

Leadership Practices and Process Reconstruction in the New Business Forms of Film-Tourism Integration Driven by Generative AI

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Abstract: This paper explores how leaders' practices and reconstructing of processes are changing under the influence of Generative AI within the emergent industry of film tourism. The researcher, through an interpretivist paradigm, undertook semi-structured interviews with thirty-six industry leaders from film production and destination management industries. Data analyses were done through reflexive thematic analysis, which identified how professionals adapt to the integration of autonomous technological agents. The findings indicate that there was a significant shift in management from an approach based on tradition to one more dominated by cognitive orchestration, in which leaders balance human intuition with algorithmic agency. The findings emphasize that the reconstruction of organizational work processes shifted from linear models toward parallel and simultaneously coordinated digital ecosystems. The most important challenges involved the need for ethical stewardship to maintain cultural authenticity against automated content generation. This research informs how the convergence of cinematic storytelling with travel is being reconstituted through generative technologies. The framework will help to navigate human-AI collaboration in cultural industries.

Keywords: Generative AI; Film Tourism; Leadership Practice; Process Reconstruction; Non-Human Agency

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1. Introduction

The world tourism industry is undergoing a paradigm shift due to a combination of cultural narrative and experiential travel. Film tourism integration and synergy have come to play a significant role as a powerful driver for regional branding and development. Nevertheless, these film tourism paradigms are being radically disrupted by a new phenomenon: Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI)^[1]. Technologies like Large Language Models (LLMs) and AI-based image creation tools like Sora and Midjourney are not only changing the way business is conducted but also creating a “new business form” that seeks to integrate virtual narrative and experiential travel^[2]. As a result, the “film tourism” value chain is shifting from a linear post-production marketing approach to a multi-dimensional and interactive system^[3]. Current literature suggests that traditional, top-down leadership styles often struggle to keep pace with the iterative and decentralized nature of AI-driven creative

processes^[4]. Leaders in this new landscape must possess a unique blend of “Digital Acumen” and “Human-Centric Empathy,” navigating the delicate balance between technological automation and the preservation of artistic integrity^[5]. Furthermore, the operational flow of film-tourism integration—ranging from scriptwriting and location scouting to destination marketing—requires a fundamental process reconstruction^[6]. The integration is no longer a sequential hand-off from filmmakers to tourism boards; it is becoming a simultaneous, data-driven collaboration powered by GenAI’s ability to synchronize content production with consumer insights. Despite the transformative potential of these technologies, there remains a critical gap in understanding how leadership truly evolves within these AI-integrated tourism enterprises and how internal processes are re-engineered to sustain competitive advantage^[7]. This research seeks to explore the lived experiences of industry leaders and the structural transformations within their organizations, providing a roadmap for navigating the complexities of the GenAI frontier^[8].

2. Qualitative Research Questions

To provide an in-depth exploration of this phenomenon, this study is guided by the following three qualitative research questions: RQ1: How do leaders within the film-tourism sector adapt their leadership styles and decision-making frameworks to manage the cultural and psychological shifts triggered by the integration of Generative AI? RQ2: In what ways does the implementation of Generative AI facilitate the reconstruction of cross-sectoral workflows between film production and tourism destination marketing? RQ3: What are the key organizational challenges and ethical dilemmas perceived by leaders when balancing AI-driven automation with human creativity in the development of new film-tourism business forms?

3. Digital Leadership Evolution in the AI Era

The evolution of leadership within technology intensive sectors has traditionally centered on digital transformation frameworks that emphasize agility and vision. Existing literature on digital leadership highlights the necessity for managers to foster a culture of innovation while navigating the complexities of algorithmic decision making^[9]. However, many scholars argue that current models remain overly focused on general technology adoption, often overlooking the nuanced leadership demands of the film tourism niche where emotional intelligence must intersect with high level technical literacy. Within this specific hybrid industry, leadership is no longer just about managing human capital but about orchestrating a symbiotic relationship between creative professionals and generative algorithms^[10]. The critique arises from the fact that most leadership theories treat AI as a passive infrastructure rather than an active participant in the creative process. This gap suggests a need to rethink leadership not as a top down hierarchy but as a facilitative role that balances the unpredictability of generative outputs with the strategic goals of destination branding. Without a specialized framework for AI driven film tourism, leaders risk falling into a trap of technological determinism that may alienate human talent and dilute the unique cultural narrative of a destination.

