

LOCAL BRAND MARKETING IN TOURISM: *A technology-mediated system model for destination marketing*

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ABSTRACT: Local tourism marketing is increasingly shaped by digital transformation, yet existing destination branding frameworks often remain fragmented, linear, or overly technology-centric, limiting their capacity to explain locally embedded branding dynamics. Addressing this gap, this study develops a system-based conceptual framework that reconceptualizes local tourism marketing as an adaptive socio-technical system. Based on an integrative review of destination branding, digital tourism marketing, and place-based branding literature, the study identifies key system components and their relationships, including local actors, technological mediation, experiential-informational processes, and branding outcomes. The model emphasizes feedback-driven interaction and emergence, explaining how destination brand meaning is co-created and transformed through continuous local engagement in digitally mediated environments. By theorizing digital technologies as mediating infrastructures rather than isolated marketing tools, the framework extends traditional destination branding models and offers a conceptual foundation for future empirical research.

Keywords: Local tourism marketing; Destination branding; Digital mediation; Socio-technical systems; Place-based marketing; Smart tourism

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I. INTRODUCTION

In the context of increasing competition among tourism destinations, local marketing has emerged as a strategic instrument for shaping, communicating, and sustaining destination value in the global tourism market. However, traditional marketing frameworks often fail to capture the nonlinear complexity of modern destinations, where digital mediation and local participation create unpredictable branding outcomes that linear models simply cannot explain. Beyond conventional promotional activities, local tourism marketing is closely intertwined with destination branding, through which local cultural, social, and environmental values are articulated, negotiated, and co-created with visitors. Previous studies have emphasized that destination brands are no longer constructed solely through top-down communication by destination management organizations, but rather evolve through the active involvement of local communities and continuous interactions with tourists across multiple touchpoints [1], [2], [3].

Parallel to this shift in marketing philosophy, digital transformation has profoundly reshaped the ways in which tourism destinations design and implement local marketing strategies. Digital technologies—such as online platforms, mobile applications, information-coding systems, and social media—have expanded the capacity of destinations not only to reach broader audiences but also to capture, store, and utilize information related to tourist behavior, experiences, and perceptions at the destination [4], [5]. As a result, local tourism marketing is increasingly characterized by a systemic nature, requiring the integration of technological infrastructure, organizational arrangements, and local actors to enable continuous flows of information throughout the tourism experience cycle.

Recent research on destination branding and smart tourism destinations suggests that digital technologies no longer function merely as supportive communication tools, but constitute core components of contemporary marketing models [4], [6]. Through digital interfaces, tourism experiences can be progressively “digitalized,” ranging from information search and expectation formation prior to travel, to interaction and engagement at the destination, and to post-visit sharing and reflection. This process facilitates the transformation of localized actions and experiences into digital brand assets, which may accumulate and diffuse destination brand value over time [5], [7].

Despite the growing body of literature addressing technology-enabled destination marketing, much of the existing research has primarily focused on describing specific digital tools or examining the isolated effects of particular technologies [1], [6]. Such approaches remain limited in explaining the overall structure and operational

mechanisms of a technology-enabled local marketing system, particularly within local tourism destinations where community actors play a central role in experience provision and image formation. This limitation indicates a notable research gap regarding the need for a conceptual model capable of systematizing the relationships among local marketing practices, technological components, and destination branding processes. Without a systemic lens, destination marketing remains a fragmented assembly of isolated digital tools and top-down messages, leaving the vital role of community-driven value and technological feedback in a 'black box' of theoretical uncertainty.

Responding to this gap, the present study aims to analyze and propose a conceptual system model of technology-enabled local tourism marketing at the destination level. Adopting a qualitative and conceptual approach, the study focuses on elucidating the structural components of the marketing system, the roles of local stakeholders, and the mechanisms through which digital technologies mediate branding processes at tourism destinations. Rather than documenting a specific project or implementation, this paper seeks to develop an analytical framework that can be flexibly applied to local tourism destinations operating under contemporary conditions of digital transformation. However, existing studies rarely conceptualize technology-enabled local tourism marketing as an integrated system that links local actors, digital infrastructure, and branding processes within a unified analytical framework.

