant $F = 8.456$, $p < 0.01$).

Table 3. Visit intention according to place placement and parasocial interactions

Types of place placement	Parasocial interaction	N	Mean	SD
On-set placement	high	45	4.45	0.87
	low	46	3.23	1.10
Creative placement	high	47	3.78	1.11

low	47	3.59	1.06
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Table 4. Moderating effects of parasocial interactions

dependent variable	Independent variable	MS	df.	F	p
Visit intention	Place placement (A)	13.06	1	14.08	.008**
	Parasocial interaction (B)	33.02	1	34.88	.000***
	A×B	8.33	1	9.45	.002**
	Error	0.98	147		

p<0.01, *p<0.001

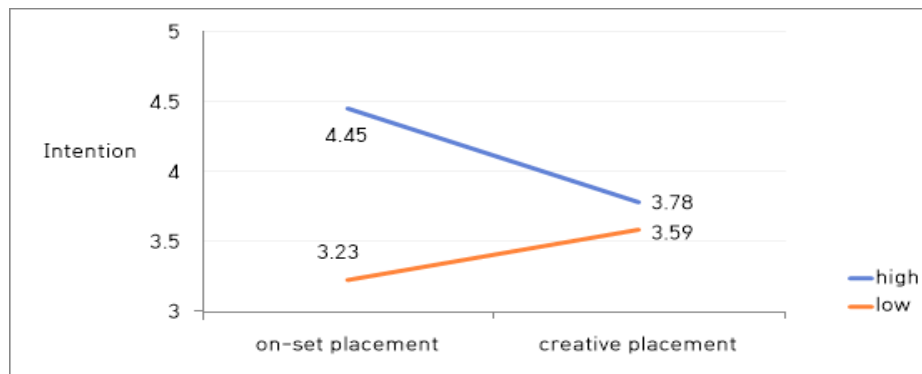


Figure 1 Moderating effects of placement type and parasocial interactions

Alt Text for Graphical Figure [74 words]

The line graph illustrates the impact of on-set and creative placement on viewers' visit intentions, differentiated by the level of parasocial interaction (high vs. low). The blue line represents viewers with high parasocial interaction, showing a higher visit intention for on-set placement (4.45) compared to creative placement (3.78). The orange line represents viewers with low parasocial interaction, showing a lower visit intention for on-set placement (3.23) but a slight increase for creative placement (3.59).

CONCLUSIONS

This study aimed to expand and apply screen tourism via an OEP, which is an entertainment form that has been steadily gaining popularity for several years. To that end, we conducted an OEP experiment to determine whether areas in the remote countryside or lesser-known islands, rather than existing famous or well-known tourist destinations, have the potential to attract tourists. The results and contributions of the study are as follows.

First, our study investigated the product placement of items in movies and TV shows from a place-centric viewpoint, thereby expanding the concept of product placement to that of location placement. The results show that the use of place placement, both in terms of on-set and creative placement, affected viewers' visit intention for the location featured in the OEP, with on-set placement having a stronger impact. In general, PPL in movies or television shows does not disrupt viewers' immersion if it aligns with the content context (Xu & Lee, 2014). From this perspective, a method of creative placement settings that naturally displays the location may be more efficient in PPL than a one that disrupts content through intentional on-set placement devices. Nevertheless, owing to the nature of the programming, OEPs typically utilise a method of publicly showcasing the settings in which the characters are active (Kim & Kim, 2020). Therefore, based on the characteristics of this broadcasting format, we determined that on-set placement in relation to location yields the reverse effect, proving to be more effective for observational entertainment.

Next, we examined the moderating impact of parasocial interactions. To encourage viewers to engage in

activities, such as sightseeing or visiting, it is necessary to perform several actions. These activities require time and corresponding costs to collect information regarding travel location. In other words, to prompt viewers to visit a tourist destination, it is necessary to minimise the perceived psychological distance concerning time and expenses between their current situation and their actual visit. Hence, it is essential to seek a suitable mechanism to reduce this psychological distance.

