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*Research Paper*

## Films as Strategic Tools for Tourism Destination Branding

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to design and present a theoretical and practical framework for leveraging films as a strategic tool in tourism destination branding. From the perspective of purpose, the research is classified as developmental, and in terms of nature and methodology, it constitutes a descriptive-analytical study with a qualitative approach. Data were collected through non-probability sampling using the snowball technique from experts in the fields of tourism, marketing, and media management. Data collection tools included semi-structured interviews and electronic questionnaires. The collected data were analyzed using inductive thematic analysis, resulting in the identification of 24 key indicators. These indicators were organized into six strategic components: (1) film production and selection, (2) media relations and partnerships, (3) designing film-based tourism experiences, (4) destination infrastructure and services, (5) policy and institutional support, and (6) digital marketing and social media enhancement. The findings suggest that the coordinated application of these components can significantly enhance the destination image, attract target tourists, increase visitor satisfaction, and strengthen the destination's brand identity. The proposed framework offers an integrated and scholarly approach to employing films in tourism destination branding, with the potential to enhance sustainable competitiveness in the global tourism market.

**Keywords:** Branding, Tourism, Destination, Film, Marketing

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Destination branding has increasingly become one of the most crucial strategies for tourism development at both national and international levels (Hanna et al., 2020). In today's highly competitive environment, merely possessing natural, historical, or cultural attractions is not sufficient for attracting tourists (Esipova & Gokova, 2020). Instead, destinations must create a distinctive identity and a positive image in the minds of travelers in order to stand out in the global tourism market (Almeida-Santana & Moreno-Gil, 2019; Yen et al., 2022). Destination branding is a multifaceted process that involves identifying and strengthening a destination's competitive advantages, narrating unique stories about the destination, and utilizing innovative marketing tools to highlight these attributes. This process not only enhances awareness and differentiation of the destination but also plays a vital role in fostering tourist loyalty, encouraging repeat visits, and contributing to the economic and social sustainability of tourism regions (Milicevic et al., 2017; Pereira et al., 2018). Consequently, many countries and cities are now striving to reinforce their tourism brand through innovative approaches to secure a sustainable and competitive position in the global marketplace.

Within this context, films and cinematic productions have emerged as one of the most powerful tools for cultural and communication in destination branding (Yakovenko & Strachkova, 2019). The visual power, narrative depth, and storytelling capacity of films influence the emotions and perceptions of audiences, transforming destinations showcased on screen into tangible and appealing experiences (Raj, 2018). Unlike traditional advertising, films engage audiences by creating immersive and emotionally resonant scenes, thereby shaping a stronger and more enduring image of the destination (Sharma, 2017). Successful global examples, such as the significant rise in tourist visits to castles, cities, and natural landscapes featured in popular movies, illustrate how films can directly enhance the brand value and attractiveness of destinations (Liu et al., 2020; Chin & Liu, 2018). Hence, films should not be regarded merely as sources of entertainment, but as strategic tools for marketing and branding destinations in the increasingly competitive tourism industry.

Given the growing importance of branding in the success of tourism destinations and the unique role of films in shaping positive perceptions, it is essential to examine this topic in greater depth. Although previous studies have addressed tourism marketing through media, less attention has been paid to the specific factors that transform films into effective tools for destination branding. Addressing this gap, the present study seeks to identify and analyze the key dimensions and components that enable films to function as branding instruments for tourism destinations. The primary aim of this research is to propose a conceptual framework that demonstrates how films can transcend their role as mere entertainment media and become influential tools in creating, reinforcing, and sustaining destination brands. Beyond enriching the theoretical literature on destination branding, the findings of this study will provide practical insights for policymakers, tourism managers, and film industry stakeholders seeking to harness the shared potential of these two sectors.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. Tourism destination branding**

Tourism destination branding constitutes a fundamental component of tourism marketing strategy, characterized by a dynamic and multidimensional process that requires continuous collaboration among diverse stakeholders, including destination managers, policymakers, local communities, industry practitioners, and marketers, to create and strengthen a unique identity that attracts potential visitors (Elizabeth et al., 2023). This process involves identifying and leveraging the competitive advantages of a destination by utilizing both tangible attributes, such as natural attractions, cultural heritage, and infrastructure, and intangible elements, including cultural values, narratives, and emotional experiences. Central to destination branding is the concept of brand equity, defined as the commercial value derived from tourists' perceptions of a destination, which plays a pivotal role in shaping positive destination image and fostering tourist loyalty (Rahman et al., 2021). Recent studies have demonstrated that destination brand association mediates the relationship between brand equity and tourists' revisit intentions, particularly in health tourism contexts, thereby underscoring the importance of targeted brand management in influencing tourist behavior (Rahman et al., 2021; Elizabeth et al., 2023).