By synthesizing relevant theoretical perspectives and articulating a proposed system model, this study contributes to both academic and practical discussions. From an academic standpoint, it advances understanding of the interrelationships among local marketing, digital technology, and destination branding from a systems perspective. From a practical standpoint, the proposed model offers a reference framework for destination managers and local stakeholders in designing and implementing technology-enabled marketing initiatives that are aligned with local conditions and destination-specific characteristics.

To address the identified theoretical gap, this study is guided by the following research questions:

RQ1: How can local tourism marketing be conceptualized as an integrated system that links local actors, technological mediation, and destination branding processes?

RQ2: What are the core components and functional relationships within a technology-enabled local tourism marketing system?

RQ3: How does technological mediation shape experiential-informational processes and contribute to the emergence of destination branding outcomes at the local level?

By addressing these questions through a conceptual and system-oriented approach, the study seeks to advance theoretical understanding of local tourism marketing under conditions of digital transformation. Collectively, these research questions position local tourism marketing not as a linear managerial activity, but as an adaptive socio-technical system characterized by interaction, mediation, and feedback.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1. Local tourism marketing and the shift toward place-based branding perspectives

Early studies on tourism marketing primarily emphasized destination promotion and image communication as managerial functions led by destination management organizations. However, this instrumental view has gradually been challenged by place-based and community-oriented perspectives, which conceptualize destination branding as a socially constructed process embedded in local contexts [2], [3]. From this standpoint, marketing is not merely a set of promotional activities, but a mechanism through which local identities, cultural meanings, and experiential values are articulated and negotiated among stakeholders.

Within the local marketing literature, increasing attention has been paid to the role of local communities as active contributors to destination brand formation rather than passive beneficiaries of tourism development [3]. This perspective aligns with broader debates in place branding, which argue that destination brands emerge through the interaction between place narratives, resident participation, and visitor experiences. As such, local tourism marketing is increasingly understood as a relational process that connects place-specific values with external audiences through multiple points of contact.

Despite this conceptual advancement, much of the literature remains fragmented in its treatment of how local marketing processes are operationalized, particularly when destinations seek to scale local narratives beyond physical boundaries. This limitation becomes more pronounced in digitally mediated tourism environments, where branding activities extend across online and offline spaces simultaneously. This conceptual fragmentation necessitates an analytical lens that moves beyond geographic boundaries to examine how local narratives are structurally integrated into a broader, technology-mediated marketing framework.

2. Technology-Enabled marketing: From digital tools to systemic perspectives

The growing body of research on digital and technology-enabled tourism marketing has highlighted the transformative role of information and communication technologies in destination promotion and visitor engagement [1], [4]. Social media platforms, mobile applications, and digital content management systems have been widely examined as tools that facilitate interaction, visibility, and co-creation between destinations and tourists.

More recent studies move beyond a tool-centric view and emphasize the need to understand digital technologies as integral components of broader marketing systems [5], [6]. From this perspective, technology does not simply support marketing communication but actively reshapes how information is generated, circulated, and interpreted within tourism destinations. Digital interfaces enable destinations to capture experiential data, facilitate real-time interaction, and sustain engagement beyond the temporal boundaries of the visit.

Nevertheless, existing research often examines digital technologies in isolation, focusing on specific platforms or technological functions without sufficiently addressing how these elements interact with local actors and branding processes in an integrated manner [1], [6]. As a result, the systemic implications of technology-enabled marketing for local destination branding remain under-theorized.

3. Destination branding in smart and digital tourism contexts

The emergence of the smart tourism destination paradigm further reinforces the need for systemic approaches to destination marketing and branding. Smart tourism research conceptualizes destinations as interconnected ecosystems where technological infrastructure, organizational arrangements, and stakeholder participation jointly shape tourism experiences and value creation [4], [6].

Within this paradigm, branding is increasingly viewed as an outcome of continuous data-driven interactions rather than a static representation of destination attributes. Digital traces generated by tourists—such as online reviews, shared content, and location-based interactions—contribute to the ongoing construction of destination meaning and brand identity [5], [7]. This dynamic view of branding challenges traditional linear models of destination image formation and calls for frameworks capable of capturing feedback loops and relational processes.

