


A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF HERITAGE TOURISM BRANDING STRATEGIES: TRENDS, CHALLENGES, AND OPPORTUNITIES

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Article history: Received: Feb, 21st 2025 Accepted: Apr, 23th 2025</p>	<p>Objective: This article examines the literature on heritage tourism branding techniques, highlighting trends, challenges, and potential opportunities.</p>
<p>Keywords: Heritage Tourism; Branding Strategies; Digital Marketing; Authenticity; Sustainable Tourism.</p>	<p>Theoretical Framework: The study explores the interplay between cultural preservation and commercial branding in heritage tourism, focusing on the importance of a cohesive strategy that considers both cultural significance and commercial needs.</p>
	<p>Methodology: The review employed scholarly sources including JSTOR, Scopus, and Google Scholar, focusing on peer-reviewed articles published between 2000 and 2024. A thematic analysis was conducted to synthesise the findings.</p>
	<p>Results & Discussion: Significant advancements in heritage tourism branding include the increasing use of digital media and storytelling techniques. Challenges include maintaining authenticity amidst commercial pressures and navigating diverse stakeholder expectations. There are possibilities in leveraging technology to create immersive experiences that captivate the growing demographic of culturally curious travellers.</p>
	<p>Research Implications: The findings offer significant insights for understanding the complexities of branding within heritage tourism. They also present actionable recommendations for managers of heritage sites and tourism marketers, aiding them in developing effective branding strategies that harmonise commercial viability with the preservation of cultural integrity.</p>
	<p>Originality: The study contributes original insights by advocating a balance between cultural authenticity and commercial branding in heritage tourism. Future studies could explore how advancements in technology affect the experiences of heritage tourists and the importance of community involvement in branding strategies.</p>
	<p>Doi: https://doi.org/10.26668/businessreview/2025.v10i5.5506</p>

UMA REVISÃO SISTEMÁTICA DAS ESTRATÉGIAS DE MARCA DO TURISMO DE PATRIMÔNIO: TENDÊNCIAS, DESAFIOS E OPORTUNIDADES

RESUMO

Objetivo: Este artigo examina a literatura sobre técnicas de branding do turismo patrimonial, destacando tendências, desafios e oportunidades em potencial.

Estrutura Teórica: O estudo explora a interação entre a preservação cultural e a marca comercial no turismo de patrimônio, concentrando-se na importância de uma estratégia coesa que considere tanto o significado cultural quanto as necessidades comerciais.

Metodologia: A revisão empregou fontes acadêmicas, incluindo JSTOR, Scopus e Google Scholar, com foco em artigos revisados por pares publicados entre 2000 e 2024. Uma análise temática foi conduzida para sintetizar as descobertas.

Resultados e Discussão: Avanços significativos na marca do turismo patrimonial incluem o uso crescente de mídia digital e técnicas de narração de histórias. Os desafios incluem manter a autenticidade em meio a pressões comerciais e

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navegar pelas diversas expectativas das partes interessadas. Há possibilidades de aproveitar a tecnologia para criar experiências imersivas que cativem o crescente grupo demográfico de viajantes culturalmente curiosos.

Implicações da Pesquisa: Os resultados oferecem percepções significativas para a compreensão das complexidades da marca no turismo de patrimônio. Eles também apresentam recomendações práticas para gerentes de locais de patrimônio e profissionais de marketing de turismo, ajudando-os a desenvolver estratégias eficazes de branding que harmonizem a viabilidade comercial com a preservação da integridade cultural.

Originalidade: O estudo contribui com percepções originais ao defender um equilíbrio entre a autenticidade cultural e a marca comercial no turismo de patrimônio. Estudos futuros poderiam explorar como os avanços tecnológicos afetam as experiências dos turistas do patrimônio e a importância do envolvimento da comunidade nas estratégias de branding.

Palavras-chave: Turismo Patrimonial, Estratégias de Marca, Marketing Digital, Autenticidade, Turismo Sustentável.

