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Article

Film-Induced Tourism and Experiential Branding: A Purpose-Driven Conceptual Framework with an Exploratory Illustration from Monsanto (Portugal)

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Abstract

This conceptual paper proposes a purpose-driven experiential marketing framework for film-inspired destinations, integrating sustainability and emotional engagement into destination management. The model comprises five interconnected dimensions – integrated experience, branding, people, emotional touchpoints and processes – articulated through purpose-driven marketing principles and aligned with relevant Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) indicators. This alignment reinforces the model's capacity to support ethical, transparent, and sustainability-oriented destination strategies. The framework was developed through an interdisciplinary literature review and is illustrated with insights from an exploratory case study of Monsanto, a rural Portuguese village recently featured in HBO's *House of the Dragon*. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a purposive sample of local stakeholders, including tourists, residents, entrepreneurs, and institutional representatives, and analysed thematically to assess the model's relevance and practical applicability. The findings suggest that emotional engagement, co-creation, and territorial authenticity play a central role in shaping memorable, film-related tourism experiences that align with the destination's purpose and value creation. The study also highlights the strategic importance of storytelling, audiovisual narratives and stakeholder collaboration in strengthening place identity and achieving sustainable differentiation. Although the study is exploratory in scope, the framework offers practical guidance for destination management organisations (DMOs), cultural programmers, and creative industry actors. The article concludes by identifying avenues for future research, including cross-regional validation, digital experimentation, and the quantitative assessment of experience dimensions.

Keywords: film-induced tourism; experiential marketing; emotional branding; GOBE model; destination experience; GRI indicators; value-based marketing; cultural events

1. Introduction

The prominence of sustainability as a theme in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has rendered it a critical topic in the tourism industry, particularly evident in targets 8.9, 12.b, and 14.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals - SDGs (ONU, 2015). These targets aim to design, implement, develop, and monitor policies and tools to promote sustainable tourism that generates employment, fosters cultural appreciation, supports local products, assesses developmental impacts, and enhances economic benefits for the region or country.

The concept of sustainable tourism is characterized by the prioritization of management strategies aimed at preserving the environment, addressing social needs, maintaining cultural integrity and aesthetic diversity, and ensuring economic viability without compromising environmental quality, social well-being, and the interests of future generations (Arteaga et al., 2018; Broccardo et al., 2017; Swarbrooke, 1999; Yi et al., 2021). Regarding tourism organizations, those that demonstrate greater commitment to sustainability may enhance their social and economic value, promote long-term prosperity, and exhibit an increased likelihood of satisfying and retaining customers (Arora et al., 2024; Méndez-Leon et al., 2021).

One of the numerous forms of tourism is cinematographic/television tourism, which, since the study by Riley and Van Doren (1992), has sparked academic interest in the relationship between audiovisual content and destinations, specifically the potential of audiovisual fiction to attract tourists to filming locations, a phenomenon called film-induced tourism (Beeton, 2016).

Film-induced tourism is typically promoted by DMOs, which are entities responsible for the development, image, branding, promotion, and marketing of a destination on behalf of private and public tourism entities (Hudson & Ritchie 2006). Their function is to attract tourists who desire to view the architecture, sets, or landscapes associated with specific films/series, or who are interested in experiencing the narratives and themes associated with the locations represented in these productions in order to get involved in the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of urban or rural landscapes (Strielkowski, 2017). Consequently, film-induced tourism establishes connections between the film and tourism industries, enhancing their overall economic impact while providing tourists with an escape from quotidian routines, offering pleasure and satisfaction, and facilitating an innovative experience with cultural learning (Yi et al., 2022).

As previously stated, tourists in this segment seek innovative, authentic, and unique experiences at specific and differentiated filming locations. This attribute makes the place and all aspects related to the film both rare and valuable to tourists, potentially representing a competitive advantage over other tourist concepts and destinations (Barney & Clark, 2019; Cardoso et al., 2017). However, to capitalize on this advantage, the positioning in the tourist's mind must reflect a genuine and authentic purpose (Fernandes et al., 2024). This is particularly crucial as tourists are increasingly aware of this issue and are more adept at spotting corporate greenwashing inauthentic claims regarding sustainability and well-being. Consequently, the DMOs should define its purpose, which is to equitably enhance the well-being of all stakeholders tourists, employees, suppliers, local communities, and shareholders and effectively reflect this in its marketing practices (Hurth & Vrettos, 2021). This approach changes the relationship between the DMO and the market segment it aims to attract. Specifically, the focus shifts to areas where the DMO has the opportunity to improve well-being, add distributed value, and ensure sustainability, rather than emphasizing financial value alone. This represents a move away from limited product, sales and market orientations, towards more environmentally sustainable operations, positive social impact and improved collective well-being, thus enabling the DMO to respond to the needs and expectations of individuals, which are two antecedents of organizational goal (van Ingen et al., 2021).

Adopting the stance of a purpose-conscious practitioner is imperative for the DMO, as it is the only approach that guarantees sustainability and the well-being of stakeholders from the perspective of tourists (Galuppo et al., 2022). This position develops within the DMO, initiated by those with the authority to do so, and influences the DMO's tangible operational methods. This affects how the DMO selects suppliers, determines investments, makes decisions regarding service and product development, and many other aspects. Nevertheless, by involving purpose-oriented individuals, it is mandatory to provide meaningful work aligned with the DMO's purpose (Lysova et al., 2019; van Ingen et al., 2021). Specifically, it serves as a mediator in the relationship between the DMO's purpose and work outcome. Simultaneously, meaningfulness is crucial in marketing to achieve desired outcomes (Zuo et al., 2019), thus underscoring the significant role of DMO in marketing strategies.

It can be stated that the DMOs should design its essence and brand according to purpose-led branding, guided by purpose-driven strategies (Fernandes et al., 2024; Jones-Khosla & Gomes, 2023), and must implement a series of marketing-based initiatives to ensure optimal positioning in a highly competitive market such as that of tourist attractions (Cardoso et al., 2017; Vagionis & Loumlioti, 2011). By achieving this goal, the DMO gains a competitive advantage, thus facilitating the development of tourism and sustainable business, since these two aspects are intrinsically linked (Schaltegger et al., 2016).

Marketing strategies and initiatives supported by the marketing-mix are the main drivers of the DMO's purpose. Several authors state that it is essential to understand the influence and contribution of marketing mix purpose on tourist experiences and value creation (Jones-Khosla & Gomes, 2023; Sheth, 2021; Wichmann et al., 2022), and to gather empirical evidence on the practical significance of the business purpose (George et al., 2023). Consequently, academic research is needed to elucidate the appropriate marketing-mix configuration for a goal-oriented DMO. This study addresses two research questions: How does the purpose influence the operational marketing of film-induced destinations? What is the optimal marketing-mix configuration that DMOs can employ to attract tourists and to design innovative and authentic experiences in film-induced destinations?