4. Structural Reconstruction of Cross Sectoral Workflows

Scholarly discourse on cross sectoral integration between the film and tourism industries has long relied on the concept of a linear value chain where cinematic content precedes tourism marketing. Traditional process models describe a sequential flow from script development to destination exposure, yet the introduction of Generative AI demands a more fluid and simultaneous approach to workflow design^[11]. Literature on Business Process Reengineering suggests that AI can drastically reduce the latency between content production and consumer engagement by enabling real time content adaptation. Nevertheless, a significant portion of current research remains theoretical, providing little empirical evidence on how these two disparate sectors actually synchronize their operational cycles under the influence of GenAI. The critique here lies in the persistent silos between film production studios and tourism management organizations, which existing process theories fail to bridge effectively^[12]. While technology allows for instant narrative generation and virtual location scouting, the structural rigidity of traditional organizations often prevents the full realization of these efficiencies. Therefore, the literature must move beyond documenting technological potential and start addressing the structural obstacles that hinder the true convergence of film and tourism into a single AI integrated ecosystem^[13].

5. Paradoxes of Automation and Creative Authenticity

The tension between automated efficiency and human creativity remains a central theme in recent studies concerning Artificial Intelligence in the cultural and creative industries^[14]. Current research often frames this relationship as a binary opposition, where AI is either a threat to artistic authenticity or a simple tool for cost reduction. In the context of film tourism, this debate is particularly acute because the value of the experience depends on the perceived soul and originality of the storytelling. Scholars have pointed out that while GenAI can generate vast amounts of promotional material and interactive experiences, it often lacks the deep cultural context and ethical sensitivity required for responsible destination representation^[15]. The critical gap in existing literature is the lack of a robust framework for managing the ethical dilemmas associated with AI generated heritage or fictionalized cultural narratives. Most organizational studies focus on productivity metrics while ignoring the potential for cultural homogenization or the loss of local agency in AI curated travel experiences^[16]. Consequently, there is an urgent need to investigate how organizations can implement a human centric AI strategy that protects creative integrity while leveraging the scalability of generative models. This requires a shift from viewing AI as a replacement for human input to seeing it as a partner that requires constant ethical oversight and creative direction^[17].

6. Research Design and Interpretivist Paradigm

This study adopts an interpretivist research paradigm to explore the complex lived experiences of industry leaders navigating the intersection of Generative AI and film tourism. An interpretivist approach is essential because it allows the researcher to understand how individuals construct meaning within their specific organizational contexts. The primary method selected for this investigation is the semi-structured interview. Quantitative methods are unsuitable for this research because they prioritize statistical generalization over the depth of subjective insight required to understand leadership shifts. Furthermore, structured interviews are overly restrictive and prevent the pursuit of unexpected but relevant information during the dialogue. Conversely, completely unstructured interviews lack the necessary focus to address the specific research questions regarding process reconstruction. Semi-structured interviews provide the ideal balance by offering a consistent thematic framework while allowing the flexibility to probe deeper into the personal perspectives and professional strategies of the participants.

7. Participant Selection and Sample Size

The researcher employed a purposive sampling strategy to identify and recruit 36 industry professionals who hold senior leadership positions in either film production or tourism management (Shown in Table 1). The selection criteria required participants to have at least five years of management experience and active involvement in projects that integrate Generative AI technologies. The sample size of 36 was determined by the principle of theoretical saturation. During the data collection process, the researcher monitored the emergence of new information and found that after the thirtieth interview, the core categories and insights became repetitive. The final six interviews were conducted to confirm that no new codes or sub themes would surface, thereby ensuring the breadth and depth of the data. This sample size is consistent with established qualitative standards for achieving a comprehensive understanding of a specialized professional phenomenon.