However, while smart tourism literature provides valuable insights into technological integration, it often prioritizes efficiency, innovation, and competitiveness at the destination level, with limited attention to the specificities of local marketing and community-based branding processes. Consequently, there remains a conceptual gap between smart tourism systems and place-based marketing perspectives, particularly in destinations where local actors play a central role in experience provision.

4. Toward a system-based conceptualization of technology-enabled local marketing

Synthesizing insights from local tourism marketing, digital marketing, and smart tourism literature reveals a shared recognition of increasing complexity in destination branding processes. Yet, these bodies of literature diverge in their analytical focus: place-based studies emphasize meaning and participation, while technology-oriented studies foreground tools and infrastructures.

What remains insufficiently explored is a system-based conceptualization that integrates these perspectives into a unified analytical framework. Such a framework would account for the interactions among local actors, technological components, and branding processes, while recognizing the cyclical and feedback-driven nature of marketing activities in contemporary tourism destinations.

Addressing this gap requires moving beyond descriptive accounts of marketing practices or isolated technological applications. Instead, there is a need for a conceptual system model that clarifies structural components, functional relationships, and information flows within technology-enabled local tourism marketing. This need provides the theoretical foundation for the model proposed in the following section. To operationalize this systemic perspective, the literature is synthesized into an analytical framework (Figure 1) that serves as a theoretical filter, categorizing existing studies into four interconnected dimensions: actors, experiences, technology, and outcomes.

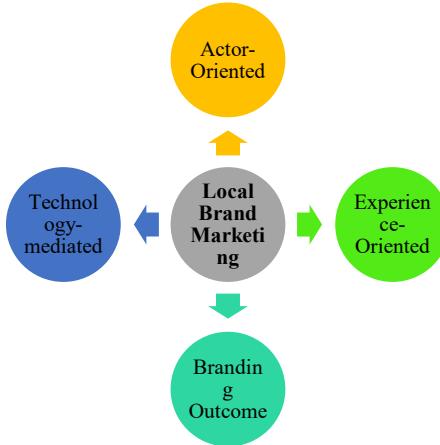


Figure 1. Analytical/Theoretical Framework

Source: Author's synthesis and analysis, 2025.

This framework (Figure 1) does not merely categorize previous research; it functions as a diagnostic tool to map the interdependencies within the tourism ecosystem. By viewing the literature through these four lenses, the study identifies how technological mediation acts as the structural glue between localized actor participation and global branding outcomes, providing the necessary theoretical rigor for the proposed system model.

III. METHODOLOGY

1. Research design

This study employs a conceptual and qualitative research design to develop a system-based model of technology-enabled local tourism marketing. The primary objective of the research is not to test hypotheses or establish statistical generalizations, but to construct a theoretically grounded framework that explains relationships and mechanisms underlying local branding and marketing processes in digitally mediated tourism destinations.

Given the exploratory and theory-building nature of the research problem, a conceptual methodology is considered the most appropriate approach. This design enables the integration of fragmented theoretical insights into a coherent analytical structure, thereby contributing to conceptual clarity and model development in an emerging research domain.

2. Conceptual research method

The study adopts the conceptual research method as its core methodological foundation. Conceptual research is widely recognized in tourism and marketing studies as a legitimate and rigorous approach for developing theoretical models, frameworks, and typologies, particularly in areas where empirical findings remain dispersed or conceptually underdeveloped. This approach follows the established tradition of theory-building in tourism research, where conceptual papers serve as vital precursors to empirical testing by providing the necessary ontological and epistemological foundations for complex phenomena.

In this research, the conceptual method is used to identify key constructs, define their analytical boundaries, and articulate their functional roles within local tourism marketing systems. Rather than generating new empirical data, the study advances knowledge by reinterpreting existing theories and synthesizing them into a system-oriented conceptual model.