Given these research opportunities, this study aims to improve the understanding of the influence of organizational purpose on operational marketing. Based on the literature, we postulate that organizational purpose serves as the guiding principle for a DMO's marketing-mix. Furthermore, we propose that tourists' needs and expectations can be conceptualized as antecedents of both organizational purpose and the marketing mix, mediated by the mechanism of being invested with meaningfulness (Lysova et al., 2019; van Ingen et al., 2021; Zuo et al., 2019). In addition, we examine the evolution from the traditional service and product-centred marketing-mix to a purpose-driven experiential marketing approach for DMO (Batat, 2024). Despite the conceptual nature of the study, exploratory validation was integrated with primary data collected in Monsanto, thereby enabling the applicability of the proposed model to be assessed among tourists, businesspeople, and local decision-makers. Furthermore, the model was associated with the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) indicators, thereby reinforcing its utility as a strategic and sustainable instrument for tourist destinations with film potential. The model integrates macro and micro level drivers in the film-induced destination segment and is further aligned with sustainability standards, including indicators from the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI). These variables may serve as a basis for future research on the influence of purpose on marketing. Finally, by elucidating the link between organizational purpose and operational marketing through the marketing-mix, we contribute to the theory and practice of film-induced destination research. Specifically, we aim to mitigate the potential for corporate greenwashing, in which purpose and marketing-mix are employed as fallacious tools for profit generation rather than social benefits.

This study has a special focus on Monsanto, a village in central Portugal. It is known as "the most Portuguese village in Portugal" and was given this title in 1938 through the Galo de Prata (Silver Rooster) distinction. Monsanto is famous for its granite buildings and history, and it was recently chosen as a place to film the HBO series *House of the Dragon*. This special meeting of cultural heritage and international media exposure positions Monsanto as an interesting example of film-induced tourism in a rural setting. It provides a useful background for looking at emotional branding, place attachment and value-based experiential design.

Although centred on film tourism, the proposed model also contributes to the design and implementation of immersive and emotionally resonant experiences within cultural events and festivals inspired by cinematic narratives.

In this context, the present article proposes a conceptual model for reconfiguring the marketing mix for film tourism. This model is based on extant literature and insights gathered from stakeholders in the sector. The purpose of this model is to make a contribution to the debate on symbolic and narrative strategies in the promotion of territories through audiovisual media.

2. Literature Review

2.1. *The Relationship Between Purpose and Marketing*

Purpose clarifies both the nature (what) and the justification (why) of DMO's actions, serving as the foundation of its marketing strategy (Busco et al., 2024; Sinek, 2017). It is an existential intention that guides decisions and practices (Gulati, 2024), and its effectiveness lies in articulating strategic goals while motivating the workforce (Blount & Leinwand, 2019). When aligned with stakeholders, purpose not only sustains the DMO financially but also generates social and community value (Drucker, 1974; Harrison et al., 2020; Ocasio et al., 2023).

Integrating purpose into marketing allows DMOs to engage tourists authentically, aligning experiences with values beyond profit (Blount & Leinwand, 2019; Batat, 2024). This conscious, purpose-driven marketing cultivates long-term relationships by connecting emotions with enduring meaning (Fernandes et al., 2024). In this way, the DMO brand becomes part of tourists' self-perception while fostering innovation, value delivery, and sustainable relationships among stakeholders (Daugherty et al., 2018; Kotler & Keller, 2016).

Marketing in tourism must therefore be both experiential and sustainable. By using marketing-mix variables to enhance tourist experiences while protecting the environment and benefiting communities, DMOs balance emotional engagement with sustainable development (Han, 2021; Kemper et al., 2019). Choosing the appropriate mix requires contextual awareness of tourists, communities, and competitors, but ultimately serves as a strategic tool for achieving the organisation's purpose (Vissak et al., 2020; Jones-Khosla & Gomes, 2023).

This conceptual articulation between purpose and strategy sets the foundation for aligning the marketing-mix with the expectations of experience-driven tourism.

2.2. *The Common Antecedents and Mediator of Purpose and Marketing*

Tourist needs and expectations tangible, intangible, individual, and social form the basis of a DMO's marketing strategies, shaping authentic experiences and competitive advantage (Luo & Ye, 2021; Grönroos & Voima, 2013). Expectations are dynamic and influenced by factors such as price, prior experience, and communication, requiring continuous adjustment of strategies (Kotler & Keller, 2016). As guiding principles, needs and expectations can thus be considered antecedents of both purpose and marketing (Blount & Leinwand, 2019; Fernandes et al., 2024).

Conscious, purpose-driven marketing aligns organisational practices with these antecedents, ensuring authenticity, trust, and transparency, while adapting to evolving tourist demands through experiential approaches (Han, 2021; Rust, 2020). Success therefore depends on integrating tourist needs with sustainability and organisational objectives.

Human capital is a critical foundation of competitive advantage (Elsharnouby & Elbanna, 2021). Meaningfulness, the perception that work contributes to individual well-being and broader organisational or social goals emerges as the main mediator linking needs, expectations, purpose, and marketing (Pratt et al., 2013; Lysova et al., 2019). When employees perceive alignment between personal values and organisational purpose, they show greater engagement, commitment, and performance, which enhances the DMO's ability to detect opportunities, manage the marketing-mix and brand, and co-create memorable experiences with tourists (Lysova et al., 2019; Woods & Sofat, 2013).

2.3. *Marketing-Mix from the "P"roduct to "E"xperience*

The marketing mix variables used by DMO vary according to the available resources and capabilities, market conditions, and the evolving needs of tourists. The configuration and meaning of these variables are subject to change at any time, and considering one variable without considering its impact on others may result in incoherence because the marketing-mix constitutes a complex adaptive system (Arraya, 2024; Khalilzadeh et al., 2024; Leinwand et al., 2016).

Research on marketing-mix has had a major influence on the development of marketing theory and practice, as well as on the improvement of long and short-term tactical programmes (Moller, 2006; Wichmann et al., 2022). Borden (1964) defined the marketing-mix as a combination of 12 variables research and analysis of facts, product planning, advertising, branding, distribution channels, displays, packaging, personal selling, physical handling, pricing, promotions, and services under the management of a marketer to satisfy the target market. McCarthy (1964) refined this concept and regrouped Borden's 12 elements into four variables, known as the: product, price, promotion, and placement. Later, Magrath (1986) suggested the addition of 3 Ps -personnel, physical facilities, and process management; Judd (1987) proposed people; Vignali and Davis (1994) suggested the addition of service; and Kotler (1999) incorporated political power and the formation of public opinion into the concept.

Regarding the marketing mix of services, Booms and Bitner (1981) added three more Ps to the traditional concept: people, processes, and physical evidence. Lim (2021), in an article on integrated care the integration of health and social care systems advocates for 10 dimensions: to by McCarthy's traditional four (1964) and to the three introduced by Booms and Bitner (1981), he adds three new packaging Ps: price a single price offer with a guarantee of the service provided, partnership cooperation between various stakeholders, and politics policy and governance of the authority.

Goldsmith (1999) suggests personalization, proposing that it becomes a standard part of the marketing-mix, forming the 8P's configuration product, price, place, promotion, personnel, physical assets, procedures, and personalization.

Regarding tourism and hospitality, the meta-analysis by Lim and Ok (2024) identified 10 dimensions: product, place, promotion, price, customer satisfaction, employee performance, human resource practices, operational efficiency, perceived quality, and satisfaction, that extend the traditional 4Ps and link tourist satisfaction to hotel performance. In parallel, Lim (2021) proposed a marketing-mix typology for integrated care, introducing the '10 Ps' framework, which, although from another field, reinforces the relevance of expanded mix approaches. Govers and Go (2009) state that "place branding", by means to build the integrity and identity of the brand in relation to the region and country, is an important dimension in the marketing-mix for tourist destinations that sought position and promote cultural attraction.