Tourism destination branding, beyond marketing, requires a holistic and strategic approach that integrates the physical, cultural, social, and emotional dimensions of the destination

(Albeshchenko et al., 2024). Within this framework, experiential branding and the application of innovative techniques such as brand storytelling and content marketing, especially in the context of new media, have gained particular significance. These approaches enable destinations to convey compelling visual and emotional narratives, fostering deeper connections with prospective visitors (Asyraf et al., 2022; Kilipiri et al., 2023; Jo et al., 2022). Such marketing strategies not only enhance brand awareness and image but also create emotional experiences that directly influence tourists' travel decisions. Research indicates that emotional measurement techniques, such as electroencephalographic (EEG) methodologies, demonstrate a strong correlation between the effectiveness of promotional campaigns and consumers' affective perceptions, highlighting the critical role of emotional branding in decision-making processes (Bastiaansen et al., 2020). Empirical evidence suggests that involving local communities in the branding process enhances both the authenticity of the brand and the sense of ownership, leading to greater tourist satisfaction and brand sustainability. Moreover, the architectural, landscape, and infrastructural features of a destination significantly contribute to the overall brand experience, and meaningfully articulating these attributes can provide a competitive edge in tourism markets (Giannopoulos et al., 2020). Therefore, effective tourism destination branding requires an integrated strategy that simultaneously addresses brand equity, emotional engagement, innovative marketing techniques, stakeholder collaboration, and the unique attributes of the destination. Such a comprehensive approach establishes a sustainable competitive position and ensures long-term impact in the minds of tourists (Albeshchenko et al., 2024).

## **2.2. Films as a tool for tourism destination branding**

Film tourism has increasingly been recognized as a powerful tool for tourism destination branding, capitalizing on the widespread influence of cinematic narratives in shaping public perceptions and stimulating travel behavior. The phenomenon of movie-induced tourism, defined as visits to destinations featured in films or television, has become a central strategy for destinations aiming to enhance their visibility and competitiveness in the global market. Scholars such as Butler (2011) emphasize that both authentic and fictional filming locations can significantly influence tourist motivation, with filmmakers and national tourism organizations identifying substantial value in leveraging cinematic exposure. This is evident in studies such as Chen et al. (2021), who demonstrate how Chinese Kung Fu films have enhanced the image of Foshan, effectively turning it into a cultural tourism hub. Similarly, Michael et al. (2020) show that exposure to film locations

generates strong interest among Emiratis and Indian expatriates, reinforcing the role of films as economic drivers in destination branding.

Case studies further illustrate the capacity of films to reimagine and reposition destinations on both national and global scales. For example, O'Connor et al. (2010) detail how collaborations with filmmakers transformed Yorkshire's landscapes into recognizable icons through popular television series, embedding the region into global cultural consciousness. Comparable patterns are observed in Indonesia, where films have elevated the visibility of locations such as Ranu Kumbolo Lake (Hoorina & Soeprapto, 2018) and inspired youth to explore sites like those featured in Laskar Pelangi (Zulkifli & Rahman, 2021). Beyond promotional visibility, cinematic representations often create emotional narratives that resonate with audiences. Research by Kim (2012) adds another dimension by highlighting the role of cultural background and narrative depth—indicating that while visual settings attract initial attention, the story and characters embedded in the film often hold greater long-term influence over tourist engagement.

The contribution of films to destination branding extends beyond visibility to fostering memorable and emotionally rich experiences that enhance visitor satisfaction and loyalty. Yen et al. (2024) reveal that film-induced tourism strengthens tourists' subjective well-being, creating experiences that are not only memorable but also likely to lead to repeat visits and positive word-of-mouth recommendations. However, as Macdonald and O'Connor (2011) caution, the rapid growth of film tourism also raises sustainability concerns, particularly regarding cultural authenticity and community impacts. Thus, responsible management and multi-stakeholder collaboration become essential to balance promotional benefits with heritage preservation. Taken together, these findings highlight the transformative capacity of films to act as strategic tools for destination branding, offering both economic opportunities and cultural enrichment, while also underscoring the importance of sustainable and authentic branding practices in the long run.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

Given that this research aims to develop and present a comprehensive framework for tourism destination branding through films, it falls within the category of developmental research in terms of purpose. Furthermore, since the study seeks to identify and analyze the key components and indicators of such a framework, it belongs to the descriptive-analytical research group in terms of

nature and methodology. Regarding data collection and analysis, this study adopts a qualitative approach.

