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Fans or Casual Tourists? Profile of Film Tourism Visitors to Western Theme Parks Through Online Reviews

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Film tourism has experienced significant growth in recent decades, influencing both destination attractiveness and tourist behaviour. However, existing literature has mainly focused on film-induced tourists, paying less attention to accidental film tourists. **Methodology**: This study analyses the profiles, motivations, experiences, satisfaction, perceived authenticity, and loyalty of visitors to two Western-themed parks in Almería (Spain): Fort Bravo–Texas Hollywood and Oasys–MiniHollywood. A mixed-methods approach is adopted, based on the analysis of 858 online reviews from TripAdvisor, combining qualitative content analysis and text-mining techniques. **Results**: The findings reveal a predominance of recreational and family-oriented narratives, many of which are not explicitly associated with cinematic motivations and do not allow for their direct classification as film tourism. Although fans represent a minority, they report higher levels of satisfaction, perceive greater authenticity, and show a stronger propensity to recommend or revisit the parks. **Discussion**: These results highlight the coexistence of heterogeneous visitor profiles and support the understanding of film tourism as a hybrid experience in which cinematic elements coexist with broader recreational uses. **Conclusions**: This study contributes to the film tourism literature by broadening the focus beyond film-induced tourists and incorporating visitors with varying levels of cinematic engagement.

Keywords: Film tourism; Tripadvisor; online reviews; fans; casual tourists; western.

1. INTRODUCTION

Film tourism has experienced significant growth in recent years (Connell, 2012; Kim et al., 2025), generating appeal for destinations and modifying tourist behavior (Hao et al., 2024). Film destinations have begun to establish emotional connections with tourists, leading to increased tourist appeal. This emotional connection stems from the stories in films, which evoke emotions in the audience (Li & Liu, 2020; Li et al., 2021). The popularity of films is directly linked to the tourist attraction they ultimately generate (Lao et al., 2023). In the Spanish context, film tourism has experienced remarkable growth in recent years, driven by both national and international productions and the rise of audiovisual distribution platforms. However, this development has not been homogeneous, but rather presents significant territorial inequalities, in investment and in the consolidation of the tourism offer, progressing at different rates depending on the destination (Mestre, 2021).

But the appeal of film tourism also varies among visitors. Basically, there are two very different types of film tourists: induced film tourists, those who take a trip or visit motivated by a film genre, movie, series, or event (Lao et al., 2023); and accidental film tourists (Moritz et al., 2024), those who, while traveling for another reason, decide to visit a film attraction or a filming location. Because the interests and motivations are so different among these types of visitors, there is a growing interest in studying who these film tourists are (Moritz et al., 2024; Wong et al., 2023) and how their satisfaction and loyalty to the experience and destination are generated (Aguilar-Rivero et al., 2025).

On the other hand, and referring to one of the main film genres, the Spaghetti Western is a subgenre of Western films that originated in Italy, primarily during the 1960s and 1970s. Initially, the term was pejorative, used to describe Western films made outside the United States with smaller budgets. However, over time it has gained immense popularity and a large following worldwide. Despite being Italian cinema, the vast majority of these films were shot in Spain, mainly in Almería (Andalusia), due to its scenic, economic, and climatic advantages.

As the genre gained popularity, Western towns sprang up in Almería. However, by the end of the 1970s, the genre had declined sharply. When these films ceased production, it was decided to convert these towns into theme parks designed for tourism. In the 1970s and 1980s, Almería experienced a significant increase in tourism, and the Western theme parks became an attractive complementary offering for tourists. This coincided with a global trend of theme park development in the 1980s. These parks have not only become spaces for entertainment and consumption but also economic and territorial actors capable of transforming the destinations where they are located (Anton Clavé, 2007).

Many fans of these Western films want to visit the original locations. This has made the conversion of these towns into theme parks viable due to the emotional connection these fans have with the settings of these films (Broughton, 2011). Furthermore, the motivations of film buffs, who seek the authenticity of the locations featured in the movies and wish to recreate the filming process (Broughton, 2011), are very different from those of casual tourists, who visit the park as just another tourist attraction and may be motivated by tourism promotions (Moritz et al., 2024). Understanding their experiences will be key to determining their satisfaction with the visit, the feelings it evokes, and their intentions to recommend and return to the destination.