Recently, Batat (2024) presented the experiential marketing-mix as a guide to building innovative and emotional experiences in physical and digital environments that consumers find hard to forget, featuring 7Es: experience, exchange, extension, emphasis, empathy capital, emotional touchpoints, and emic/etic processes.

In this study, our focus is on the tourist experience in a film-induced destination. As such, we conceptualize the tourist's experience in this type of proposal as their journey from the experience of choice from research to purchase, which is a process that incorporates past experiences, latent expectations, and external factors through the various emotional touchpoints, only some of which are under the control of the DMO to the memorable emotions that are recorded at the end of the experience. This process acts as a guide for examining tourists' experiences during their trip, as well as for modeling the effects of different emotional touchpoints on their experiences. As shown in Figure 1, tourists' journeys are conceptualized in three stages: choice, experience, and post-experience.

Choice. This stage covers all pre-purchase interactions with the film-induced destination, shaped by expectations, recognition needs, and information overload. Credibility, trust in operators, and previous experiences are decisive factors from the recognition of needs to purchase (Pieters et al., 2001).

Experience. This stage covers all the interactions tourists have with the film-induced destination during the purchase of access to the destination, stay, and experience. This stage is significantly influenced by marketing activities, such as the marketing-mix (Kotler & Keller, 2015), the environment and atmosphere (Steadman et al., 2021), and the service environment (Berry et al., 2006) during the experience.

Post-Experience. This stage includes behaviors such as post-stay engagement, which is reflected in the tourist's integrated experience and their emotional touchpoints, and non-purchase behaviors, such as word of mouth and other forms of tourist engagement, particularly on digital networks.

In the context of a tourist's journey, emotional touchpoints serve as stimuli that elicit specific affective responses to the experience. Understanding and addressing these emotional touchpoints improves the tourists' journey and facilitates a deeper connection with the destination. This study identified four categories of emotional touchpoints that influence experiences during a tourist's journey: brand, partners, co-creation, and social/external factors.

Brand. These emotional touchpoints are interactions with tourists during the experience that are designed, manipulated, and managed by the DMO. They include online and offline advertising, websites, tourist attraction programs, and other variables of the marketing-mix. Search engine advertising has also been extensively studied.

Partners. These emotional points of contact interact with tourists during the experience that are jointly designed, handled, managed, and controlled jointly by the DMO and its partners, understood as all entities that promote, complement, and contribute directly to the DMO's business model.

Co-creation. These emotional touchpoints are actions of the tourist that are part of their experience and which no entity directly influences or controls. This concept is related to the tourist being a co-creator of value, independently or together with the DMO and its partners (Vargo et al. 2020).

Social/external. These emotional touchpoints recognize the significant role of known and unknown individuals in the tourist experience. Throughout the experience, tourists are influenced by external touchpoints that can affect the experience, such as other tourists, influences from acquaintances, individual or collective opinion leaders Booking and TripAdvisor and the surrounding environment in its diverse forms economic, political, and security.

These categories of emotional touchpoints provide the DMO with a coherent framework for understanding the potential points that can influence and enhance the tourist experience, thus making important contributions to the configuration of the marketing-mix.

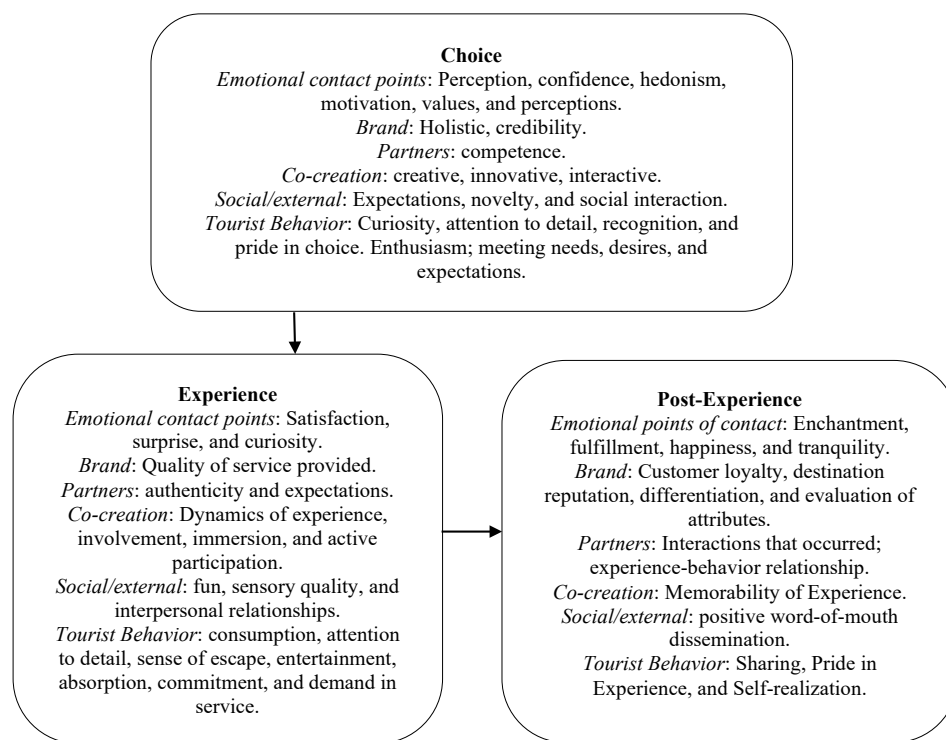


Figure 1. Process model for tourist journeys and experience. Source: Elaboration by the authors (2025).

2.4. *The Configuration of the Marketing-Mix in the Context of the Film-Induced Destination*

2.4.1. The Configurational Process

The marketing-mix is a holistic entity whose totality makes it dynamic and more powerful than the sum of its variables; failing to recognise this weakens strategic understanding (Carvalho, 2012; MacInnis et al., 2020). Examining it through the lens of complexity highlights its multidimensional nature, shaped by tourists, purpose, ethics, sustainability, culture, and stakeholders (Morin, 1986; Carvalho, 2012).

Conceptualising the mix as a complex adaptive system enables DMOs to detect threats and opportunities, anticipate tourist preferences, and enhance adaptability and competitiveness (Filser et al., 2021). This configurational approach organises and aligns variables into coherent strategies that avoid simplification and serve as a rational guide (Ghedini & Franco, 2008). It requires theory-based learning, rigorous analysis, and creativity, encouraging adaptability, exploration, and collaboration as innovative sources of value (Godin, 2020).

A marketing-mix configuration is therefore a constellation of interdependent variables whose coherence generates superior performance (Leinwand & Mainardi, 2011; Pinto & Curto, 2007). Because of equifinality and non-linearity, multiple configurations can lead to effective outcomes depending on context (Grandori & Furnari, 2013).

2.4.2. The Driving Forces in the Segment Film-Induced Destination

The multiplicity of configurations available in the marketing mix represents a challenge in terms of choice and decision-making; however, it remains imperative to consider the main causal factors and trends in tourist behavior, particularly those associated with film-induced destinations. Thus, and in consideration of authors such as Rust (2020) and Zhang and Watson IV (2020), we have identified five influential trends in film-induced destination marketing: (1) market developments, new business models, and sustainability; (2) technological advances, (3) socioeconomic changes, (4) geopolitical changes and (5) environmental changes in terms of the sustainability of natural resources.