UNA REVISIÓN SISTEMÁTICA DE LAS ESTRATEGIAS DE BRANDING DEL TURISMO PATRIMONIAL: TENDENCIAS, RETOS Y OPORTUNIDADES

RESUMEN

Objetivo: Este artículo examina la bibliografía sobre técnicas de creación de marca para el turismo patrimonial, destacando tendencias, retos y oportunidades potenciales.

Marco Teórico: El estudio explora la interacción entre la preservación cultural y la creación de marcas comerciales en el turismo patrimonial, centrándose en la importancia de una estrategia coherente que tenga en cuenta tanto la importancia cultural como las necesidades comerciales.

Metodología: La revisión empleó fuentes académicas como JSTOR, Scopus y Google Scholar, centrándose en artículos revisados por pares y publicados entre 2000 y 2024. Se realizó un análisis temático para sintetizar los resultados.

Resultados y Discusión: Entre los avances significativos en la creación de marcas turísticas patrimoniales se incluye el uso cada vez mayor de medios digitales y técnicas de narración de historias. Entre los retos que se plantean figuran el mantenimiento de la autenticidad en medio de las presiones comerciales y la gestión de las diversas expectativas de las partes interesadas. Existen posibilidades de aprovechar la tecnología para crear experiencias inmersivas que cautiven al creciente grupo demográfico de viajeros culturalmente curiosos.

Repercusiones de la Investigación: Las conclusiones aportan datos significativos para comprender las complejidades de la creación de marca en el turismo patrimonial. También presentan recomendaciones prácticas para los gestores de sitios patrimoniales y los comercializadores turísticos, ayudándoles a desarrollar estrategias de marca eficaces que armonicen la viabilidad comercial con la preservación de la integridad cultural.

Originalidad: El estudio aporta ideas originales al abogar por un equilibrio entre la autenticidad cultural y la creación de marcas comerciales en el turismo patrimonial. Futuros estudios podrían explorar cómo afectan los avances tecnológicos a las experiencias de los turistas del patrimonio y la importancia de la participación de la comunidad en las estrategias de marca.

Palabras clave: Turismo Patrimonial, Estrategias de Marca, Marketing Digital, Autenticidad, Turismo Sostenible.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

Travelling to experience the places and activities that truly depict the stories and people of the past and present is an essential component of heritage tourism, which is a subset of the tourist sector that operates on a worldwide scale. Natural resources, cultural resources, and historic resources are all included in it (Thuyet, 2023). assets tourism, which is a subset of the

tourism industry that is expanding at a rapid rate, not only makes a sizeable contribution to the economy but also plays an essential part in the protection of cultural and historical assets (Long, 2020). According to Jamal and Smith (2017), heritage tourism is a great instrument for fostering cultural interchange and understanding because of its potential to deliver educational experiences and deep cultural immersion. This is the particular appeal of heritage tourism which makes it a powerful tool.

1.2 IMPORTANCE OF BRANDING

Branding is not merely a marketing technique in the context of heritage tourism; rather, it is a purposeful approach to the creation of a distinctive identity that connects with the cultural and historical essence of the destination. According to Özyurt and Sariibrahımođlu (2022), effective branding in heritage tourism requires the use of storytelling, authenticity, and emotional connection. This ensures that the historical narrative is transmitted in a manner that is both compelling and environmentally responsible. According to Loureiro et al. (2022), branding works to differentiate heritage sites in a market that is highly competitive, to enhance the appeal of these sites, and to ensure that sustainable tourism practices are implemented that respect and protect the essential cultural worth of the heritage sites.

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE REVIEW

The purpose of this review paper is to investigate the prevalent trends, difficulties, and opportunities in the field of heritage tourist branding. Through an in-depth analysis of the existing body of literature, the purpose of this study is to get an understanding of the branding and marketing strategies employed by heritage sites, the difficulties they encounter in preserving their authenticity and competitiveness, and the opportunities that are currently emerging within this dynamic area. This exploration is essential for the development of strategies that not only contribute to the sustainable management and preservation of heritage assets, but also contribute to the promotion of heritage tourism (Hameed et al., 2022).