The statistical population of this research consisted of experts in tourism, marketing, and media management. Sampling was conducted through a non-probability approach using the snowball sampling technique to identify knowledgeable individuals relevant to the research topic. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and electronic questionnaires. The interview protocol and questionnaire were distributed via email in spring 2024, requesting participants to return their responses. Out of 14 distributed questionnaires, 11 complete responses were received. Although the initial plan included extending the sample in a second stage if theoretical saturation was not achieved, the analysis of responses indicated that saturation occurred after the eighth interview, as subsequent responses became largely repetitive. The demographic and professional characteristics of the participants are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Characteristics of the research study sample

| Row | Academic Degree | Field of Expertise | Years of Experience | Number of Experts |
|-----|-----------------|--------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| 1   | PhD             | Media Management   | 3 to 5 years        | 2                 |
| 2   | PhD             | Marketing          | 5 to 7 years        | 3                 |
| 3   | PhD             | Tourism            | 3 to 5 years        | 6                 |

The data collected in this phase were analyzed using an inductive thematic analysis approach, following the method of Braun and Clarke (2006). In this process, each sentence or paragraph of the responses was carefully examined and assigned a code. Through the refinement of these codes, first-level concepts were developed. In the second stage of coding, these concepts were organized into themes. In total, 24 concepts (indicators) were extracted, which, after further aggregation and analysis, were categorized into six themes (components). To ensure the validity and reliability of the findings, several methodological measures were implemented, including a multi-observer review for descriptive validity, re-examination of the data by two additional researchers, and verification of the alignment of the coded data with the theoretical foundations of the study for theoretical validity. This rigorous process enhanced the accuracy and quality of the data analysis and provided a solid foundation for presenting a scientifically robust and credible framework in the field of research.

## 4. RESULTS

The present study aimed to identify the key factors that enable leveraging films as strategic tools for tourism destination branding. Data were collected through interviews with experts and analyzed using thematic analysis. This process led to the identification of 24 key factors, which were grouped into six strategic components, as shown in Table 2. These components represent critical operational dimensions for transforming films into powerful destination branding tools.

**Table 2.** Key Factors for Leveraging Films as Tourism Destination Branding Tools

| Component                                      | Indicator  | Code |
|--|--|------|
| Film Production and Selection                  | – Selecting locations with strong tourist attraction capacity and cultural identity                          | F1   |
|  | – Collaborating with scriptwriters to incorporate destination elements into the storyline                    | F2   |
|  | – Inviting directors and producers with high marketing capability to film at the destination                 | F3   |
|  | – Producing supplementary content (documentaries, behind-the-scenes, short clips) related to the destination | F4   |
| Media Relations and Partnerships               | – Inviting and granting media access to film locations   | F5   |
|  | – Providing scripts, images, and ready-made promotional clips for media use                                  | F6   |
|  | – Using popular film celebrities in destination promotional campaigns  | F7   |
|  | – Creating cooperation between tourism departments and film companies for mutual promotion                   | F8   |
| Designing Film-Related Tourism Experiences     | – Designing film-themed tours with the presence of actors or filmmakers                                      | F9   |
|  | – Creating interactive and experiential spaces (VR, AR, gamification) at the destination                     | F10  |
|  | – Launching museums, exhibitions, or events related to the film  | F11  |
|  | – Creating special spots for photography and direct experience of film scenes                                | F12  |
| Destination Infrastructure and Services        | – Improving access and transportation routes to film locations   | F13  |
|  | – Developing accommodation and hospitality services aligned with the film experience                         | F14  |
|  | – Equipping the destination with signs, maps, and digital displays about the film                            | F15  |
|  | – Establishing souvenir and cultural merchandise centers related to the film                                 | F16  |
| Policy and Institutional Support               | – Providing financial incentives and tax exemptions for filming at the destination                           | F17  |
|  | – Developing protective regulations for film shooting locations  | F18  |
|  | – Creating cooperation processes between tourism organizations, filmmakers, and local communities            | F19  |
|  | – Defining legal frameworks for the use of film images and brand in tourism marketing                        | F20  |
| Digital Marketing and Social Media Enhancement | – Creating promotional campaigns on social media centered on the film  | F21  |
|  | – Encouraging user-generated content (UGC) related to the film and destination                               | F22  |
|  | – Publishing behind-the-scenes short clips to increase destination visibility                                | F23  |
|  | – Using hashtags and digital branding to establish the destination's identity                                | F24  |