Market environments are continuously changing and transforming (Arraya, 2022), and consequently, the dynamism of tourists and the development of the marketplace influence the emergence of new business models. These models must prioritize objectives that go beyond profits, emphasizing the local community, the environment, and relationships between internal and external stakeholders to share a common purpose (Collins & Saliba, 2020).

Technological advances result from the increasing interconnectivity between individuals and objects, facilitated by equipment, Internet efficiency, the Internet of Things (IoT), greater computing power, and the consequent greater ability to collect and analyze/use data (i.e., lead flow data, location data, user-generated content), more sophisticated mobile applications and social networks, artificial intelligence, and robotics (Davenport, 2018; Grewal et al., 2020; Mende et al., 2019).

Socioeconomic changes are attributed to income disparities between different strata of the population, economic growth in emerging markets, and dichotomous trends, such as globalization, free trade facilitation, and the rise of protectionism in certain regions of the world (Rust, 2020).

Geopolitical changes are a result of new political, religious, and moral realities as well as cultural shifts, often exacerbated by deepfakes and the dissemination of disinformation (Shams et al., 2024).

Environmental concerns are increasingly significant for numerous consumers, users, and policymakers (Rust, 2020), with evident implications for marketers in the tourism industry.

In Table 1, we list some of the main effects of each of the trends that condition the marketing-mix of film-induced destinations.

Table 1. Driving trends and their effect on film-induced destinations.

Driving trends	Demand side What tourists are looking for	Supply side What the operator/guardian of the DMO is looking for
Marketplace	peace of mind and guarantees when planning vacation and avoiding constraints; the feeling of living in a fantastical environment; authenticity and a distinct, unique, and relevant experience; boosting self-esteem; gaining status and prestige; ego gratification; escaping reality; strengthening identity; and relaxation (Herbert, 2001; Macionis, 2004; Yi et al., 2022).	Collaboration with tourists boards and film producers to capitalize on the popularity of a destination and attract visitors, by enhancing the cinematic appeal of a location to promote tourism, shaping the perception of the location and region's image in line with the DMO's objectives; establishing the personality, vitality, prominence, and brand credibility of the film-induced destination as a distinctive tourism product; marketing the filming location as an influential factor in travel decision-making; transforming filming locations into attractive tourist experiences; promoting synergies and co-creation; developing narratives, memories, and facilitating tourists' personal historical connections by maximizing opportunities; promoting the sustainable development of the location; building trust with all stakeholders to facilitate the rapid and sustainable growth of the destination (Araújo-Vila et al., 2024; Di Cesare & la Salandra, 2015; Nicosia, 2015; Oshriyeh & Capriello, 2022).
Technological	The digitization of films influences the perception of place and authenticity; the representations created by media have a significant impact on tourists, increasing freedom of choice through easier access to destination offers and hotel booking systems, enhancing the empowerment of tourists to access and share information, with clear implications for the notoriety, credibility, and recognition of the tourist destination (Almeida, 2015; Carlet et al., 2007; Kim & Hall, 2019).	Technology and the Internet provide a significant global distribution channel at relatively low cost; social media plays a key role in holiday/travel research and booking, reducing tourism production costs, providing better prices for tourists and higher margins for operators, and creating immersive and personalized cinematic experiences (Antunes, 2014; Chapain & Stachowiak, 2017).
Socioeconomic	The decision-making process regarding the selection of tourist destinations is significantly influenced by income fluctuations, changes in relative prices, exchange rate dynamics, inflationary pressures, lifestyle changes, environmental considerations, and many other factors (Wang & Tziamalís, 2023).	National and local governments can establish a suitable business environment to attract investment in tourism development, thereby using it as a mechanism for economic and social development (Wang & Tziamalís, 2023). The positive effects of tourism on the socio-economic aspects of the host country culminate in improving the well-being of local communities and contributing to the conservation of the natural environment, thus enhancing the culture and heritage of the region (Alcalá-Ordóñez and Segarra, 2023).
Geopolitical	The decision to visit a particular destination is strongly influenced by geopolitical factors, including political stability and safety concerns. Tourists' choices are often influenced by armed conflicts, terrorist activities, and human rights issues in potential travel locations. Consequently, countries facing such problems usually experience a reduction in tourism (Papagianni et al., 2024). Tourists prioritize safety and mitigation of uncertainty when making decisions about their travel destinations (Parray et al., 2023).	Tourism works as a mechanism for promoting peace, based on a global understanding between individuals who know each other's ethics, customs, and traditions (Alcalá-Ordóñez and Segarra, 2023). Transforming a specific and organized geographic area into a commercially viable tourism product, within an existing policy and regulatory framework, which promotes, develops, and benefits communities (Jovi'ci'c, 2019).
Natural environmental	Tourists increasingly prioritize ecological impacts and environmental sustainability (Schamp et al., 2019), and filming locations are considered significant factors when selecting new holiday destinations (Revtrakunphaiboon, 2009).	Operators emphasize the attractiveness of the location to be filmed, its natural resources, atmosphere, location, people, culture, ways of life, and local cuisine to promote the destination (Pham & Hwang, 2022).

Source: Elaboration by the authors (2025).

Data and insights from these trends clarify the trajectory of film-induced destinations and are fundamental for shaping the marketing-mix, as they reveal tourist attitudes and behaviours and the prospects for sustainable development and growth of DMOs (Bowen & Whalen, 2017). DMOs can configure variables and improve offerings through a deeper understanding of preferences and market dynamics, capitalising on opportunities aligned with competencies, capabilities, local resources, and locations. The capacity to identify and adapt to these changes is therefore critical for competitiveness (Bowen & Whalen, 2017). At the same time, tourism in natural areas often used as filming locations may generate negative impacts such as overuse of sites, resource conflicts, and biodiversity loss, with implications for local communities (Breiby et al., 202; Lindberg et al., 2021). These trends directly affect decision-makers and operators of DMOs, influencing both marketing-mix strategies and the spectrum of sustainability issues crucial for the future of tourism.

2.4.3. Variables of the Experiential Marketing-Mix in the Film-Induced Segment Destination

In this subsection, we propose a configuration of the variables of the DMO marketing-mix, turning it into a personalized and competitive tool. A marketing-mix variable is defined as a dimension that represents a significant marketing function, oriented towards the organization's purpose and market, integrated into the marketing strategy, and which, when handled appropriately, positively influences tourists' purchasing decisions or choices, generating value for stakeholders.

The marketing-mix of DMOs requires different configuration decisions compared to the marketing of goods, services, or personalization, and closely aligns with Batat's (2024) approach to experiential marketing. Our aim was to present a configuration that reorganizes the variables in a complex adaptive system, considering the specificity of the film-induced destination.

Following Batat's (2024) approach, the proposed marketing-mix configuration focuses on an integrated tourist experience and incorporates the emotional, sensory, social, cognitive, behavioral, and relational elements and attributes of the experience at filming locations. Consequently, the configuration incorporates five controllable variables: integrated experience, branding, people, emotional touchpoints, and processes. This allows for the implementation of effective strategies to design successful experiences for tourists, sustainable practices for the environment, socially relevant initiatives for the community, and profitable outcomes for operators and DMO.