3. Qualitative research approach

A qualitative approach underpins the conceptual development of the model. The choice of a qualitative-conceptual design is not a substitute for lack of data, but a deliberate methodological strategy to address the “systemic” nature of destination branding, which often remains obscured in fragmented quantitative models. This approach is appropriate for examining complex, context-dependent phenomena such as local tourism marketing and destination branding, which involve social interactions, meaning construction, and relational dynamics among multiple stakeholders.

The qualitative orientation allows the study to focus on interpretation and understanding rather than measurement. It supports the examination of how local actors, technological elements, and branding processes interact within tourism destinations, and how these interactions collectively shape marketing outcomes. As such, the qualitative approach provides the epistemological grounding necessary for theory development and model conceptualization.

4. Conceptual analysis

Conceptual analysis constitutes the primary analytical method used in this study. This method involves the systematic examination and clarification of key concepts related to local tourism marketing, digital technologies, and destination branding. Through conceptual analysis, the study identifies recurring constructs, explores their meanings across different theoretical traditions, and examines their relationships within marketing processes.

The analysis proceeds by abstracting concepts from established literature and evaluating their relevance and function within a system-based perspective. This process enables the refinement of conceptual definitions and supports the logical structuring of model components. Conceptual analysis thus ensures internal consistency and analytical precision in the proposed framework.

5. Theoretical synthesis

To integrate insights derived from multiple bodies of literature, the study employs theoretical synthesis as a complementary methodological strategy. Theoretical synthesis goes beyond descriptive literature review by comparing, reconciling, and combining theoretical perspectives that address similar phenomena from different analytical angles.

In this research, theoretical synthesis is used to bridge place-based marketing theories with technology-oriented tourism studies. By identifying points of convergence and tension between these perspectives, the study constructs a unified conceptual model that captures both local specificity and technological mediation. This synthesis enhances the explanatory power of the model and situates it firmly within existing scholarly debates.

6. Methodological rigor

Rigor in this conceptual and qualitative study is ensured through systematic engagement with peer-reviewed literature, transparent articulation of analytical steps, and logical coherence between research objectives, methodological choices, and model outcomes. The validity of the proposed model is assessed based on theoretical plausibility, consistency with established knowledge, and its capacity to explain complex interactions within local tourism marketing systems.

The methodological approach adopted in this study provides a robust foundation for future empirical research, including qualitative case studies or quantitative model testing, thereby reinforcing the academic value of the conceptual framework. By adhering to the standards of conceptual rigor—clarity, parsimony, and internal consistency—this study claims theory-building legitimacy consistent with seminal conceptual works in top-tier tourism journals that have successfully reshaped destination marketing paradigms without initial empirical generalization.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Results

1.1. Rationale and structure of the conceptual model

Building on the theoretical gaps identified in the literature, this study proposes a conceptual system model to explain local tourism marketing under conditions of technological mediation. Prior research has demonstrated that destination marketing and branding processes are increasingly shaped by complex interactions among local stakeholders, digital infrastructures, and visitor experiences, yet these interactions are often examined in isolation rather than as an integrated system [2], [4], [6].

To address this limitation, the proposed model conceptualizes local tourism marketing as a dynamic and interactive system, rather than a linear sequence of promotional actions. As illustrated in Figure 1, the model consists of four analytically distinct yet interdependent components: local actors, technological mediation, experiential-informational processes, and destination branding outcomes. The relationships among these components are characterized by bidirectional linkages and feedback mechanisms, reflecting contemporary perspectives in destination branding and smart tourism research [3], [6].

To clarify the structural logic and dynamic relationships proposed in this study, a conceptual system model is presented. Rather than depicting a linear marketing process, the model visualizes local tourism marketing as an interconnected system shaped by continuous interactions among actors, technologies, and branding processes. Figure 2 illustrates how local participation and technological mediation jointly structure experiential and informational flows, leading to adaptive destination branding outcomes within digitally enabled tourism environments.