Therefore, it is essential to understand who visits these parks, their motivations and interests, and their experience during the visit. In this regard, it is interesting to understand the satisfaction and loyalty related to the experience of these two types of film tourist profiles: the fan and the accidental visitor. This analysis aligns with studies that segment film tourism based on visitor satisfaction and loyalty intentions (Millán et al., 2016).

This study focuses on two film tourism theme parks (Fort Bravo-Texas Hollywood and Oasys-MiniHollywood) that were originally authentic film locations and have now been transformed into artificial cinematic tourist attractions. They currently offer gunfights, bank robberies, stagecoach rides, and even a film museum. There is a significant lack of research on how visitors or tourists develop emotional connections with a film destination converted into a theme park. It is essential to understand how they perceive authenticity and how this influences their satisfaction and loyalty (Aguilar-Rivero et al., 2025; Zhou et al., 2022).

In recent years, online reviews have become one of the most valuable and rich sources for analyzing travelers' opinions and experiences, and consequently, one of the most influential for tourism decision-making (Gretzel, 2022). Specifically, TripAdvisor has been the leading online review platform in the tourism and hospitality sector (Marine-Roig, 2022), projected to amass over 1 billion reviews worldwide on travel experiences by 2025. This user-generated and shared content, including recaps, opinions, images, and ratings of travel and leisure experiences (Marine-Roig & Huertas, 2020), has been very useful for analyzing the perception of the experience, user sentiment, satisfaction, and loyalty (intention to recommend and revisit the destination) (Marine-Roig, 2022), as well as for segmenting tourist profiles and motivations (Sun et al., 2024).

Therefore, this study aims to identify the typology and profiles of visitors who engage in film tourism at Fort Bravo-Texas Hollywood and Oasys- MiniHollywood based on their spontaneous reviews on TripAdvisor. Using an automated analysis of online travel reviews, the study intends to classify film and non-film tourists according to their motivations for visiting and their feelings. Through mixed methods—a qualitative and quantitative content analysis of the reviews—the experiences, emotions, satisfaction, perceived value, and loyalty of the various film tourists at the studied Western parks are analyzed; emotional connections with characters or films are identified, and these connections are related to the

intention to revisit or recommend the parks. It should be noted that no previous studies on this topic exist, based on online travel reviews.

2. OBJECTIVES

The objective is to analyze the profiles, motivations, and experiences of visitors to two Western film theme parks in Almería—Fort Bravo–Texas Hollywood and Oasys–MiniHollywood—differentiating between fans of film tourism and casual tourists. This will be accomplished by analyzing online tourist reviews to examine how perceived authenticity, satisfaction, and film-related emotions influence loyalty to the experience and the destination.

Specific Objectives:

- To explore the relationship between satisfaction and tourist loyalty, understood as the intention to recommend and return, and to determine to what extent this relationship differs between fans and non-fans.

- To identify the main thematic structures of visitors' discourse through word frequency analysis and co-occurrence networks, to understand how the cinematic and recreational experience is narratively constructed.

- To examine the effect of specific film references (movies, directors, or elements of filming) in reviews on visitor satisfaction levels.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1. Film Tourism and Tourist Experience

Film tourism is considered one of the creative forms of tourism (Moritz et al., 2024) that integrates film elements into the tourism industry to create tourist attractions that can be visited or experienced by tourists (Kim & Kim, 2018). The concept of film tourism is very broad, encompassing everything from visits to film locations in destinations (Hudson & Ritchie, 2006) to visits to film studios, film sets, film festivals, award ceremonies, or film-themed parks (Connell, 2012). The demand for film tourism in all its forms has continued to grow (Teng, 2021).