- Integrated Experience

Tourism, particularly film-induced tourism, conceptualised as a complex product, requires an integrated approach that combines cultural offerings, gastronomy, and hospitality (Du & Girault, 2018). The integrated experience is thus a crucial variable of the marketing-mix, facilitating reciprocal value creation through co-creation among filming locations, available services/products, and tourists themselves (Vargo et al., 2020; Wu et al., 2018). Co-creation enables coordinated dynamics between agents, enhancing perceived value, satisfaction, and revisit intention (Meng & Cui, 2020). Cooperation among diverse providers artisans, hoteliers, restaurateurs, and cultural institutions must converge towards cohesive goals, fostering innovation and tangible benefits for territories (Sugathan & Ranjan, 2019).

This integrated dynamic strengthens memorability and authenticity (Duxbury et al., 2021; Maia et al., 2023; Shakya & Vagnarelli, 2024), value creation (Aquino et al., 2020), recommendation behaviour (Tien et al., 2021), and competitive advantage (Leite et al., 2021). Moreover, experiences generate lasting memories: even when minor negative episodes occur, positive aspects dominate tourist perceptions (Wang et al., 2021; Papadopoulou et al., 2022).

- Branding

Branding, as a variable of the marketing mix, is a critical component of the DMO's marketing strategy, which aims to position itself effectively, valorize local culture, and establish emotional connections that facilitate identification with the destination (Neves et al., 2024; Ahmed & Ünüvar, 2022). Specifically, the aim is to develop, with a focus on sustainability, reputation, image, and identity of the destination as a brand, which is essential for positively influencing the memories of tourists and stakeholders (Maurya & Mishra, 2012). This approach is in line with the concept of "place branding," which aims to build brands for localities, generate positive associations, and differentiate a place from others (Acharya & Rahman, 2016; Eshuis et al., 2014).

For a place branding strategy to be effective, in accordance with conscientious purpose-driven marketing, it must be predicated on authenticity consistency, trust, transparency, and a well-defined value proposition and connect to tourists' needs and expectations, fostering an emotional connection that increases trust in the experiences offered and facilitates purchase decisions (Chang, 2020; Huerta-Viso et al., 2024; Fernandes et al., 2024).

Another central element of marketing strategy is the people variable, which encompasses the employees of the DMOs. These professionals play a vital role in the tourist experience by shaping brand identity through direct and meaningful interaction.

- People

The "People" variable is essential for creating quality experiences, promoting satisfaction, and fostering tourist loyalty (Agyeiwaah et al., 2021). Tourist experience and satisfaction depend on employees, who are crucial in interactions as co-producers of the service, ensuring pleasantness and personal connections (Zhang et al., 2023). Tourist orientation, which refers to prioritizing tourists' interests, is of particular importance (Kusumawati et al., 2021; Marques et al., 2018). Employees who focus on tourists' needs and expectations exhibit attitudes and behaviors aimed at their satisfaction, and provide authentic, reliable, and empathetic services (Franke & Park, 2006). This translates into adapted behaviors focused on creating a memorable experience (Novitasari et al., 2022). The authenticity of emotions shown by employees has a direct impact on tourists' perceptions and reactions, even influencing their emotional states (Lam et al., 2022). This occurs through rational evaluations of the experienced events and the phenomenon of emotional contagion (Barsade, 2002). The manifestation of these emotions can be seen in job satisfaction and organizational commitment, which are reflected in positive results in terms of visitor satisfaction and loyalty (Agyeiwaah et al., 2021; Homburg & Hoyer, 2009).

The DMOs should ensure that a tourist experience meets or exceeds visitors' expectations (Pike & Page, 2014; Toma & Mihai, 2022). By promoting high-quality standards among employees, the DMO contributes to a memorable tourist experience and a positive perception of the destination, encouraging loyalty and recommendations to other potential tourists (Surahman et al., 2020).

Therefore, the DMOs should invest in employee development and promote a culture of excellence reflected in tourist satisfaction (Lee and Kim, 2023).

- Emotional touchpoints

Emotional contact refers to the interaction between DMO employees and tourists, characterized by the exchange and management of emotions, which directly shapes the tourist experience (Delcourt et al., 2016). The tourist experience involves a series of emotional contacts that include planning, consumption of the experience itself, and post-trip recollection (Larsen, 2007). At these touchpoints, key interactions can be identified, known as Moments of Truth (Carlzon (1987), where customers and employees emotions can influence each other (Liu et al., 2019). Positive emotional experiences are associated with tourist satisfaction and can contribute to pleasant and memorable experiences (Hosany & Gilbert, 2010).

In tourism activity, emotional contacts play a decisive role in tourist satisfaction, influencing the overall evaluation of the experience, perception of the destination, and intention to repeat or to recommend it (Larsen, 2007; Liu et al., 2019). In this regard, it is essential that in moments of truth, in addition to technical competencies, all human capital involved demonstrate differentiated emotional competencies (e.g., the ability to recognize, understand, express, and manage emotions) in order to establish a positive impact on both the perceived quality of the service and the emotional connection with the tourist (Delcourt et al., 2016; Delcourt et al., 2017).

In a process-oriented approach, effective management of the moment of truth may require a detailed analysis of the sequence of key moments throughout the tourist experience journey to identify critical points and highlight specific areas for improvement (Liu et al., 2019).

- Process

The process variable comprises a structured and interactive set of activities aimed at enabling a DMO to deliver value to tourists and to achieve strategic goals (Guha et al., 1997; Strnadl, 2006). Specifically, it emphasizes the way in which the other variables of the marketing-mix are conducted and represents a defined sequence of tasks organized to meet the expectations, needs, and unique experiences of tourists during their journey (Lemanska-Majdzik & Okreglicka, 2015). Comprising events and activities (Goel et al., 2023), events occur naturally and are the immediate beginning of the process. An activity refers to a single unit of work or task (Dumas et al., 2018). One characteristic of this process is that it consists of logically ordered activities with well-defined inputs and outputs to achieve the DMO goal (Weske, 2019).

When well-defined, the process plays a crucial role in optimizing and maintaining efficiency in marketing-mix configurations, in dynamic adaptations of an internal and external nature, and must be executed systematically with the involvement of all DMO personnel and agents/operators to ensure consistent quality in DMO operations (Goryachev et al., 2021; Romero et al., 2015). The execution of tasks to increase the efficiency of the DMO, including the marketing-mix processes, lies in the field of the formation of network structures, in increasing the degree of development, interaction, and integration of the process within the DMO, ensuring the organizational alignment of the process, the creation of value, the adaptation and use of new market opportunities, and the alignment of the DMO with its purpose and business environment (Dumas et al., 2018; Wagner & Eggert, 2016; Ziggers & Henseler, 2016).

By establishing clear task guidelines, this process can prevent errors and reduce the time required for completion. The lack of a process definition can lead to inconsistent results, which can affect the quality of tourists' experience (Tregear, 2015). Finally, the process cannot neglect the psychology of the tourist's experience, more specifically the importance of the memory modeling exercise that determines their reference behavior. Therefore, the process should identify emotional touchpoints, sequence them, and strategically structure them to highlight positive memories. The process is thus the starting point that makes the tourist experience unique and exceptional and contributes to the overall success of the DMO (Godin, 2020).