1.4 STRUCTURE OF THE PAPER

Specifically, the paper is organised as follows: After the introduction, the section on the literature review dives into the ideas of heritage tourism and branding, and it also investigates the research that have been conducted in this particular subject in the past. The methodology section provides an explanation of the technique that was adopted for the selection and analysis of the literature. There are trends, difficulties, and opportunities that have been recognised in the literature, and they are presented in the findings section. After this, there is a discussion section that then interprets these findings in light of the theories that have already been established and the practical consequences that they have. In the final section of the paper, a summary of the findings, a discussion of the limitations of the study, and some recommendations for further research are included.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 HERITAGE TOURISM: DEFINITION AND EVOLUTION

There has been a major development over the years in the field of heritage tourism, which is a type of tourism in which tourists experience the natural, historical, and cultural aspects of a particular location. In the beginning, heritage tourism was primarily concerned with the preservation and interpretation of historical places. However, it has since grown to embrace a wider variety of experiences, including cultural practices, natural landscapes, and intangible heritage (Wang et al., 2022). According to Yu et al. (2023), the evolution of historic tourism is characterised by an increasing emphasis on authenticity, sustainability, and community involvement. In their article from 2020, Seyhan and Russo explore the growth of heritage tourism in protected rural areas, stressing the change towards approaches that are more inclusive and sustainable. In the year 2023, Martínez Yáñez conducts an investigation into the development of international cultural tourism charters, which are a reflection of the shifting ideas and practices in the field of heritage tourism.

2.2 BRANDING IN TOURISM

The concept of branding in the tourism industry has become an essential tactic for locations that are looking to identify themselves in a market that is very competitive. Soltani et al. (2018) investigate city branding techniques and analyse the influence these tactics have on the success of local tourism. They highlight the significance of having a brand identity that is both distinctive and captivating. M. Zaenul Muttaqin and Oscar Oswald O. Wambrauw (2023) address the difficulties and approaches involved in branding tourism locations. They emphasise the importance of developing novel strategies in order to compete in a market that is always evolving. An examination of nation branding and marketing tactics to tackle tourism crises is presented in Avraham (2020). This study demonstrates the significance that branding plays in managing the image and perceptions of a destination. As an indication of the larger ramifications of branding beyond consumer marketing, Bagheri et al. (2023) describe employer brand improvement measures in the tourist and hospitality sector after the COVID-19 outbreak.

When it comes to heritage tourism and branding, there have been a number of studies that have especially focused on the intersection. A creative strategy for the branding of a destination for meetings, incentives, conventions, and exhibitions (MICE) tourism that incorporates heritage tourism is proposed by Kim et al. (2022), proving the potential for unique branding techniques. In their study, Basyari et al. (2023) investigate the use of city branding in the process of establishing historic military tourism. Their findings illustrate the various ways in which branding may be applied in traditional heritage contexts. The authors Escandon-Barbosa et al. (2023) explore the moderating influence of virtual reality technologies in the branding of the cultural tourism industry. They stress the role that technology plays in promoting heritage branding. In their discussion of the role that national heritage designation plays in city branding and tourist management, Dai et al. (2022) highlight the significance of heritage in the process of forming destination brands.

2.3 ANALYSIS OF MARKETING STRATEGIES IN HERITAGE TOURISM

Isdarmanto et al. (2021) carried out an investigation into marketing techniques that centred on the distinctiveness of Yogyakarta's traditions, cultures, and culinary items as assets of branding with the purpose of supporting the growth of the tourism industry in the city. Their research emphasises the significance of utilising the distinctive characteristics of the local

community in branding initiatives in order to boost tourism development. Similarly, Kostopoulou et al. (2021) explore the legacy branding of the Silk Road and its significance in the development of polycentric tourism. They highlight the potential of heritage branding in the creation of diversified and sustainable tourism experiences.

2.4 INCORPORATING SERVICE DESIGN IN RELIGIOUS HERITAGE BRANDING

Chang and Chuang (2021) investigate the possibilities of incorporating service design into religious heritage branding, with a particular focus on the preservation of cultural traditions. The findings of their research offer valuable insights into teaching and design techniques that may be implemented to successfully include service design into heritage branding. This will result in an improved experience for visitors while simultaneously protecting cultural values.