Similarly, studies on film tourism have proliferated, traditionally focusing on analyzing its impact on destinations: their attractiveness, image, promotion, branding, and development (Abd El Samie Mohamed, 2016; Hudson & Ritchie, 2006; Nieto-Ferrando et al., 2023); or on the motivations of tourists (Beeton, 2010) and their experiences (Carl et al., 2007). Previous studies have also explored the psychological and emotional factors that motivate film tourism (de Araújo et al., 2018; Oviedo-García et al., 2016; Pan & Tsang, 2014). It has been shown that film genre is a key factor in the motivations of film tourists (Raj, 2018). Likewise, it is worth noting that a significant part of the literature on film tourism has focused on westerns (Kim et al., 2025; Rittichainuwat et al., 2018).

According to Kim et al. (2025), studies on this type of tourism can be grouped into three phases: an initial phase up to 2006 focused on the development and management of film tourism; a second phase of significant growth up to 2017 focused on the perceptions and practices of film tourists; and a third, mature phase, in which research has expanded to include diverse cultural contexts and film tourists have begun to

be studied more qualitatively and with interdisciplinary approaches. The current study falls within this last phase.

In recent years, the tourist experience has become a key area of study (St-James et al., 2018). Connell and Meyer (2009) analyzed how film tourists perceive, interact with, and relate to destinations. Other studies have demonstrated the impact of storytelling, celebrities, and locations on the tourist experience and attraction, as well as on visit intentions (Kim & Kim, 2018; Kim et al., 2019; Teng & Chen, 2020; Wong & Lai, 2015; Yen & Croy, 2016). Along the same lines, Aguilar-Rivero et al. (2025) have recently shown that satisfaction with the experience and emotional attachment to the place play an important role in tourists' visit decisions and their loyalty to film destinations.

It has been shown that tourist immersion and involvement generate memorable tourist experiences (Chandralal & Valenzuela, 2015), because tourists eliminate the distance between themselves and the experience, leading to their full involvement and a far superior experience. Tourists who actively engage with films and create a connection to them construct an active experience with diverse dimensions (cognitive, emotional), forging a connection with the characters, stories, and locations of these films (Kim & Assaker, 2014), which motivates them to visit those locations more extensively (Fu et al., 2016). Thus, the importance of the tourist engagement has been demonstrated in film tourism. Teng (2021) demonstrated that tourists with higher engagement generate better experiences with film tourism and they are the ones with higher intentions of visiting the film destination.

St-James et al. (2018) studied how tourists used and manipulated films to construct immersive film tourism experiences, both among film-induced and casual tourists. They demonstrated that tourists compare their mental image of the place with the location and create their sense of being there; they explore locations, expand their knowledge about the film, and rewatch scenes from the film on-site; and they create their own experience of the place based on the film. All of this makes their experiences more immersive, authentic, and memorable.

However, studies from a critical perspective have found that most of the literature focuses on induced tourists and their experiences, neglecting casual tourists (St -James et al., 2018). Domínguez-Azcue et al. (2021) have begun to highlight the need for a better understanding of the different types of film tourists and the kinds of trips or visits they undertake related to film.

3.2. Typology of the Film Tourist

Previous studies have analyzed the motivations and behaviors of tourists, their involvement, and their experience, but little is known about the typology of these tourists. There are many studies on film tourism, but not as many that examine who film tourists actually are (Fu et al., 2016; Moritz et al., 2024), film fans, or online communities interested in film tourism, their different involvements, and behaviors (Kirillova et al., 2019; Rather et al., 2019).

Although there is no clear conceptual framework with agreed-upon definitions for the different types of film tourists, previous studies have primarily distinguished two types of profiles: the film-induced tourist, who travels for film-related reasons and makes decisions about their destination and visits based on film (Connell, 2012); and the accidental film tourist, who has other reasons for traveling but ends up making film-related visits during their trip (Macionis & Sparks, 2009). These two types of tourists have different interests and motivations for their trips. Furthermore, previous studies have shown that they also have different experiences at film destinations or locations (Buchmann et al., 2010; Roesch, 2009).

Although this notable distinction in interests and profiles is clear, it is worth noting that most studies on film tourism do not even mention this distinction. Furthermore, despite the fact that the vast majority of existing studies focus on film-induced tourists, research has shown that film tourism is mostly incidental and is generally not the primary reason for travel (Croy & Heitmann, 2011; Macionis & Sparks, 2009). Thus, the casual tourist is the majority (Macionis & Sparks, 2009; Moritz et al., 2024). Therefore, a certain gap is observed in the existing literature on film tourists.