Table 1. Participant Information

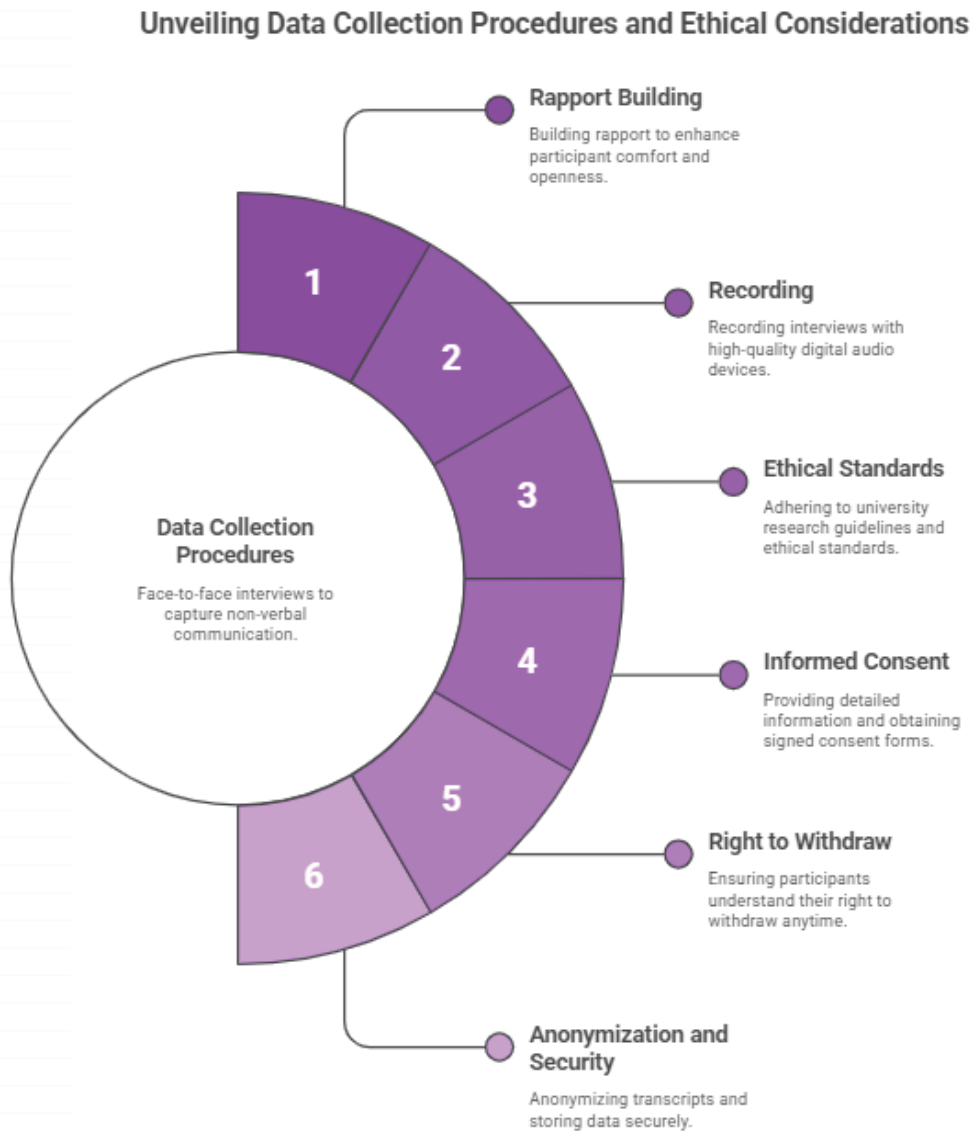
Participant ID	Gender	Current Role / Position	Industry Sector	Experience (Years)
Participant 01	Female	Senior Leader / Manager	Film / Tourism	> 5 Years
Participant 02	Male	Senior Leader / Manager	Film / Tourism	> 5 Years
Participant 03	Male	Senior Leader / Manager	Film / Tourism	> 5 Years
Participant 04	Male	CEO of a Regional Tourism Board	Tourism Management	12 Years
Participant 05	Male	Senior Leader / Manager	Film / Tourism	> 5 Years
Participant 06	Female	Senior Leader / Manager	Film / Tourism	> 5 Years
Participant 07	Female	Senior Leader / Manager	Film / Tourism	> 5 Years
Participant 08	Male	Senior Leader / Manager	Film / Tourism	> 5 Years

