

2nd International Conference

# on Resilience and Sustainable Regions

## MOTIVATIONS FOR MARKETING COLLABORATION IN SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

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SHIFT-Sustainability-oriented, Highly interactive, and Innovation-based Framework for Tourism marketing  
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## Agenda



- Introduction
- Literature Review
- Method
- Findings
- Implications
- Limitations and Future Research



Project reference: PTDC/EDE-OGE/2146/2021

## Introduction



**Interorganizational relationships** have long been recognised as a **competitive advantage in tourism**, offering benefits such as a diversified tourism product portfolio, cost reduction, integrated marketing strategies, broader market reach, and increased regional economic impact (Wilke et al., 2019). Dynamic and collaborative ecosystems **further enable organisations to navigate evolving contexts and meet emerging demands** (Hernandez-Chea et al., 2021).

One practical application of these relationships is **collaborative marketing**, where **stakeholders work together to amplify marketing efforts and enhance the destination's competitiveness**.



## Introduction



**Despite this potential**, tourism marketing **efforts often remain fragmented**, driven by individual stakeholder priorities (Fyall & Garrod, 2019). This tension—between traditional independent practices and the growing need for collaboration in response to macro-environmental pressures—**calls for deeper exploration** of tourism collaboration.

This study **builds on existing research by adding new empirical data to highlight the key motivations for collaboration** in sustainable tourism marketing. While previous studies emphasised strategic and economic factors, this research highlights other motives.

## Literature Review

This study builds on inter-organizational collaboration and destination marketing theories, including Wang and Xiang's (2007) framework and recent marketing collaboration approaches.



Motivations refer to the reasons why tourism actors may engage in inter-organisational relationships for marketing collaboration. These motivations provide insights into the micro-level factors influencing stakeholders' willingness to participate in collective efforts.

## Literature Review

While Wang and Xiang's (2007) foundational framework provided critical insights into the collaborative process at the destination level, it reflects the context of its time. Tourism now faces unprecedented challenges that require a fresh perspective on what motivates collaboration.



Previous literature links collaboration to strategic, learning, cost, and market factors. This study adds entrepreneurial and sustainable orientation as key drivers for collaboration in the context of resilient tourism destinations.

## Method

This study adopts an abductive approach, combining a literature review with qualitative data from interviews with European tourism policy representatives and focus groups with industry professionals.



In the first phase, preliminary theoretical assumptions were established, drawing on the foundational model proposed by Wang and Xiang (2007) and further informed by the contributions of Danso et al. (2019), Khalilzadeh and Wang (2018), Line and Wang (2017), Ngo et al. (2018), Öberg (2016).

In the second phase, the preliminary theoretical assumptions were tested and refined through empirical analysis. This phase involved conducting in-depth interviews and focus groups, which enabled the collection of rich, qualitative data.



## Method

Six interviews were conducted with key representatives from institutions involved in European policy on markets and SMEs (UN WTO, European Commission, European Travel Commission, Catalan Tourist Board, FITUR and Digital Europe).



Two focus groups were held. These groups included tourism entrepreneurs, SME managers, professionals, and representatives from tourism-related organisations. One focus group took place in Spain and the other in Italy, reflecting the study's focus on Southern Europe due to its significance in both European and international tourism.

NVivo-assisted analysis identified key collaboration motivations.



## Findings

The findings reveal five key motivations for collaboration in tourism marketing: sustainability-, market-, learning-, cost-, and entrepreneurial orientation.



### Motives for Collaboration

• <i>Sustainability-orientation</i>		Interview 4 (1x)	FG-Spain (1x); FG-Italy (1x)
• <i>Market-orientation</i>	Line and Wang (2017) Wang and Xiang (2007)	-	FG-Spain (1x); FG-Italy (1x)
• <i>Learning-orientation</i>	Wang and Xiang (2007)	-	FG-Spain (1x)
• <i>Cost-orientation</i>		Interview 1 (1x)	FG-Spain (1x)
• <i>Entrepreneurship-orientation</i>		Interview 1 (1x); Interview 5 (1x)	FG-Spain (1x); FG-Italy (1x)

## Findings

Actors in a destination who exhibit higher levels of sustainability, market, learning, entrepreneurial, and/or cost orientations are more strongly motivated to engage in collaborative marketing efforts to achieve sustainability

Sustainability is increasingly relevant due to environmental and social challenges. Interviewees and focus group participants underscore the growing awareness and urgency surrounding sustainability in tourism. These perspectives reinforce that **sustainability orientation** drives collaborative efforts to create comprehensive and balanced solutions for the tourism industry's challenges.

A **market-oriented** approach to destination marketing aligns stakeholder interests to effectively address diverse customer needs, enhancing competitiveness through the collaborative integration of resources. However, competition within destinations can act as a barrier to collaboration.



## Findings

A **willingness** among actors **to learn** from each other and share knowledge is essential for successful collaboration. Results emphasise the importance of shared knowledge and mutual growth as key incentives for fostering partnerships in the tourism sector.

A lack of resources poses a significant challenge for many tourism SMEs. Therefore, cost reduction is crucial for SMEs. Many SMEs are **cost-oriented** and motivated to engage in collaborative efforts that could reduce costs or improve efficiency. Collaboration offers an opportunity to pool resources, streamline operations, and achieve shared objectives, making it an appealing strategy for resource-limited enterprises.



**Entrepreneurial orientation** influences managers' willingness to accept risk and engage in collaborative efforts. The perception of the benefit-effort ratio and the risk-acceptance profile of actors within a destination influences motivation. Actors with higher entrepreneurial orientation—characterised by ambition, risk tolerance, and a focus on long-term benefits—are more likely to engage in collaborative efforts.



## Conclusions

### Implications for theory

This study highlights the critical role of collaborative marketing strategies in helping the tourism sector tackle its most pressing challenges. Tourism is not just a key global economic activity; it is deeply affected by external forces like technological advancements and climate change. These pressures call for a shift toward more integrated and sustainable ways of working (Costa et al., 2023).



Central to this transformation is the power of inter-organizational relationships, which can boost competitiveness, strengthen local economies (Wang et al., 2009; Mwesiumo & Halpern, 2019), and create more inclusive and sustainable tourism products (Ngo et al., 2018).



## Conclusions

### Implications for theory

Uncovering the motives for marketing collaboration is our way of responding to these challenges. It combines ideas from existing literature with real-world insights to better understand why tourism organisations choose to collaborate and how they can do so effectively.



## Conclusions

### Implications for practice

This study expands collaboration models in tourism by introducing new motivations.

Understanding these drivers enables more effective collaboration.

Our results are a practical tool for tourism stakeholders. Destination Management Organisations (DMOs), policymakers, local businesses, and other destination stakeholders can use it to strengthen collaboration and make real progress toward shared goals.



## Conclusions

### Limitations and future research

First, because **this study is conceptual**, it needs to be tested in different real-world contexts. **Future studies could look at how it works in regions with diverse governance styles, cultural norms, or levels of tourism development to ensure its broad applicability.**



Second, while we have drawn on insights from key informants and focus groups, **we may have missed some perspectives**, especially from smaller or less represented stakeholders, like family-run businesses or destinations in emerging markets. **More research, both qualitative and quantitative, could help capture these voices** and provide a fuller picture of collaboration dynamics.

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