As a tactical task, the marketing-mix configuration can influence DMO's strategy and facilitates a broader understanding of the film-induced destination. However, its efficacy is optimized when it is consistently implemented as a framework for planning, executing, evaluating, and re-evaluating the DMO's marketing initiatives. We propose the following checklist for each variable in Table 2.

Table 2. Checklist for a film-induced destination marketing-mix.

Integrated Experience	<p>Are the purpose of the DMO and tourist experience aligned?</p> <p>In what areas should DMOs allocate resources and skills to enhance the visitor experience in film-induced destinations?</p> <p>How can the cultural, historical, or unique attributes of a destination be integrated to create an authentic experience?</p> <p>What aspects of a destination evoke the most intense emotional responses from visitors?</p> <p>How does film-induced tourism engage visitors in the value co-creation process?</p> <p>How does the DMO intend to enhance and develop the tourist experience, both physical and digital, to encourage future visits to film-induced destinations?</p> <p>How does one assess the quality of the tourist experience?</p>
Branding	<p>Does the DMO's brand communication effectively communicate its purpose?</p> <p>What elements and meanings do film-induced destination brands share with tourists?</p> <p>How can we ensure that online and physical spaces convey the intended ambiance and emotions associated with the destination?</p> <p>Does a DMO's focused proposition create a user-friendly brand?</p> <p>Do collateral elements of brand communication (banners, images, features, etc.) create lasting impressions?</p>
People	<p>Is the alignment between the DMO's purpose and its people optimal?</p> <p>Do recruitment practices focus on individuals who embody the DMO's purpose and model appropriate behavior?</p> <p>How do professionals involved in film-induced destination marketing enhance their tourist experiences?</p> <p>To what extent are people involved in interactions between the DMO and tourist?</p> <p>What strategies can be implemented to make services more personalized and empathetic?</p> <p>Do management practices effectively support staff in linking their tasks to organizational priorities?</p> <p>How can appropriate tools be ensured to facilitate efficient and productive work?</p> <p>What methods are used to evaluate staff contributions to tourist experiences?</p> <p>What is the level of job satisfaction among the staff?</p>
Emotional touchpoints	<p>What emotions do DMO aim to evoke in tourists through communication strategies?</p> <p>How can the immersion of tourists at a destination be ensured from the initial point of contact?</p> <p>What methods can be employed to streamline the tourist experience, allowing for a greater focus on emotional engagement and reduced concern about logistical matters?</p> <p>How can visual imagery and narrative techniques be used to simultaneously convey authenticity and establish an emotional connection?</p> <p>How can local communities foster a sense of welcome and emotional connections between tourists and the destination?</p> <p>What methodologies can be employed to evaluate touchpoints in tourist experience?</p>
Process	<p>Is the alignment between the purpose of the DMO and its organizational processes coherent?</p> <p>Does the DMO have the requisite human capital to secure operations and respond to emerging opportunities?</p> <p>Do emotional touchpoints ensure realization of the moment of truth?</p> <p>Is the process of actualizing the moment of truth optimized?</p> <p>Are DMO's operational processes sufficiently adaptable?</p> <p>What types of training can be implemented to enhance employees' work processes, thereby ensuring emotionally positive and memorable interactions with tourists?</p> <p>How can positive reviews be generated based on tourist experiences?</p>

Source: Elaboration by the authors (2025).

2.5. Value, Experience and Innovation in Film Tourism

Several studies have demonstrated the importance of film tourism in the construction of tourist images and the creation of distinctive experiences. As posited by Osácar Marzal, Fraiz Brea and Araújo-Vila (2022), audiovisual narratives function as instruments of cultural mediation, with the capacity to influence perceptions, nurture imaginaries and draw tourist flows motivated by fictional content. The city of Barcelona, for instance, has been subject to extensive analysis as a recurring setting in international films and series, thereby contributing to its symbolic repositioning as a cosmopolitan and creative destination (Osácar Marzal, 2020).

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Recent studies have explored the interactions between cinema and regional identity in Brazil. For instance, Silveira, Baptista and Barros (2023) emphasised the importance of narrative experiences for the emotional rooting and cultural recognition of territories. Teng (2021) advances the argument that tourists' engagement with the plot, characters and symbolic context of film production increases their intention to visit and enhances participatory behaviour.

In this context, the present article proposes an approach focused on value creation and experiential innovation in film tourism. The concept of value creation is understood as the intersection between the interests of tourists, local communities, stakeholders, and organisations. The creation of value is predicated on the design of experiences that resonate with visitors, are rooted in the cultural identity of the local, and promote sustainable practices. The concept of co-creation is pivotal to this process, as it enables tourists to actively participate in defining their experiences (Monteiro et al., 2025).

Moreover, the proposal for integrated tourist experiences combining cultural immersion, storytelling, and interactive activities aims to surpass conventional visitation models, thereby facilitating the establishment of emotional bonds with destinations and encouraging more conscious and lasting behaviours (Monteiro et al., 2025).

The model proposed in this article is structured around four guiding principles, which form the foundation of the conceptual framework. As illustrated in Figure 2, the diagram demonstrates how stakeholder co-creation, immersive and narrative-driven tourist experiences, and audiovisual cultural mediation contribute to the achievement of long-term sustainable outcomes, while reinforcing both the attractiveness and the symbolic identity of tourist destinations. The importance of convergence between narrative innovation, territorial authenticity and ethical commitment to sustainability is reinforced by these principles.

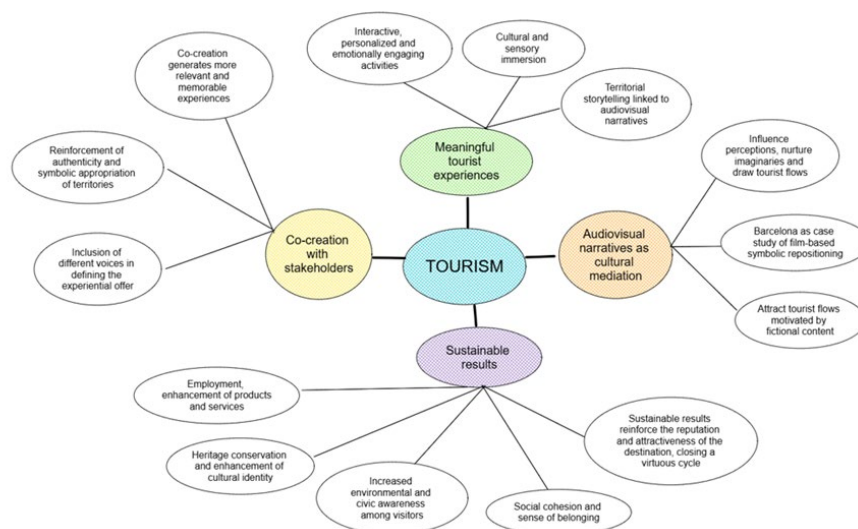


Figure 2. Mind map of co-creation, tourist experiences, audiovisual narratives, and sustainable outcomes in film tourism. Source: Elaborated by the authors with conceptual and visual assistance from ChatGPT (OpenAI, 2025).