Participant ID	Gender	Current Role / Position	Industry Sector	Experience (Years)
Participant 09	Female	Location Manager for Major Projects	Film Production	14 Years
Participant 10	Male	Senior Leader / Manager	Film / Tourism	> 5 Years
Participant 11	Male	Senior Leader / Manager	Film / Tourism	> 5 Years
Participant 12	Female	Film Production Manager	Film Production	8 Years
Participant 13	Male	Senior Leader / Manager	Film / Tourism	> 5 Years
Participant 14	Male	Senior Leader / Manager	Film / Tourism	> 5 Years
Participant 15	Female	Head of Integrated Media	Media / Entertainment	11 Years
Participant 16	Female	Senior Leader / Manager	Film / Tourism	> 5 Years
Participant 17	Female	Senior Leader / Manager	Film / Tourism	> 5 Years
Participant 18	Male	Intl. Destination Marketing Manager	Tourism Marketing	10 Years
Participant 19	Male	Senior Leader / Manager	Film / Tourism	> 5 Years
Participant 20	Female	Senior Leader / Manager	Film / Tourism	> 5 Years
Participant 21	Male	Cultural Heritage Consultant	Tourism / Culture	15 Years
Participant 22	Female	Senior Leader / Manager	Film / Tourism	> 5 Years
Participant 23	Female	Senior Leader / Manager	Film / Tourism	> 5 Years
Participant 24	Female	Senior Leader / Manager	Film / Tourism	> 5 Years
Participant 25	Male	Senior Leader / Manager	Film / Tourism	> 5 Years
Participant 26	Male	Senior Leader / Manager	Film / Tourism	> 5 Years
Participant 27	Male	Creative Director (Immersive Park)	Tourism / Entertainment	9 Years
Participant 28	Female	Senior Leader / Manager	Film / Tourism	> 5 Years
Participant 29	Female	Senior Leader / Manager	Film / Tourism	> 5 Years
Participant 30	Female	Senior Leader / Manager	Film / Tourism	> 5 Years
Participant 31	Male	Senior Leader / Manager	Film / Tourism	> 5 Years
Participant 32	Male	Senior Leader / Manager	Film / Tourism	> 5 Years
Participant 33	Female	Senior Marketing Director	Film Studio	20 Years
Participant 34	Female	Senior Leader / Manager	Film / Tourism	> 5 Years
Participant 35	Female	Senior Leader / Manager	Film / Tourism	> 5 Years
Participant 36	Female	Senior Leader / Manager	Film / Tourism	> 5 Years

8. Data Collection Procedures and Ethical Considerations

Data collection was conducted through face to face interviews to capture the nuance of non verbal communication and build a high level of rapport with the participants. Each session lasted between sixty and ninety minutes and was recorded using a high quality digital audio device. All procedures were designed to adhere to strict ethical standards in accordance with university research guidelines. Every participant received a detailed information sheet and signed a formal consent form before the interview commenced. The researcher ensured that all participants understood their right to withdraw from the study at any time without providing a reason. To protect the privacy of the individuals and their organizations, all transcripts were anonymized using alphanumeric codes and stored in a secure, encrypted database accessible only to the research team (Shown in Figure 1).