2.5 IMPACT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE ON DESTINATION BRANDING

In the year 2023, Son and Kyung Hee University-Seoul investigate the influence that cultural legacy has on the branding of destinations and the experiences that tourists have, with a particular emphasis on South Korea. The findings of their study indicate the considerable influence that cultural heritage has on the formation of destination brands and the enhancement of tourist experiences. This research also highlights the necessity of strategically integrating components of heritage into branding initiatives.

2.6 CREATIVE AND INNOVATIVE DESTINATION BRANDING

Dolah et al. (2022) present methods of destination branding that are unique and new for the tourism industry in Penang. Their research demonstrates how creativity and innovation may be utilised in the branding of destinations, particularly in the field of heritage tourism, in order to attract tourists while simultaneously retaining the cultural and historical core of the place.

2.7 SUSTAINABLE DESTINATION BRANDING AND MARKETING

The article by Sharma et al. (2019) offers a detailed overview of the branding and marketing of sustainable destinations. The work that they do is essential in gaining a knowledge of how sustainability may be included into branding and marketing strategies in heritage tourism. This will ensure that tourist practices are responsible and that heritage is preserved for another generation.

2.8 HERITAGE AND LITERARY TOURISM IN CITY BRANDING

Cesarino (2022) investigates literary tourism and city branding, with a particular emphasis on the heritization of Xu Xiake's previous mansion in Jiangyin to represent the city. The purpose of this study is to demonstrate how literary history may be utilised in city branding, which can contribute to the diversification and richness of experiences that are associated with historical tourism.

2.9 CULTURAL HERITAGE IN EDUCATIONAL PROJECTS FOR PLACE BRANDING

In their 2019 study, Radosavljević and Kuletin Čulafić investigate the utilisation of cultural assets for the purpose of place branding in educational projects. They employ the case studies of Smederevo and Golubac strongholds, both located on the Danube. The findings of their study emphasise the possibility for incorporating cultural heritage into educational programmes in order to improve place branding and to promote sustainable tourism.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 DATA SOURCES

The search for relevant material for this systematic review was carried out with the assistance of a number of academic databases and sources. JSTOR, Scopus, Google Scholar, and PubMed were among the databases that we used. The selected databases were selected because to the extensive coverage they provide of publications that have been subjected to peer review in the domains of cultural studies, marketing, and tourism. The researchers also looked

at relevant literature, conference papers, and reports from respectable organisations like the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and the World Tourism Organisation). In addition to this, they conducted interviews with professionals working in the field of cultural heritage and tourism in order to collect insightful and perspective-building information.

3.2 SEARCH STRATEGY

The search strategy consisted of utilising a combination of keywords and phrases that were associated with historical tourism and branding tactics. Keywords such as "heritage tourism," "branding in tourism," "cultural heritage," "tourism marketing," and "destination branding" were utilised in the search. To further narrow the scope of the search, Boolean operators (AND and OR) were utilised. As an illustration, a search string could consist of phrases such as "cultural heritage OR tourism marketing" or "heritage tourism AND branding strategies" (Page, McKenzie, et al., 2021). The search technique also includes limiting the results based on publication date in order to guarantee that the most recent and pertinent sources were included in the search of the information. In addition, academic databases and websites with a good reputation were given priority in order to collect material that was credible and authoritative regarding the subject matter.

3.3 SELECTION CRITERIA

The inclusion criteria for the literature were as follows: publications that were published in English between the years 2000 and 2024 and were subjected to peer review; the papers focused on heritage tourism and branding initiatives. Non-peer-reviewed papers, articles written in languages other than English, and articles that were not clearly related to the fundamental concepts of legacy tourism and branding were among the criteria that were excluded. According to Opheim et al. (2019), all studies that were merely focused on general tourism marketing and did not provide a particular emphasis on heritage tourism were not included in the consideration.