As shown in Table 2, the identified factors are organized into strategic components that cover various aspects of leveraging films for destination branding. Factors related to “*Film Production and Location Selection*” focus on creating cinematic works that highlight destinations with strong tourist attraction capacity and cultural identity. This includes collaborating with scriptwriters to incorporate destination elements into the storyline, inviting directors and producers with strong marketing capabilities to shoot at the destination, producing supplementary content such as documentaries and behind-the-scenes footage, and providing media access to filming locations. Factors under “*Media Relations and Partnerships*” focus on creating collaborations with media stakeholders to enhance visibility and destination branding. This includes providing scripts, images, and ready-made promotional clips for media use, employing popular film celebrities in destination promotional campaigns, and fostering cooperation between tourism organizations and film companies for effective destination promotion.

The “*Designing Film-Related Tourism Experiences*” component includes creating tourism offerings that integrate the film narrative into visitor experiences, thereby strengthening the destination brand. This includes organizing themed film tours with the presence of actors or filmmakers, developing interactive and experiential attractions using virtual reality, augmented reality, or gamification, launching museums and exhibitions related to the film, and creating photography and direct-experience spots for film scenes.

The “*Destination Infrastructure and Services*” component involves developing physical environments and services needed to support film-based branding. This includes improving access and transportation routes to filming locations, developing accommodation and hospitality services aligned with the film experience, installing signage, maps, and digital displays about the film, establishing souvenir and cultural merchandise centers, and enhancing visitor facilities to reinforce branding effects.

The “*Policy and Institutional Support*” component refers to legal and organizational measures that facilitate leveraging films as destination branding tools. This includes providing financial incentives and tax exemptions for filming at the destination, establishing protective regulations for filming locations, creating cooperation processes between tourism organizations, filmmakers, and local communities, and defining legal frameworks for using film images and branding in tourism marketing.

The “*Digital Marketing and Social Media Enhancement*” component focuses on using online platforms to strengthen the branding effects of films. This includes launching targeted social media campaigns centered on the film, encouraging user-generated content related to the film and the destination, publishing behind-the-scenes clips to increase visibility, and using hashtags and digital branding strategies to establish the destination’s identity.

Together, these factors form a comprehensive framework for transforming films into strategic tools for tourism destination branding. Implementing these factors can strengthen the destination image, attract target tourist groups, and sustainably increase the destination’s brand value.

## 5. DISCUSSION

The present research was conducted to identify the key factors for leveraging films as tourism destination branding tools. In this regard, 24 indicators were identified through expert interviews and classified into six strategic components. Each of these components is explained below.

**Film Production and Location Selection:** One of the most important components in leveraging films as tools for tourism destination branding is "Film Production and Location Selection," based on the idea that films are not only entertaining content but also powerful marketing tools for introducing and strengthening a destination’s brand image. Selecting filming locations should consider the tourist attraction capacity and cultural identity of the destination to create a compelling visual experience for the audience (Pookaiyaudom & Tan, 2020). Collaborating with scriptwriters to incorporate destination elements into the storyline (Lund & Kimbu, 2020), inviting directors and producers with strong marketing capabilities, and producing supplementary content such as documentaries and behind-the-scenes clips all enhance the impact of the film on the destination’s brand. Providing media access to filming locations through permits and press collaborations ensures rapid and effective dissemination of the destination’s visual narrative. This factor demonstrates that location selection and film production are strategic marketing processes that require careful planning, cross-sector collaboration, and a deep understanding of the destination’s identity, ultimately producing a long-term impact on destination branding.

**Media Relations and Partnerships:** The component of "Media Relations and Partnerships" holds a critical position in the process of transforming films into tools for tourism destination branding, as effective media engagement and strategic partnerships can significantly expand the reach, depth, and longevity of a destination’s brand message. This factor encompasses a range of strategic

actions starting with inviting tourism media to film at destination locations and extending to providing access to scripts, images, ready-made clips, and supplementary content for use in advertisements, social media campaigns, and multi-platform promotions (Bhin, 2020). Engaging popular film celebrities in destination promotions, hosting collaborative events, and producing exclusive content ensure that the destination's narrative is widely and compellingly communicated, creating a deep emotional connection between audiences and the destination (Dhandhnia & Tripathi, 2019). Furthermore, fostering sustainable cross-sector partnerships between tourism authorities and film production companies enables the design and implementation of joint branding campaigns whose effects can extend well beyond a short-term project. This factor illustrates that targeted media relations and strategic partnerships not only enhance audience awareness but also contribute to building a lasting brand identity and strengthening the destination's mental image, making them a foundational element of long-term tourism branding *strategies*.