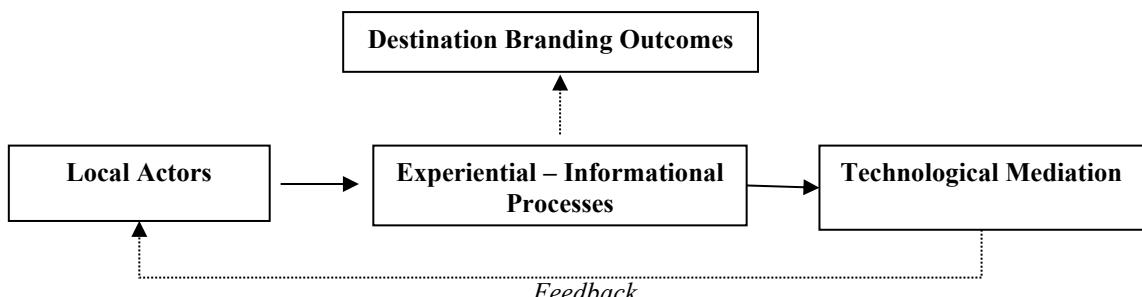


Figure 2. Conceptual system model of technology-enabled local tourism marketing

Source: Author's synthesis and analysis, 2025.

The analytical value of the model lies in its ability to reconceptualize local tourism marketing as a recursive system rather than a set of discrete managerial actions. By foregrounding interaction and feedback, the model emphasizes that branding outcomes are not terminal results but evolving system states that influence subsequent local practices and technological configurations. This perspective aligns with contemporary system-oriented tourism research, which views destinations as adaptive socio-technical environments. Importantly, the model highlights the mediating role of technology in translating localized experiences into scalable branding signals without detaching them from their place-based origins. The inclusion of feedback mechanisms underscores the capacity of local destinations to learn, adapt, and recalibrate marketing strategies over time. As such, the model provides a robust analytical lens for examining how local identity, technological infrastructures, and branding dynamics co-evolve within competitive tourism markets.

The conceptual system model is grounded in multiple theoretical streams rather than derived from a single body of literature. To make these foundations explicit, Table 1 summarizes the key theoretical perspectives

that inform each major component of the model. This mapping demonstrates that the proposed framework represents a synthesis of established research traditions in tourism marketing, destination branding, and technology-enabled tourism, thereby reinforcing its theoretical legitimacy.

Table 1. Theoretical foundations of the conceptual system model

Conceptual component	Theoretical perspectives	Theoretical rationale
Local Actors	Place-based marketing; community-oriented destination branding; relational marketing	These perspectives conceptualize destination branding as a socially constructed process shaped by local participation, everyday practices, and interactions between residents, service providers, and visitors.
Technological Mediation	Digital tourism marketing; smart tourism destination theory; socio-technical systems	These theories frame digital technologies as mediating infrastructures that shape information flows, stakeholder interaction, and the circulation of experiential content within tourism systems.
Experiential–Informational Processes	Experience-based tourism theory; value co-creation; digital content co-creation	These approaches explain how tourism value emerges through lived experiences and is subsequently transformed into narratives, data, and symbolic representations relevant to branding.
Destination Branding Outcomes	Dynamic destination branding; tourism ecosystem perspectives	These theories conceptualize destination brands as emergent, adaptive outcomes shaped by continuous feedback among actors, experiences, and mediated representations.

Source: Author's synthesis and analysis, 2025.

By consolidating diverse theoretical perspectives, the table reveals how the model bridges traditionally fragmented strands of tourism research. Place-based and community-oriented branding theories provide the conceptual grounding for local actor participation, while digital tourism and smart destination studies justify the centrality of technological mediation. Experience-based and co-creation theories further support the model's emphasis on experiential–informational processes as the operational core of branding dynamics. This synthesis demonstrates that the proposed model does not merely aggregate existing concepts, but reorganizes them within a system-oriented logic that foregrounds interaction and emergence. As a result, the framework extends prior research by integrating social, technological, and experiential dimensions into a unified analytical structure capable of capturing the complexity of contemporary local tourism marketing.

1.2. Local actors as the foundational component

Local actors are positioned as the foundational component of the proposed system, consistent with place-based marketing and destination branding literature that emphasizes the socially constructed nature of destination meaning [2], [3]. Existing studies argue that destination brands are not solely the product of formal marketing strategies implemented by destination management organizations, but emerge through everyday interactions involving residents, local service providers, and visitors [3].