3.4 DATA ANALYSIS

A method known as theme analysis was utilised in order to examine the works that were chosen. Finding, analysing, and reporting on recurring themes or patterns within the data was a necessary step in this process. The investigation was carried out in a number of stages, including basic coding, theme development, and theme evaluation. The themes were then connected to the research questions and objectives of the review in order to complete the process. An approach known as trial sequential analysis was chosen because it is helpful in conducting systematic reviews that include meta-analysis (Wetterslev et al., 2017). This was done in order to guarantee the reliability and validity of the work. Furthermore, both single screening and typical double screening approaches were taken into consideration for the selection of studies in order to improve the effectiveness of the review process (Waffenschmidt et al., 2019).

4 FINDINGS

4.1 TRENDS IN BRANDING STRATEGIES

The literature review revealed several emerging trends in heritage tourism branding strategies:

1. **Digital and Social Media Marketing:** According to Page, McKenzie, and others (2021), there is a movement towards utilising digital platforms and social media for the purpose of branding and engagement. This trend is a reflection of the growing significance of having a presence and being connected online in order to communicate with a larger audience and create engagement with them. Heritage tourism locations have the ability to effectively exhibit their one-of-a-kind services, communicate with prospective guests, and establish a feeling of community around their brand by utilising digital platforms and social media. Furthermore, this strategy makes it possible to communicate and receive feedback in real time, which affords destinations the opportunity to modify their branding strategies in accordance with the ever-changing requirements and preferences of their target market.
2. **Storytelling and Authenticity:** According to Opheim et al. (2019), branding should place an emphasis on authentic experiences and storytelling in order to establish more

meaningful connections with tourists. To do this, it is possible to incorporate local tales, customs, and cultural history into the branding activities that are being undertaken. Heritage tourism places have the ability to attract tourists who are looking for experiences that are both meaningful and immersive if they share stories that are compelling and demonstrate the authentic character of the destination. Not only does this strategy set the destination apart from others, but it also helps to cultivate a sense of trust and credibility among those who could visit the location in the future.

3. **Sustainable and Responsible Branding:** According to Wetterslev et al. (2017), there is a growing emphasis on the sustainable and responsible tourism practices that are being used in branding initiatives. These methods not only indicate a commitment to conserving and protecting the destination for future generations, but they also appeal to the growing number of travellers who are concerned about the environment. Through the incorporation of sustainable practices into their branding, venues have the ability to attract tourists who share their values and appreciate responsible tourism. It is possible that this could result in favourable word-of-mouth recommendations and subsequent visits, which will further build the sense of community and loyalty that is associated with the company.
4. **Technological Integration:** Making use of cutting-edge technology such as augmented reality and virtual reality to create immersive brand experiences (Waffenschmidt et al., 2019). Through the provision of immersive experiences that engage and fascinate travellers who are environmentally conscious, technological integration has the potential to strengthen the branding efforts of a geographic location. By utilising technology such as augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR), locations are able to exhibit their sustainable practices in a visually attractive manner. This enables tourists to virtually explore eco-friendly efforts and observe the good influence that these initiatives have on the environment. A memorable and participatory experience that resonates with travellers is created as a result of this, which not only reaffirms the destination's commitment to sustainability but also encourages travellers to spread the word about the destination and select it for their future travel plans.
5. **Experiential Marketing:** Creating marketing initiatives that are one-of-a-kind and immersive, with the goal of providing experiences that are unforgettable (Nambiema et al., 2021). During these campaigns, guests may participate in immersive activities such as eco-tours, workshops on sustainable practices, or even interactive exhibitions that

educate them about the destination's efforts to conserve the environment. Through the participation of tourists in experiential marketing campaigns, places have the ability to make a long-lasting impression on them and motivate them to become advocates for environmentally responsible travel. This strategy not only helps the environment, but it also helps attract a rising proportion of environmentally conscious travellers who place an emphasis on sustainability in their decision-making process.

4.2 CHALLENGES

The main challenges identified in heritage tourism branding include:

1. **Maintaining Authenticity:** Balancing commercial interests with the need to preserve authenticity and cultural integrity (Newman & Gough, 2020).
2. **Balancing Commercial and Cultural Values:** Finding the right balance between commercialization and cultural preservation (Page, Moher, et al., 2021).
3. **Stakeholder Engagement:** Managing diverse stakeholder expectations and interests (Opheim et al., 2019).
4. **Adapting to Technological Changes:** Keeping up with rapid technological advancements and integrating them effectively into branding strategies (Wetterslev et al., 2017).