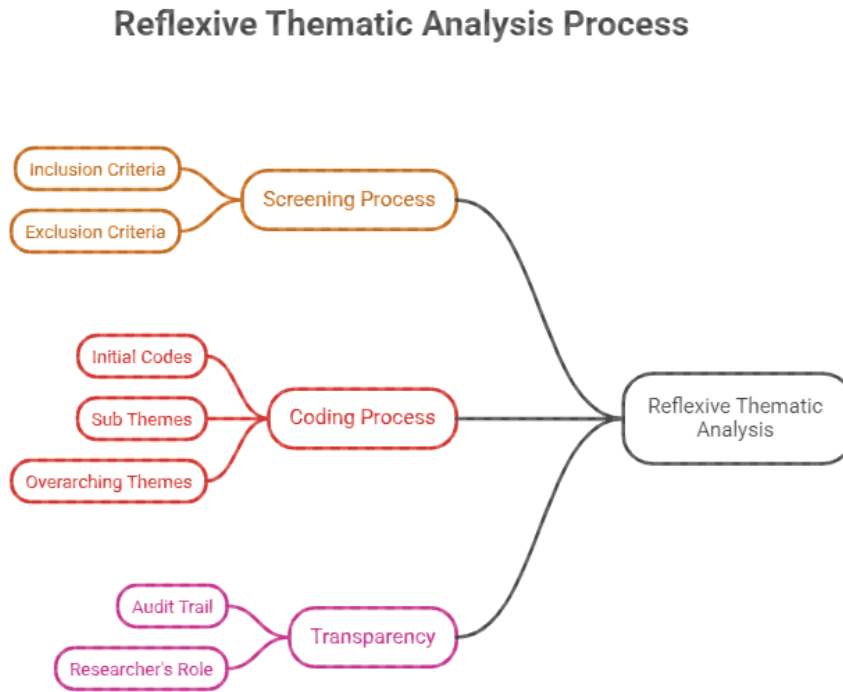
Figure 1. Data Collection Procedures and Ethical Considerations



9. Reflexive Thematic Analysis and Transparency

The researcher applied reflexive thematic analysis to interpret the raw data and identify meaningful patterns. The analysis began with a rigorous screening process where specific inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied to the transcripts. For example, the researcher included segments where leaders discussed their long term vision for AI implementation but excluded technical descriptions of software coding that did not relate to organizational leadership. Another example of exclusion involved removing personal anecdotes about general travel experiences that lacked a direct connection to the film tourism business model. This systematic approach ensures that the analysis remains focused on the primary research objectives while maintaining a high level of data integrity. The coding process followed a recursive path from initial data immersion to the final development of themes. The researcher first generated initial codes by highlighting recurring phrases and concepts across the entire dataset. These codes were then clustered into broader sub themes that captured specific dimensions of the leadership experience and process changes. Finally, the researcher refined these sub themes into overarching themes that provide a comprehensive answer to the research questions. This process was documented in a detailed audit trail to ensure transparency and allow for future review. By prioritizing the reflexive role of the researcher, this analysis acknowledges that the findings are an interpreted product of the interaction between the data and the researcher’s theoretical lens (Shown in Figure 2).

Figure 2. Reflexive Thematic Analysis

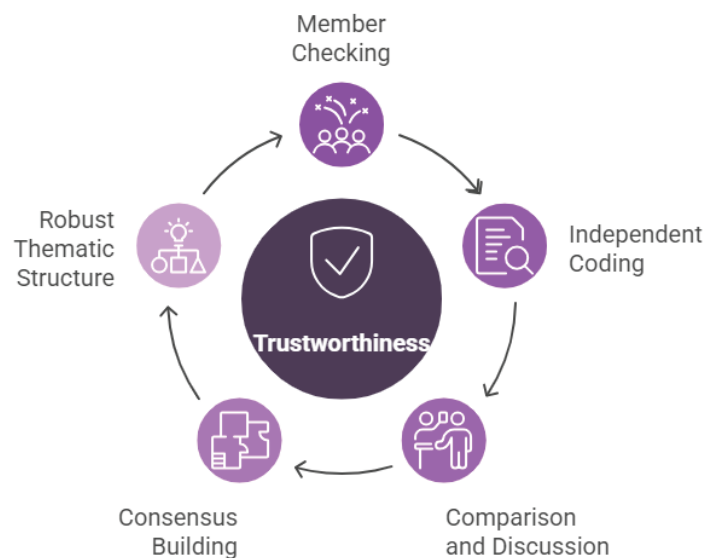


10. Trustworthiness and Thematic Validation

To ensure the credibility and dependability of the findings, the study utilized two primary validation techniques. First, the researcher employed member checking by sending the preliminary findings and summary transcripts back to a subset of the participants. This allowed the leaders to verify that the interpretations accurately reflected their original perspectives and professional experiences. Second, an independent researcher who was not involved in the initial data collection performed a blind coding of ten percent of the transcripts. The two researchers then compared their results and discussed any discrepancies until a consensus was reached. This double independent checking process minimizes researcher bias and strengthens the overall robustness of the thematic structure, ensuring that the final conclusions are grounded firmly in the evidence (Shown in Figure 3).