However, a recent study by Moritz et al. (2024) does distinguish and analyze the different experiences generated by film location visits for both profiles and takes into account the casual tourist. These authors demonstrated that visits to film locations generally occur by chance, that film tourism is mostly combined with other types of tourism, and that this accidental film tourist tends to be younger and mainly engages in film location visits when taking longer trips.

On the other hand, not all film-induced tourists share the same profiles. They exhibit varying levels of attraction, motivation, and engagement, but there is still no established categorization or studies that classify them. Within this typology, a distinction could be made between induced tourists, who decide to visit locations featured in a film or series, and those who are genuine fans of that film or series (Gómez-Morales et al., 2024). True fans show greater interest in and engagement with film tourism and movie destinations (Gómez-Morales et al., 2024).

Fans of film genres, movies, or series form communities of true lovers and followers of these cinematic works, sharing a deep interest in them and promoting them culturally (Lao et al., 2023). These fan consumers dedicate considerable amounts of time, money, and energy to pursuing their interest (Gómez-Morales et al., 2024). Their passion extends far beyond film tourism. In these cases, in fact, film tourism would be a consequence of their fandom for that particular work. Studies on these fans have recently begun to emerge. These fans become induced tourists and make their own associations with films and film destinations, making their own travel decisions without the need for marketing from the filmmakers or destination promoters (Thelen et al., 2020).

There are film fan communities that promote film tourism among themselves, such as the Spaghetti Western Web Board. This is a cinephile cultural community that brings together fans of the spaghetti western subgenre, actively seeks out western film locations, and organizes cultural events on the subject. Broughton (2011) observed that these fans, during their visits to the western parks in Almería—those analyzed in this study—sometimes express disappointment at the lack of authenticity they find there. This aligns with a previous study by Urry (2002), which demonstrated that tourists are often disappointed because they seek authentic locations. Since its purpose is to locate and recreate historic movie locations, the fact that they can be found so easily in these highly artificial parks makes it seem inauthentic.

Therefore, it is increasingly necessary to study and understand who the different profiles of tourists who visit these western parks are and who forms these communities of film fans, as well as their interests and motivations (Lao et al., 2023; Wong et al., 2023).

4. METHODOLOGY

This study uses a mixed-methods approach to determine whether visitors to the Fort Bravo–Texas Hollywood and Oasys– MiniHollywood Western theme parks in Almería, Spain, behave as film-motivated tourists (fans) or as casual visitors. This is achieved through the analysis of 858 online travel reviews from

TripAdvisor, a widely recognized source for providing spontaneous, experience-based narratives (Gretzel, 2022; Marine-Roig, 2022). All available TripAdvisor reviews for the analyzed attractions were downloaded in Spanish and English, the primary languages used for these destinations on the platform. Data extraction began in November 2025, without a predetermined time limit, to capture the full evolution of the visitor experience over time. This initial process yielded a corpus of approximately 870 reviews. The reviews were collected using Cyotek WebCopy software was used to automatically obtain the information available on the platform. Subsequently, the data underwent a cleaning and structuring process, following the procedure described in Marine-Roig (2022). This process included the removal of duplicates, incomplete records, reviews without textual content, and entries composed solely of non-linguistic elements (e.g., emojis). Reviews that, despite being classified by the platform as written in Spanish or English, were written in other languages were also removed to ensure the linguistic consistency of the analyzed corpus. After this filtering process, the final sample consisted of 858 valid reviews (N = 858), which contained sufficient textual information for analysis. The resulting database included variables such as the reviewer's identifier, country of origin, rating, publication date, date of access, review language, as well as the title and body of the text. Next, a content analysis of the title and body of the reviews was carried out, combining qualitative and quantitative techniques to identify discursive and thematic patterns.

4.1. Quantitative Analysis

First, a quantitative text mining was performed using KH Coder software, designed for the statistical analysis of textual content that integrates morphosyntactic tagging (POS tagging), MySQL text databases, and statistical association tools. Then, following the workflow recommended by KH Coder, a keyword frequency list was generated to evaluate the most frequently used terms in the reviews.