**Designing Film-Related Tourism Experiences:** The component of "Designing Film-Related Tourism Experiences" plays a pivotal role in transforming films into strategic tools for tourism destination branding, as unique experiences tied to a cinematic work can create a deep emotional connection between tourists and the destination, significantly strengthening the destination's brand image; this factor includes designing and implementing special film-themed tours with the presence of actors or filmmakers, creating interactive and immersive spaces such as virtual reality (VR) (Nayyar et al., 2018), augmented reality (AR) (Han et al., 2018), and gamification programs, organizing filmmaking workshops, exhibitions, and exclusive film-related events at the destination (Chen et al., 2019); such experiences not only add value to tourism but also encourage tourists to share their memories and experiences, thereby enhancing destination marketing organically and widely; moreover, this factor provides a cultural educational opportunity so that visitors, in addition to enjoying entertainment, become familiar with the history, culture, and unique characteristics of the destination; therefore, designing film-related tourism experiences is a crucial strategic tool in destination branding that requires planned investment and collaboration among tourism organizations, film producers, and local communities to fully leverage its potential for enhancing the destination's brand positioning.

**Destination Infrastructure and Services:** The component of "Destination Infrastructure and Services," represents a critical element in leveraging films for tourism destination branding. This

component encompasses providing proper access and improving transportation routes to filming locations, developing accommodation and hospitality services aligned with the film experience, equipping the destination with signs, maps, and digital displays related to the film, and establishing souvenir and cultural merchandise centers tied to the film. The importance of this component lies in the fact that even if a captivating film with breathtaking scenes is produced, the lack of adequate infrastructure can hinder its transformation into a successful tourism destination (Priyana & Prihartanto, 2024). Enhancing access and transportation not only increases visitor convenience but also directly influences the tourism experience, strengthening the positive perception of the destination in the audience's mind (Sulistio & Septiani, 2018). Developing accommodation and hospitality services—particularly those that recreate or reflect the film experience—enhances the sense of being part of the film world for tourists (St-James et al., 2018). Signs, maps, and digital displays serve as educational and promotional tools, providing valuable information and enriching the visual experience for visitors (Elgammal et al., 2020), thereby fostering deeper engagement with the film's story and the destination (Kowalczyk & Pokojski, 2018). Furthermore, establishing souvenir and cultural merchandise centers not only generates revenue but also strengthens tourists' sense of attachment and memory recall of the visit. Consequently, investing in this component elevates the destination's physical infrastructure while delivering a comprehensive and memorable brand experience that can have a lasting impact on the destination's image and attractiveness.

**Policy and Institutional Support:** The component of "Policy and Institutional Support" plays a crucial role in transforming films into effective tools for tourism destination branding. This component includes providing financial incentives and tax exemptions for filming at the destination, developing protective regulations for filming locations, creating cooperation processes between tourism organizations, filmmakers, and local communities, and defining legal frameworks for the use of film images and brands in tourism marketing. The significance of this component lies in the fact that without appropriate policy support and institutional frameworks, the execution of filming projects and the effective utilization of cinematic works for destination promotion would face serious challenges. Financial incentives and tax exemptions can attract professional filmmakers and investors (Marjanović et al., 2020), which in turn enhances the quality and impact of films. Protective regulations for filming locations not only preserve the cultural and environmental values of the destination (Fry et al., 2022) but also ensure that filming is carried out in accordance with necessary standards and considerations. Cooperation processes between

organizations and local communities help establish a supportive and sustainable ecosystem for filmmaking and tourism, ultimately fostering greater engagement and solidarity among stakeholders (Mendes et al., 2017). Legal frameworks for the use of film images and brands provide the necessary legal security for promotional and commercial use of cinematic works and help maintain the credibility of the destination brand. Overall, investment and support in this component pave the way for creating long-term and sustainable opportunities for destination branding through films.