Taken together, the relationships illustrated in Figure 2 demonstrate that film tourism operates as an integrated system in which co-creation, narrative immersion and audiovisual mediation produce emotional, symbolic and sustainability-oriented value. This synthesis provides the conceptual basis for the experiential marketing framework developed in the following sections.

3. Study

3.1. Research Design and Conceptual Development

This article adopts a predominantly conceptual, exploratory and qualitative research design centred on developing a purpose-driven experiential marketing framework for film-induced destinations. The methodological strategy combines:

1. an interdisciplinary literature review.
 2. the construction of a conceptual model.
 3. An illustrative application using stakeholder insights from Monsanto (Portugal).
- ✓ Literature review and conceptual sources

The conceptual framework was developed through an extensive review of literature on the following topics:

- Experiential marketing and emotional branding (Batat, 2024; Gobé, 2001);
- Purpose-driven strategy and marketing-mix evolution (Blount & Leinwand, 2019; Vargo et al., 2020).
- Film-induced tourism and place branding (Beeton, 2016; Connell, 2012; Hudson & Ritchie, 2006).

- Sustainability frameworks applied to tourism, particularly the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) (2021).

These sources informed the structuring of the model's five dimensions: integrated experience, branding, people, emotional touchpoints and processes.

- ✓ Why GRI instead of ESG?

The study adopts the GRI framework due to its operational suitability for destination management organisations (DMOs).

While ESG indicators primarily address investor-oriented risk, GRI standards provide process-level guidance (e.g. GRI 203, 413 and 418) that can be mapped directly onto:

- Visitor Journeys.
- Stakeholder involvement.
- Experiential design and digital touchpoints.
- Digital touchpoints.
- Community impacts.

These factors make GRI more appropriate for purpose-driven marketing in film-induced destinations.

3.2. Empirical Illustration: Stakeholder Insights from Monsanto

This is not an empirical validation study, but an exploratory illustration has been included to demonstrate the applicability of the model in a real-world context.

The context is Monsanto, a rural Portuguese village with a strong cultural identity that recently gained international exposure as a filming location for House of the Dragon. This setting is relevant for exploring the intersection of:

- Film narratives.
- Emotional engagement.
- Place identity.
- Experiential marketing.
- ✓ Data collection

Between May and July 2025, 25 semi-structured interviews were conducted with a range of stakeholders.

To preserve material for future, more comprehensive empirical work, eight interviews were purposively selected for illustrative analysis in this article.

1. Three tourists (diversity in terms of age, nationality and motivation).
2. Two local entrepreneurs from the accommodation and restaurant sectors.
3. Two institutional representatives (one from the regional tourism board and one from the local authority).
4. One long-term resident.

The interviews (lasting 30–45 minutes) were recorded with consent, transcribed, and examined through thematic coding.

- ✓ Analytical approach

Coding was guided by the five dimensions of the conceptual model and relevant GRI indicators.

The analysis does not seek to validate the model statistically; rather, it aims to:

1. Illustrate how each dimension manifests in a real destination.
2. Identify convergences and divergences across stakeholders.
3. Demonstrate conceptual-to-practical coherence.

This exploratory illustration demonstrates the framework's relevance and potential for transferability.

3.3. Alignment with Global Reporting Initiative (GRI)

To reinforce operational and ethical consistency, each dimension of the model was mapped to relevant GRI indicators, strengthening its applicability for DMOs adopting sustainability-oriented management.

Key links include:

- GRI 203 – Indirect Economic Impact: local value creation via integrated experiences.
- GRI 413 – Local Community Engagement: co-creation, resident involvement and authenticity.
- GRI 401/404 – Employment & Training: emotional competence of staff (People dimension).
- GRI 418 – Customer Privacy: digital touchpoints and post-visit engagement.
- GRI 102-43 – Stakeholder Participation: participatory processes and governance.

This mapping is summarised in Table 3, which presents the correspondence between the five dimensions of the experiential marketing model and the relevant GRI indicators.

Table 3. Correspondence between the dimensions of the experiential marketing model and GRI indicators.

Model Dimension	Description / Sustainability Contribution	Relevant GRI Indicators
Integrated Experience	Co-creation, local authenticity, community involvement	GRI 203 – Indirect Economic Impact GRI 413 – Local Community Engagement
Branding	Representation of cultural identity, audiovisual narratives, place image	GRI 203 – Economic Impact GRI 102-43 – Stakeholder Engagement
People	Emotional competence, staff training, quality of human interactions	GRI 401 – Employment GRI 404 – Training and Education
Emotional Touchpoints	Visitor emotions, digital engagement, satisfaction, social interactions	GRI 418 – Customer Privacy GRI 413 – Community
Processes	Governance, operational sequences, digital experience, transparency	GRI 102-43 – Stakeholder Participation GRI 418 – Privacy

Source: Elaboration by the authors based on the proposed model and the GRI Standards (2021).

This alignment positions the model simultaneously as: a strategic marketing framework; a sustainability-oriented management tool; useful for DMOs; cultural programmers; event organisers and film-related initiatives.

Finally, stakeholder comments highlight how emotional appeal, narrative identity and audiovisual influence shape value creation in film-induced destinations, reinforcing the multidimensional nature of the proposed framework.

4. Findings, Discussion and Conclusions

4.1. Findings

The exploratory validation conducted in Monsanto confirms the relevance and applicability of the proposed purpose-driven experiential marketing model. The five dimensions integrated experience, branding, people, emotional touchpoints and processes emerged consistently across stakeholder narratives. Illustrative examples include:

- **Integrated Experience:**
"We joined a guided tour that mixed history and filming spots, it felt authentic." (Entrepreneur #1)
→ Demonstrates co-creation, experiential integration, and perceived authenticity.
- **Branding:**
"We came because the series made the village famous." (Tourist #2)

→This reinforces the mediating role of audiovisual narratives in shaping expectations and the image of a destination.

- People:

“The staff welcomed us warmly and explained the filming story.” (Tourist #1)

→This highlights the importance of emotional intelligence and moments of truth in service interactions.

- Emotional touchpoints:

“Sharing photos online was part of the fun.” (Tourist #3)

→This indicates the growing importance of digital engagement and user-generated content (UGC).

- Processes:

“The booking app was easy to use and respected privacy.” (Institutional #1)

→This shows the operational relevance of transparent, user-friendly and privacy-aware systems.

To clarify how empirical insights relate to sustainability principles, Table 4 maps the key experiential themes to the corresponding GRI indicators.

Table 4. Mapping experiential marketing themes to GRI indicators.

Theme	Representative Quote	Insight	GRI Indicator
Integrated Experience	“We joined a guided tour that mixed history and filming spots, it felt authentic.” (Entrepreneur #1)	Co-creation and narrative integration enhance memorability and perceived authenticity.	GRI 203 (Indirect Economic Impacts) GRI 413 (Local Community Engagement)
Branding	“We came because the series made the village famous.” (Tourist #2)	Audiovisual narratives influence expectations and shape destination attractiveness.	GRI 203 (Economic Impact of Cultural Exposure)
People	“Staff welcomed us warmly and explained the filming story.” (Tourist #1)	Emotional competence and empathetic interaction strengthen visitor satisfaction.	GRI 401 (Employment) GRI 404 (Training & Education)
Emotional Touchpoints	“Sharing photos online was part of the fun.” (Tourist #3)	User-generated content amplifies emotional engagement and co-created storytelling.	GRI 418 (Data Protection and Privacy)
Process	“The booking app was easy and respected privacy.” (Institutional #1)	Digital processes influence trust, accessibility, and ethical data handling.	GRI 418 (Data Privacy)

Source: Authors' elaboration based on interview data and the GRI Standards (2021).