A keyword frequency list provides an overview of the most frequently occurring terms/words in a dataset and is commonly used in quantitative content analysis and text mining methodologies (Stemler, 2001). This type of output allows researchers to identify dominant themes, evaluative patterns, and experiential dimensions expressed by visitors before examining more complex relational structures, such as co-occurrence networks (Sarachuk, 2024). Frequency lists are particularly valuable for studies on tourism motivation and experience, as they reveal which aspects of the visit are most significant to users in their spontaneous narratives.

Afterwards, a co-occurrence network analysis was constructed to identify clusters of concepts and relational structures in visitor discourse (Medina-Hernandez et al., 2024). Co-occurrence networks, calculated using Jaccard coefficients, allow for the detection of recurrent semantic associations. These networks help uncover latent patterns and thematic structures that go beyond manual coding, while the combined correlational and dictionary-based approach strengthens reliability by limiting researcher bias, as highlighted in Higuchi's (2016) methodological justification for the two-step integration of statistical association and rule-based coding in KH Coder. Finally, textual patterns, emotional tone, and co-occurrence structures were analyzed to gain a deeper understanding of visitor profiles and the distinction between film tourists and casual visitors.

A co-occurrence network is a graphical representation that visualizes how frequently words tend to appear together within the same textual units (such as phrases or paragraphs) (Higuchi, 2016). In these networks, words are represented as nodes, and the lines (edges) indicate statistically significant co-occurrences between them. The strength of each connection reflects how often the two words appear together. In other words, it helps to explore the main themes and semantic structures of a dataset.

The manual coding scheme was structured around a set of variables previously defined based on the literature and an exploratory analysis of the corpus. These variables included, among others, the type of visitor (final classification), the main motivation for the visit (fan, film-related, accidental, curiosity, family, or other), and the presence of film references (mention of films, directors, or elements of the filming). An analysis was carried out on the emotions expressed by visitors, perceived authenticity (coded as low, indifferent, medium, and high), as well as indicators of satisfaction (ambiance, shows, and value for money) and loyalty (intention to return and explicit recommendation). Each category was operationalized using explicit identification criteria in the text. For example, the category "fan" was assigned to visitors who made direct references to film and/or expressed knowledge of the Western genre. In contrast, the categories "family" or "recreational" were assigned when the experience was described in terms of general leisure, activities with children, or enjoyment of the park beyond the film component. Similarly, the variable "emotions" was coded based on the identification of emotional expressions in visitors' discourse, differentiating between general emotions and "cinephile feelings." The latter refers to emotional responses specifically linked to cinematic worldview (e.g., nostalgia or a sense of immersion in a film), distinguishing them from emotions associated with the general recreational experience.

To ensure consistency in coding, common decision rules were established among the researchers, based on the identification of keywords, recurring expressions, and the semantic context of each review. In cases where a review presented multiple motivations, the dominant category was assigned based on the visitor's discursive emphasis. Coding was performed independently by two researchers using the overlapping coding technique (Neuendorf, 2002). In cases of discrepancy, consensus was reached through the intervention of a third researcher. Although a formal inter-coder agreement coefficient was not calculated, this independent coding and consensus resolution procedure is widely accepted in qualitative content analysis studies as a guarantee of process consistency and reliability. Finally, it should be mentioned that SPSS software was used for statistical testing of the variables under study.

5. RESULTS

5.1. Keyword Analysis

Table 1 presents a list of keywords with the 42 most frequently occurring terms (appearing up to 100 times) in the analyzed reviews. The table presents the most repeated nouns, adjectives, and verbs within the text. Nouns, adjectives, and verbs are presented separately because these three lexical categories capture the core elements of visitors' experiences—objects and themes (nouns), evaluative meanings (adjectives), and reported actions or behaviors (verbs)—allowing for a more precise understanding of how tourists describe and interpret their visit.