**Digital Marketing and Social Media Enhancement:** The component of “Digital Marketing and Social Media Enhancement,” holds growing significance in branding tourism destinations through films, as digital media and social networks have become the primary communication and promotional tools today. This component includes creating film-centered promotional campaigns on social media, encouraging user-generated content (UGC) related to the film and destination, publishing behind-the-scenes clips to increase destination visibility, and using hashtags and digital branding to establish the destination’s identity. Smart utilization of these tools can extend the impact of films beyond a one-time audience experience (Franklin et al., 2015) and increase direct engagement with target audiences. Social media campaigns, leveraging optimization algorithms and precise targeting, can attract a broader range of tourists and enhance destination awareness (Dedeoğlu et al., 2020). Encouraging user-generated content fosters a sense of belonging and deeper engagement with the film and the destination (Nazare et al., 2024), which strengthens the destination’s brand. Behind-the-scenes clips, in addition to sparking interest and excitement (Osokin, 2019), create more opportunities for audience interaction with the destination. The use of hashtags and digital branding generates visual and semantic cohesion in the digital space, helping to embed the destination’s image in the audience’s mind. Overall, this component underscores that the success of destination branding through films is nearly impossible without effective utilization of digital marketing and social media tools, making investment in this area a strategic necessity for tourism destinations.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Films have evolved into powerful tools for shaping perceptions, building identity, and promoting tourism destinations on a global scale. Their ability to engage diverse audiences emotionally and visually makes them uniquely effective for destination branding. This study highlights six critical

components for leveraging films as strategic branding tools: Film Production and Selection, Media Relations and Partnerships, Designing Film-Related Tourism Experiences, Destination Infrastructure and Services, Policy and Institutional Support, and Digital Marketing and Social Media Enhancement. Each component includes specific indicators that collectively determine how effectively a film can create a strong brand identity for a destination. Recognizing these components allows destination managers, tourism stakeholders, and policymakers to design coherent strategies that integrate cinematic storytelling with destination marketing.

Effectively applying these six components can significantly enhance the visibility and attractiveness of tourism destinations. It can lead to stronger destination branding, higher levels of tourist satisfaction, increased visitor numbers, repeat visits, and deeper emotional connections with the place. To achieve this, destination planners must ensure that film productions align with the destination's cultural and identity strengths, foster media collaborations, create immersive and memorable tourism experiences, enhance infrastructure, develop supportive institutional policies, and utilize innovative digital marketing approaches. Ultimately, this integrated framework can transform film tourism from a passive phenomenon into a deliberate strategic approach for sustainable destination branding, contributing to long-term competitiveness in the global tourism market.

### **6.1. Limitations**

Despite the significant contributions of this study in developing a comprehensive framework for leveraging films as strategic tools for tourism destination branding, several limitations must be acknowledged. First, the findings are derived from expert interviews, which inherently carry subjective perspectives and potential biases based on personal experiences and professional backgrounds. Future studies could expand the scope of data collection by including diverse stakeholder groups such as tourists, local communities, policymakers, and representatives from the film industry to ensure a more balanced and inclusive understanding. Second, the study presents a general conceptual framework without delving into the specificities of cultural, geographic, or economic contexts. Since destinations vary widely in their tourism potential, cultural heritage, and market positioning, applying this framework to particular case studies could yield valuable insights into contextual variations and practical implementation challenges. Third, this research does not deeply address the rapidly evolving technological landscape, which significantly impacts both film production and tourism marketing. Emerging tools such as virtual

reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), artificial intelligence (AI), and immersive storytelling have the potential to transform film tourism branding, and future research should explore these innovations in detail.

## 6.2 Future research directions

For future research, longitudinal studies could be particularly valuable to assess the sustained effects of tourism destination branding through films on destination image, tourist engagement, and repeat visitation over time. Comparative research between destinations that have adopted the proposed six-component framework and those that have not could clarify the relative impact of these factors. Additionally, integrating quantitative methods, such as surveys and econometric modeling, alongside qualitative approaches would strengthen the empirical validation of the framework and allow for statistical generalization. Another important direction for future research is to examine the economic, social, and environmental sustainability implications of film-based tourism destination branding. This includes exploring how destinations can balance branding strategies with preserving cultural authenticity and environmental integrity, ensuring that tourism growth does not undermine local heritage or ecosystems. By addressing these limitations and exploring the proposed research directions, future studies can deepen the understanding of the complex relationship between films and tourism destination branding through films, thereby contributing to more effective and sustainable tourism development strategies.

### Declaration of Generative AI and AI-assisted technologies in the writing process

During the preparation of this work, the author(s) used ChatGPT to improve language, grammar, or structure. After using this tool/service, the author(s) reviewed and edited the content as needed and take(s) full responsibility for the content of the publication.

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