Figure 3. Trustworthiness and Thematic Validation

Trustworthiness and Thematic Validation Cycle



11. Finding

Theme 1: Adaptive Leadership and Cognitive Reskilling in the AI Era. This theme captures the fundamental transformation of leadership identities and practices within the film tourism sector as organizations integrate Generative AI. It reflects a shift from traditional managerial control toward a more dynamic and technologically integrated leadership model. Leaders no longer view themselves as mere administrators but as orchestrators of a hybrid workforce where human creativity and algorithmic efficiency coexist. This transition requires a profound cognitive reskilling that involves moving beyond basic digital literacy to a deeper understanding of how generative models can be used to enhance storytelling and brand positioning. The core of this theme lies in the realization that leadership in an AI driven environment is as much about managing psychological change and cultural alignment as it is about implementing new software solutions. Consequently, the findings suggest that the most effective leaders are those who can synthesize technical possibilities with human centric values to maintain organizational stability during periods of rapid technological disruption.

Theme 2: Structural Convergence and Workflow Synchronicity. This theme examines the fundamental reconstruction of organizational structures and operational processes that occurs when film and tourism sectors converge through Generative AI. It describes a move away from the traditional model where film production and tourism marketing operated as separate and sequential entities. Under the influence of generative technologies, these two industries are beginning to share a unified digital infrastructure that allows for simultaneous content creation and destination promotion. This convergence is characterized by a high degree of workflow synchronicity, where data from film production informs tourism strategies in real time and vice versa. The theme emphasizes that the successful integration of film and tourism is no longer just a marketing strategy but a structural transformation that requires a common language and synchronized operational cycles. This structural shift enables organizations to respond more quickly to market demands and create more cohesive and immersive experiences for consumers who seek to visit the locations they see on the screen.

12. Discussion

Cognitive Orchestration and the Rise of Non Human Agency in Leadership. The adaptation of leadership styles within the film tourism sector reflects a profound transition from traditional top down management toward a model of cognitive orchestration. While early frameworks of digital leadership emphasized the necessity of agility and technical vision, they often failed to account for the specific emotional and cultural complexities inherent in cinematic storytelling and destination branding. This study reveals that leaders are navigating the integration of Generative AI not merely as the adoption of a new tool but as the management of a new form of non human agency within their creative teams. This phenomenon of non human agency represents a significant shift where the AI system is treated as an active participant in the decision making process rather than a passive infrastructure. By moving beyond the general digital literacy often highlighted in previous scholarly discourse, these leaders are developing a specialized form of relational intelligence that allows them to mediate between human intuition and algorithmic output. This proactive engagement addresses the earlier critique that leadership models were too focused on general technology adoption by showing how leaders in film tourism must specifically protect artistic integrity while leveraging generative speed. The leadership practice now involves a constant negotiation with this autonomous agent to ensure that the strategic goals of the organization are not lost in the sheer volume of AI generated possibilities. Consequently, the leadership framework has evolved into a facilitative role that balances the unpredictability of generative outputs with the stable requirements of regional branding, thereby filling the gap in understanding how leadership evolves within high stakes cultural industries.

Structural Synchronicity and the Convergence of Digital Ecosystems. The reconstruction of workflows between film production and tourism management signifies a move toward a state of structural synchronicity that traditional linear models could not achieve. Previous research on the film tourism value chain often described a sequential flow where cinematic content preceded tourism marketing, but the introduction of Generative AI has effectively collapsed these temporal and spatial silos. By treating Generative AI as a central node of non human agency that operates across both sectors, organizations are now able to engage in simultaneous content creation and destination promotion. This finding addresses the persistent

problem of structural rigidity and organizational silos that was identified as a major barrier in earlier studies of business process reengineering. The data shows that when film and tourism teams share a unified digital infrastructure powered by generative models, they can synchronize their operational cycles in real time, allowing for a more fluid and responsive brand narrative. This convergence is not merely about technical efficiency but about the creation of a hybrid cultural asset that serves multiple professional purposes from its inception. Unlike previous theoretical models that lacked empirical evidence on sectoral synchronization, this study demonstrates that the presence of an active AI agent forces a common language and a shared data environment upon both industries. Therefore, the workflow is no longer a hand off between separate entities but a collaborative evolution that maximizes the impact of cinematic storytelling on physical travel experiences.