This table illustrates how key dimensions of the proposed purpose-driven experiential marketing model (integrated experience, branding, people, emotional touchpoints and processes) are reflected in the perspectives of interview participants and how these align with relevant Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) standards.

4.2. Discussion

The findings provide coherent validation of the purpose-driven experiential marketing model, demonstrating how its five dimensions operate in film-induced destinations. Three overarching insights emerge.

Firstly, the results demonstrate that purpose is not merely a strategic statement, but rather a factor that shapes operational marketing practices by guiding the incorporation of emotional, cultural and sustainability elements into the tourist experience. Second, stakeholders' statements reveal that visitors favour experiences combining authenticity, narrative immersion, and ethical positioning, suggesting that purpose functions as an anchor for trust, differentiation, and value creation.

Secondly, the experiential marketing mix derived from the literature integrated experience, branding, people, emotional touchpoints and processes proves applicable in a real-world context. Insights from Monsanto confirm that these dimensions reinforce each other: branding attracts tourists, people mediate emotional meaning, emotional touchpoints stimulate sharing and identification, and processes ensure consistency, efficiency and protection (e.g. data privacy). This supports the claim that experiential marketing in film tourism requires an integrated, interdependent approach rather than isolated tactical actions.

Thirdly, mapping the findings onto GRI indicators shows that experiential marketing can serve communicative, promotional, sustainability reporting, and governance purposes. Alignment with GRI 203 (indirect economic impact), 413 (community involvement), 404 (training) and 418 (privacy) indicates that destination marketing organisations (DMOs) can operationalise sustainability through the experiential journey itself rather than treating sustainability as an external or parallel policy layer.

These findings have three implications for destinations inspired by films:

- (1) Cinematic narratives act as emotional mediators, amplifying place identity.
- (2) Co-creation and user-generated content (UGC) strengthen loyalty and symbolic attachment.
- (3) Sustainability frameworks such as the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) can meaningfully structure destination management strategies that prioritise transparency, community well-being and long-term competitiveness.

Overall, the discussion confirms the importance of a purpose-driven, experiential approach as a strategic tool for destinations seeking to leverage audiovisual exposure whilst promoting social, cultural and environmental responsibility.

4.3. Theoretical Implications

This study makes several theoretical contributions that advance our understanding of experiential marketing and film-induced tourism.

Firstly, it broadens the theoretical basis of experiential marketing by sitting it within the context of film-induced tourism and anchoring it in organisational purpose. While previous research has emphasised the role of film in shaping destination image and travel motivation (Beeton, 2016; Hudson & Ritchie, 2006), our model goes further than considering the effects on image. It introduces purpose-driven experiential marketing as a multidimensional construct in which emotional value, territorial authenticity, and sustainability act as the primary drivers of experience design. This addresses recent calls to incorporate ethical, emotional and socio-cultural dimensions into frameworks for tourism experiences (Batat, 2024; Araújo-Vila et al., 2024).

Secondly, the study contributes to literature on place branding and cultural tourism by emphasising the role of audiovisual narratives in strengthening territorial identity. While traditional place branding approaches tend to focus on positioning strategies and promotional imagery (Anholt, 2007; Morgan, Pritchard & Pride, 2011), the proposed model suggests that cinematic representation can encourage symbolic co-creation between tourists and destinations. Consequently, it enriches theoretical discussions at the intersection of cultural mediation, narrative authenticity, and territorial marketing (Connell, 2012; Richards, 2011)

Thirdly, the model incorporates sustainability into film tourism theory, an area which remains underdeveloped. By aligning its five dimensions with the indicators of the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the study introduces a systematic approach to evaluating the socio-economic, cultural and environmental impacts of film-based experiences. This strengthens emerging discussions on responsible tourism development and

the balance between cultural valorisation and commercialisation (Méndez-León et al., 2021; Fernandes et al., 2024).

Finally, while Monsanto is used as an illustrative case study, the conceptual model can be applied to other film-induced destinations. Its emphasis on purpose, experiential design and sustainability provides a versatile theoretical framework that can be applied to diverse territorial and cultural contexts. Consequently, it makes a valuable contribution to debates on the evolution of experiential tourism and the strategic role of audiovisual narratives in shaping future destination management practices.

4.4. Limitations and Future Research

Although this study makes an integrated conceptual contribution to the field of purpose-driven experiential marketing in film-induced destinations, several limitations must be acknowledged.

Firstly, the empirical component is illustrative rather than confirmatory. While the qualitative insights from Monsanto exemplify how the proposed dimensions may operate in practice, they do not constitute systematic empirical validation of the model. While the strategic subsample of interviews is diverse, it is insufficient for generalisation and was not designed to support claims of representativeness. Future studies should therefore incorporate the full dataset and apply rigorous qualitative protocols, such as multi-coder thematic analysis or grounded theory, to strengthen analytical depth and reliability.

Secondly, the model was examined within a single cultural and geographical context, at an early stage of the destination's film-induced visibility. Film tourism dynamics often evolve over time, being shaped by media exposure cycles, infrastructure development, and resident attitudes. Therefore, longitudinal research would be valuable in assessing how the five dimensions, particularly emotional touchpoints and integrated experience, shift across phases of destination maturity.

Thirdly, while the framework aligns with GRI sustainability indicators, operational measurement was beyond the scope of this study. Future research should explore how destination management organisations (DMOs) can translate these indicators into actionable metrics and integrate them into monitoring systems for visitor experience, community impact, and environmental performance. Mixed-methods designs combining surveys, digital trace data (user-generated content, platform analytics) and socio-economic indicators would offer a more comprehensive evaluation.

Fourthly, the experiential and narrative components of film tourism involve complex psychological processes, such as identity projection, media-place affinity and co-creation on digital platforms, that remain understudied in sustainability-oriented tourism marketing. Drawing on psychology, cultural studies and digital anthropology to refine the emotional and symbolic dimensions of the model may benefit future research.

Finally, comparative research across multiple film-induced destinations that vary in terms of scale, media reach, governance structures, and cultural heritage would enhance our understanding of how transferable the model is. Applying it to urban, rural and cross-border destinations, or to festivals and creative events, may reveal different configurations and boundary conditions.

Overall, the model provides a basis for further theoretical development and empirical investigation. Comprehensive validation will depend on broader samples, diversified destinations, quantitative metrics and interdisciplinary approaches capable of capturing the multidimensional nature of experiential marketing induced by film.

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Data Availability Statement: The data collected in this study consist of confidential interview recordings and anonymised transcripts. Due to privacy and ethical restrictions, and in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the audio files and full transcripts cannot be made publicly available. An anonymised subset of thematic codes may be provided by the corresponding author upon reasonable request and subject to ethics compliance. No publicly archived datasets were generated or analysed in this study.

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Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used in this manuscript:

DMO Destination Management Organisation
ESG Environmental, Social and Governance
GDPR General Data Protection Regulation
GRI Global Reporting Initiative
SDGs Sustainable Development Goals
UGC –User-Generated Content

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