4.3 OPPORTUNITIES

The review also highlighted several opportunities for innovation and growth:

1. **Leveraging Emerging Technologies:** Utilizing new technologies like AI and IoT for innovative branding solutions (Waffenschmidt et al., 2019).
2. **Targeting Niche Markets:** Focusing on niche markets and personalized experiences (Nambiema et al., 2021).
3. **Community-based Tourism Initiatives:** Engaging local communities in tourism development and branding (Newman & Gough, 2020).
4. **Global Branding Strategies:** Developing global branding strategies that resonate with international audiences (Page, Moher, et al., 2021).

5 DISCUSSION

5.1 INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

The systematic review shows heritage tourism branding methods are dynamic. In the digital age, online presence and engagement are vital, thus the industry has moved to digital and social media marketing (Page, McKenzie, et al., 2021). Storytelling and authenticity in branding strategies reflect consumer demand for authentic and immersive experiences (Opheim et al., 2019). Sustainability and responsible branding correlate with the global shift towards sustainability, signifying a more conscious approach to tourism that respects the environment and local cultures (Wetterslev et al., 2017).

Heritage tourism branding is complicated, as authenticity and commercial and cultural values must be balanced. These issues underscore the delicate balance between using heritage for tourism and protecting its cultural worth (Newman & Gough, 2020). Heritage tourism branding may grow innovatively and sustainably by using emerging technology and targeting specialised consumers (Waffenschmidt et al., 2019).

5.2 THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings enhance tourism and branding theories. Digital and social media marketing supports technological convergence in tourism, where technology is integrated into all elements of marketing and management (Page, Moher, et al., 2021). Storytelling and authenticity align with experiential marketing ideas, which emphasise meaningful consumer experiences (Opheim et al., 2019). Sustainable and responsible branding represents the growing relevance of sustainable tourism theories, which promote environmentally, culturally, and economically sustainable tourism (Wetterslev et al., 2017).

5.3 PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

These discoveries have several tourism uses. The shift to digital and social media marketing recommends that practitioners should establish a strong online presence and actively engage with audiences (Page, McKenzie, et al., 2021). Branding techniques that emphasise storytelling and authenticity may help travellers have more meaningful and satisfying

experiences, leading to repeat visits (Opheim et al., 2019). Sustainable and responsible branding requires practitioners to incorporate sustainability into their strategies as a moral imperative and a competitive advantage (Wetterslev et al., 2017).

In conclusion, this systematic analysis highlights heritage tourism branding trends, difficulties, and prospects. They contribute to tourism and branding theory and help legacy tourism practitioners navigate the changing terrain.

6 CONCLUSION

The review of heritage tourism branding strategies reveals emerging trends such as digital and social media marketing, storytelling, authenticity, sustainable practices, technological integration, and experiential marketing. Challenges include maintaining authenticity, balancing commercial interests with cultural values, managing diverse stakeholder expectations, and adapting to rapid technological changes. Opportunities for innovation include leveraging emerging technologies, targeting niche markets, engaging in community-based tourism initiatives, and developing global branding strategies. Overall, the review highlights the importance of balancing commercial interests with cultural values.

7 LIMITATIONS

This review has several limitations. Firstly, the focus on articles published in English may have excluded relevant studies in other languages. Secondly, the review was limited to articles published between 2000 and 2024, which may have omitted historical perspectives on the evolution of branding strategies in heritage tourism. Finally, the reliance on published academic literature may not fully capture the practical insights and experiences of tourism practitioners in the field.

8 FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Future research in heritage tourism branding should focus on the impact of multilingual and cross-cultural branding strategies on tourist engagement and satisfaction, conduct longitudinal studies to understand long-term impacts, compare the effectiveness of different branding strategies across different cultural and geographical contexts, examine the role of

emerging technologies like artificial intelligence and virtual reality in enhancing branding and marketing, and consider the perspectives of stakeholders, including local communities, in the development and implementation of branding strategies.

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