From this perspective, local actors contribute to destination branding through experience creation, cultural expression, and the articulation of place-specific values. Community-oriented tourism research further highlights that local participation plays a critical role in sustaining authentic destination identities and enhancing experiential value [2]. By placing local actors at the core of the model, this study aligns with theoretical approaches that conceptualize local tourism marketing as a participatory and relational process rather than a top-down communication function.

1.3. Technological mediation and digital infrastructure

The inclusion of technological mediation as a core component of the model is grounded in research on digital tourism marketing and smart tourism destinations, which identifies digital technologies as key enablers of information exchange and stakeholder interaction [1], [4], [6]. Rather than viewing technology as a neutral tool, recent studies conceptualize digital platforms and applications as socio-technical infrastructures that actively shape how tourism experiences are recorded, represented, and communicated [5].

Technological mediation enables the transformation of localized experiences into digital content and data streams that circulate across multiple channels, extending destination marketing beyond physical encounters [6]. This mediating function supports continuous engagement across the tourism journey and facilitates the visibility of local narratives in competitive digital environments. Accordingly, the model positions technological mediation as an enabling subsystem that connects local practices with broader branding processes.

1.4. Experiential–Informational processes as the operational core

At the center of the system are experiential–informational processes, which translate interactions between visitors and local actors into communicable and shareable forms. This conceptualization draws on experience-based tourism theories and research on digital content co-creation, which emphasize that tourism value is generated through lived experiences and subsequently transformed into symbolic and informational representations [5], [7].

These processes encompass experience creation, interpretation, digital encoding, and dissemination. Through technological mediation, experiential value is converted into narratives, reviews, and digital traces that contribute to ongoing destination meaning-making. Branding literature increasingly recognizes such processes as non-linear and feedback-driven, challenging traditional models that treat branding as a one-way communication activity [7]. In the proposed model, experiential-informational processes constitute the operational core through which local practices acquire branding relevance.

1.5. Destination branding outcomes as emergent properties

Destination branding outcomes are conceptualized as emergent properties of the system, arising from the cumulative interactions among local actors, technological mediation, and experiential-informational processes. This view is consistent with dynamic branding and smart tourism research, which conceptualizes destination brands as evolving constructs shaped by continuous stakeholder interactions and data-driven feedback loops [4], [6].

Rather than representing fixed images or predetermined brand identities, branding outcomes are understood as provisional and adaptive, reflecting changing visitor perceptions and local practices. These outcomes, in turn, influence subsequent marketing activities and local engagement strategies, reinforcing the recursive nature of the system. By conceptualizing branding as both an output and an input, the model captures the adaptive dynamics of technology-enabled local tourism marketing.

1.6. System dynamics and feedback mechanisms

A key contribution of the proposed model lies in its explicit incorporation of system dynamics and feedback mechanisms. Feedback loops connect branding outcomes with local actor behavior and technological configurations, enabling destinations to adjust marketing practices in response to visitor engagement and digital interaction patterns. Such dynamics are widely acknowledged in systems-oriented tourism research as essential for understanding complex destination ecosystems [6].

These feedback mechanisms highlight the non-linear and iterative character of local tourism marketing under digital conditions. They allow the model to account for continuous learning, adaptation, and co-evolution among system components, distinguishing it from static or tool-centered marketing frameworks.

1.7. Theoretical contribution of the conceptual model

The proposed conceptual system model contributes to tourism marketing theory by integrating place-based branding perspectives with technology-enabled marketing research within a unified analytical framework. By synthesizing insights from multiple theoretical streams, the model addresses the fragmentation identified in existing literature and offers a structured lens for understanding local tourism marketing as a system rather than a set of isolated activities [8].

Furthermore, the model provides a foundation for future empirical research. Its components and relationships may be examined through qualitative case studies or operationalized for quantitative analysis, thereby supporting theory refinement and empirical validation in different destination contexts. In this respect, the model functions not only as an explanatory framework but also as a platform for subsequent research on technology-enabled local branding. While the theoretical foundations clarify the origins of the model, an additional analytical step is therefore required to explicate how individual components operate and interact within the proposed system, particularly in relation to destination attractiveness and visitor-related outcomes [9]. Table 2 addresses this need by articulating the primary functional roles and analytical significance of the model's components. This functional clarification strengthens the explanatory power of the framework and supports its application in subsequent empirical research.