A plausible solution is to foster empathy towards characters through parasocial interactions. Although people may not actively research a particular location or tourist destination, they can acquire knowledge or information about different places by watching observational entertainment shows. Parasocial interactions with characters reduce the distance between them and increase immersion in the content as a whole. With this in mind, we investigated whether actual visit intention could be increased through the place placement on screen and parasocial interactions with characters. For viewers with a high perception of parasocial interaction with characters, deliberate location exposure through on-set placement proved to be significantly more effective than natural creative placement. This supports the results of previous studies showing that the perceived presence of a location in an OEP enables viewers to experience it indirectly through the characters' lives, which may ultimately enhance their visit intention (Kim & Yang, 2022; Kim & Kim, 2020). In other words, the places or regions where the characters are active are displayed as script during the broadcast and are naturally mentioned in the characters' daily lives. This increases the positive image of a place and maximises viewers' indirect experiences, potentially leading to a positive visit intention.

Implications Theoretical Implications

The findings of this study have important academic implications, particularly for screen tourism. In terms of screen tourism, our results provide a crucial foundation for employing genre formats in addition to movies and dramas. This study is particularly significant as it expands PPL, which was previously explored only in product advertising, to place marketing for the development of tourist destinations in the field of tourism studies. This study also provides the groundwork for future research on other types of TV programmes and various PPL methods. Upon detailed examination, it is generally observed that in dramas or movies, PPL does not interfere with the narrative. Instead, creatively placing products along the movements and paths of the main characters or cast proves to be effective for product-based PPL. However, in OEP, the placement of locations or backgrounds where the characters' activities take place differs from typical product PPL. Here, the deliberate inclusion of locations does not cause aversion among viewers. In fact, on-set placement is revealed to be more effective. This indicates a theoretical expansion of traditional product placement into location-based product placement. It also provides a theoretical basis for the necessity of research in various media formats from the perspective of screen tourism.

Practical Implications

Numerous nations are currently shifting towards marine and land tourism and are working to develop new tourist destinations by utilising islands. Korea is bordered by the sea on three sides and boasts the fourth largest number of islands in the world. Owing to these features, the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism, together with the Korea Tourism Organisation and various public and private companies in the local government, are engaged in ongoing implementation of concerted policies and efforts to promote marine tourism. In other words, the findings offer practical advantages for screen tourism by activating OEPs. These programmes not only promote well-known tourist destinations but also develop and utilise unknown and remote locations and islands as potential tourist spots.

In conclusion, the results of this study go beyond the relationships between variables such as tourism policies, existing tourist destinations, and visit intentions to undeveloped places and explore the effect of place marketing through experiments using broadcast programs. We believe that the results of this study provide practical guidance to practitioners and managers in the tourism industry. In particular, Korea has become a cultural powerhouse beyond the Korean Wave, and its movies, dramas, and entertainment programs are popular in many countries worldwide through various video platforms. Thus, it is necessary to use various TV program formats to attract domestic and foreign tourists. From this perspective, place placement through an OEP in this study can provide clues for a strategic approach to effective place marketing that can effectively reduce the

distance between viewers and their actual visits.

Limitations and Future Directions

However, this study has several limitations, based on which we suggest directions for future research. First, the study was conducted on only one type of PPL. In future research, it will be necessary to study the effects in more detail by subdividing them into various PPL types based on previous research on place marketing. Second, this is an experimental study. Many exogenous variables may exist in an experiment. In fact, in experimental research, it is difficult to control for all exogenous variables. Therefore, it is necessary to obtain consistent results through repeated experiments. Finally, there is a limitation that the subjects of the experiment are all population residing near Busan. Therefore, in future research, it will be necessary to overcome these limitations and conduct experiments by repeating them and subdividing the types of subjects so as to generalize the results.

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