Ethical Stewardship and the Dilemma of Automated Cultural Representation. The management of organizational challenges and ethical dilemmas in the AI driven film tourism landscape requires a shift toward a new form of ethical stewardship. While existing literature often frames the tension between automation and creativity as a binary struggle, this research highlights a more complex reality where leaders must manage the moral implications of non human agency in cultural representation. The findings suggest that the primary challenge is not the loss of human control in a general sense but the specific risk of cultural homogenization when generative models are allowed to operate without deep contextual oversight. This study extends the previous debate on artistic authenticity by showing that leaders are now acting as critical editors of AI outputs to ensure that fictionalized narratives do not distort the actual heritage of a destination. By focusing on the ethical dilemmas of AI generated content, this research fills a critical gap where previous organizational studies ignored the potential for the loss of local agency in AI curated experiences. The phenomenon of non human agency introduces a paradox where the efficiency of the algorithm must be constantly restrained by the human need for cultural sensitivity and historical accuracy. Leaders are therefore forced to develop new institutional logics that prioritize the preservation of unique destination identities over the sheer scale of automated marketing. This requires a human centric AI strategy that treats the technology as a partner requiring constant ethical direction, ensuring that the integration of Generative AI enhances rather than diminishes the cultural value of the film tourism experience.

13. Contribution and Novelty

The primary theoretical contribution of this study is the introduction of the “Narrative Loom” as a novel conceptual framework for understanding the convergence of film and tourism in the age of artificial intelligence. This concept moves beyond existing scholarship by treating Generative AI not as a mere utility but as a transformative agent that interlaces disparate industrial threads into a unified whole. The Narrative Loom is defined as a multidimensional leadership and operational architecture where generative algorithms function as a connective tissue to synchronize cinematic production, destination marketing, and personalized visitor experiences into a cohesive cultural fabric. This framework addresses the limitations of traditional Digital Leadership by emphasizing the co-constitutive role of non human agency in the professional meaning making process. It also extends Business Process Reengineering theories by replacing the pursuit of linear efficiency with a model of narrative fluidity that allows for the simultaneous evolution of content and strategy. Furthermore, the Narrative Loom enriches the theory of Ethical Stewardship by framing AI as a collaborative partner in the preservation of cultural authenticity rather than a threat to it. By identifying this previously unobserved phenomenon of narrative interlacing, the study provides a robust theoretical bridge that connects cognitive orchestration, structural synchronicity, and ethical oversight. The novelty lies in the shift from viewing film and tourism as separate entities to viewing them as a single, woven ecosystem where the AI agent facilitates a continuous and rhythmic exchange of creative and strategic value across sectoral boundaries.

14. Conclusion

This research concludes that the integration of Generative AI into the film tourism sector has fundamentally altered the requirements of leadership and the structure of organizational workflows. The shift toward a more adaptive and technologically fluent leadership style is essential for navigating the complexities of modern content creation and managing the psychological transitions of creative teams. Furthermore, the transition from linear to concurrent workflows enables

a level of cross sectoral synchronization that was previously unattainable through traditional management practices. The findings demonstrate that successful film tourism integration in the AI era depends on the ability of leaders to act as ethical stewards who protect cultural narratives while embracing technological innovation. This study contributes to the broader field of Humanities and Social Sciences by offering a critical lens through which to examine the evolving relationship between human creativity and autonomous digital systems in the production of cultural meaning. By establishing the Narrative Loom as a viable framework, the study provides both scholars and practitioners with the conceptual tools needed to understand and manage the digital transformation of cultural experiences in an increasingly automated world. Ultimately, the research suggests that the future of the creative economy lies in the harmonious orchestration of human intuition and algorithmic agency to create more immersive and authentic narratives.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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