Table 2. Functional roles of system components in technology-enabled local tourism marketing

System component	Primary function	Analytical role within the system
Local Actors	Creation and articulation of place-based experiences	Source of experiential value and local meaning that initiates branding processes
Technological Mediation	Capture, transformation, and circulation of experiential information	Enabling infrastructure that connects local practices with broader branding dynamics
Experiential-Informational Processes	Conversion of lived experiences into communicable content	Operational core through which experiential value becomes branding-relevant
Destination Branding Outcomes	Consolidation and adaptation of destination meaning	Emergent system output that feeds back into subsequent marketing and engagement practices

Source: Author's synthesis and analysis, 2025.

The functional articulation presented in Table 2 reinforces the systemic nature of the proposed model by clarifying how different components contribute to overall system performance without operating independently. Local actors emerge as the primary source of place-based meaning, while technological mediation enables the

circulation and amplification of that meaning across spatial and temporal boundaries. Experiential-informational processes operate as the system's transformative core, converting localized interactions into branding-relevant outputs.

By distinguishing between functions and analytical roles, the table enhances the model's operational clarity and prepares it for empirical engagement. Researchers can draw on these functional distinctions to design case studies, develop measurement constructs, or test specific system relationships, thereby positioning the model as a flexible yet theoretically grounded platform for future research.

2. Discussion

2.1. Reframing local tourism marketing as a systemic and technology-mediated process

The conceptual system model proposed in this study advances existing research by reframing local tourism marketing as a systemic and technology-mediated process rather than a collection of discrete promotional activities. While prior studies have acknowledged the importance of local participation and digital tools in destination marketing, these elements have often been examined independently, resulting in fragmented theoretical explanations [10]. By integrating local actors, technological mediation, experiential-informational processes, and branding outcomes within a unified system, this study responds directly to the research gap identified in the literature.

This systemic reframing aligns with emerging perspectives in tourism research that emphasize interaction, emergence, and adaptation, yet extends them by explicitly positioning local marketing as a dynamic socio-technical configuration. In doing so, the model moves beyond tool-oriented or actor-centric approaches and offers a more holistic understanding of how local destinations construct and sustain brand meaning under digital conditions.

2.2. Theoretical implications for local destination branding

From a destination branding perspective, the model challenges traditional assumptions that branding outcomes can be strategically designed and controlled through top-down communication efforts. Instead, branding is conceptualized as an emergent property of continuous interactions among local actors, mediated experiences, and digitally circulated information. This perspective reinforces relational and place-based branding theories, while providing a system-level explanation of how such processes unfold in technologically enabled environments.

By explicitly incorporating feedback mechanisms, the model highlights the recursive nature of branding dynamics, whereby branding outcomes influence subsequent local practices and marketing configurations. This contribution extends existing branding literature by offering a conceptual explanation of how local identity, participation, and digital mediation co-evolve over time, rather than remaining fixed or externally imposed.

2.3. Extending technology-enabled tourism marketing research

The proposed model also contributes to technology-enabled tourism marketing research by shifting the analytical focus from isolated digital tools to technological mediation as a structural component of local marketing systems. While prior research has extensively examined specific platforms or applications, the model emphasizes how technology shapes information flows, interaction patterns, and experiential transformation across the entire marketing system.

This perspective clarifies why technological adoption alone does not guarantee effective local branding outcomes. Instead, branding effectiveness depends on how technologies are embedded within local practices and experiential processes. By conceptualizing technology as an enabling infrastructure rather than a dominant driver, the model reconciles tensions between technology-centric and place-centric approaches in the literature.

2.4. Contributions to conceptual and system-oriented tourism research

At a broader theoretical level, this study contributes to system-oriented tourism research by demonstrating the analytical value of conceptual system modeling for understanding complex marketing phenomena. The model illustrates how non-linear dynamics and feedback loops can be theorized without resorting to overly abstract or purely technical system frameworks.

Moreover, the integration of qualitative and conceptual methods underscores the legitimacy of theory-building research in contexts where empirical evidence remains fragmented or rapidly evolving. By grounding the model in established theoretical streams while reorganizing them into a coherent system, the study exemplifies how conceptual research can generate explanatory frameworks that are both theoretically rigorous and analytically useful.

2.5. Implications for future research

The conceptual system model proposed in this study provides a foundation for future empirical investigation. Researchers may operationalize the model through qualitative case studies to examine how local actors and technologies interact in specific destination contexts, or through quantitative approaches to test

relationships among system components. The model's flexible structure also allows for adaptation to different destination scales and technological configurations, supporting comparative and longitudinal research designs.

Future studies may further refine the model by incorporating additional dimensions such as governance structures, policy environments, or sustainability considerations. Such extensions would enhance the model's explanatory scope while preserving its core system-oriented logic.

2.6. Practical implications for local tourism marketing

Although primarily conceptual, the model offers important practical insights for destination stakeholders. It suggests that effective local tourism marketing requires coordinated attention to community engagement, experiential design, and technological integration, rather than isolated investments in digital tools. Local destinations seeking to strengthen their brand positioning should therefore focus on enabling participatory processes and feedback mechanisms that allow branding strategies to evolve organically.

By recognizing branding outcomes as adaptive rather than fixed, destination managers can adopt more flexible and responsive marketing approaches that align with local identity and visitor expectations in digitally mediated tourism environments.

2.7. Summary of contributions

In summary, this study advances tourism marketing scholarship by proposing a theoretically grounded conceptual system model that integrates local participation, technological mediation, and destination branding dynamics. Through this integrative approach, the study addresses key limitations in existing literature and offers a coherent framework for understanding local tourism marketing in the digital era. The model's systemic perspective not only enriches theoretical debate but also provides a platform for future empirical research and practical application.

Despite its integrative value, the proposed conceptual system model is subject to several theoretical boundary conditions that merit explicit acknowledgment. First, the model presupposes a minimum level of digital infrastructure and platform accessibility at the destination level. In contexts where technological adoption remains limited or uneven, the mediating role of digital technologies may be significantly weakened, constraining the system's capacity to transform local experiences into scalable branding signals.

Second, the model assumes a degree of willingness and capability among local actors to participate in digitally mediated marketing processes. In destinations characterized by low community engagement, weak institutional support, or high levels of actor fragmentation, the feedback mechanisms emphasized in the model may fail to operate effectively. Under such conditions, local tourism marketing may revert to more hierarchical or externally driven branding dynamics.

Third, the explanatory power of the model is bounded by its focus on local-level branding processes. While the system perspective captures interaction and emergence within destinations, it does not explicitly account for macro-level forces such as national branding strategies, geopolitical influences, or global platform governance, which may override or distort locally generated branding outcomes.

Finally, as a conceptual framework, the model does not claim predictive validity. Its value lies in analytical explanation and theory development rather than empirical generalization. Consequently, the relationships proposed should be interpreted as theoretically plausible rather than empirically confirmed, underscoring the need for future empirical research to test, refine, or challenge the model under diverse destination contexts.

V. CONCLUSION

This study develops a conceptual system model that reconceptualizes local tourism marketing as a dynamic, technology-mediated process shaped by the interaction among local actors, experiential-informational processes, and destination branding outcomes. By integrating established theoretical perspectives into a coherent system framework, the study addresses fragmentation in existing tourism marketing research and advances understanding of how local brand meaning emerges under digital conditions.

The proposed model contributes to theory by shifting attention from isolated marketing tools and actors toward systemic relationships and feedback mechanisms. In doing so, it offers a structured explanation of branding dynamics that acknowledges both place-based participation and technological mediation without privileging either dimension in isolation.

While conceptual in nature, the model provides a robust foundation for future empirical research and comparative analysis across destination contexts. More broadly, it underscores the value of system-oriented conceptual approaches for theorizing complex marketing phenomena in contemporary tourism environments.

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