Table 1. *List of Frequent Words*

#	Noun	Total	Percentage	Adjective	Total	Percentage	Verb	Total	Percentage
1	day	499	0.49	good	509	0.50	visit	274	0.27
2	animal	406	0.40	western	419	0.41	look	219	0.21
3	place	406	0.40	great	334	0.33	make	204	0.20
4	park	395	0.39	hot	135	0.13	recommend	172	0.17
5	zoo	373	0.37	little	134	0.13	spend	165	0.16
6	area	347	0.34	nice	122	0.12	enjoy	152	0.15
7	pool	314	0.31	small	122	0.12	want	148	0.15
8	time	289	0.28	worth	122	0.12	love	142	0.14
9	film	277	0.27	expensive	121	0.12	walk	134	0.13
10	set	246	0.24	spanish	109	0.11	feel	133	0.13
11	town	236	0.23	old	99	0.10	include	132	0.13
12	horse	227	0.22	can-can	89	0.09	eat	131	0.13
13	lot	215	0.21	entertaining	87	0.09	pay	129	0.13
14	saloon	215	0.21	free	84	0.08	say	124	0.12
15	cowboy	206	0.20	best	83	0.08	think	117	0.11
16	photo	192	0.19	bad	81	0.08	leave	109	0.11
17	food	183	0.18	friendly	81	0.08	like	105	0.10
18	bit	177	0.17	interesting	80	0.08	stay	93	0.09
19	child	173	0.17	different	75	0.07	buy	92	0.09
20	kid	168	0.16	better	72	0.07	come	92	0.09
21	ticket	165	0.16	large	67	0.07	close	90	0.09
22	buffet	158	0.15	authentic	66	0.06	arrive	87	0.09
23	fun	158	0.15	open	65	0.06	film	86	0.08
24	people	149	0.15	real	64	0.06	watch	83	0.08
25	actor	146	0.14	fantastic	62	0.06	need	79	0.08
26	visit	145	0.14	wild	62	0.06	bring	76	0.07
27	thing	144	0.14	big	59	0.06	know	76	0.07
28	price	143	0.14	excellent	59	0.06	use	74	0.07
29	staff	141	0.14	amazing	56	0.05	expect	70	0.07
30	family	136	0.13	poor	49	0.05	offer	70	0.07
31	movie	136	0.13	main	46	0.05	set	67	0.07
32	drink	130	0.13	clean	44	0.04	shoot	67	0.07
33	euro	129	0.13	high	44	0.04	tell	67	0.07
34	ride	129	0.13	sure	39	0.04	understand	57	0.06
35	hour	128	0.13	beautiful	38	0.04	enter	54	0.05
36	entrance	127	0.12	cool	37	0.04	work	53	0.05
37	restaurant	114	0.11	second	36	0.04	cool	50	0.05
38	water	114	0.11	long	35	0.03	dress	49	0.05
39	desert	110	0.11	happy	34	0.03	try	49	0.05
40	year	110	0.11	lovely	34	0.03	ride	46	0.05
41	building	108	0.11	fine	32	0.03	care	45	0.04
42	heat	101	0.10	pleasant	31	0.03	add	43	0.04

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

In the analyzed reviews, the most frequent nouns “day” (499), “animal” (406), “place” (406), “park” (395), “zoo” (373) may indicate that visitors frame their experience primarily in terms of general leisure activities and interactions with animals, rather than explicitly cinematic or Western themed elements. Although film-related nouns, such as “film” (277), “set” (246), “cowboy” (206) and saloon (215) appear in the top positions, but they are considerably less frequent than terms associated with nature, facilities, or recreational features. Adjectives reinforce this pattern: highly positive evaluative descriptors such as “good” (509), “great” (334), “nice” (122) and “worth” (122) dominate the list, while the term “western” appears frequently but functions more as a thematic label than a central experiential driver. The list of verbs also highlights general tourist behaviors “visit” (274), “look” (219), “make” (204), “spend” (165) and “enjoy” (152) rather than actions related to film, suggesting that visitors predominantly describe their time at the site in terms of general enjoyment, spending the day, and interacting with the park environment. Furthermore, the presence of nouns such as “child” (173), “kid” (168) and “family” (136), combined with positive adjectives such as “friendly” (81) and “entertaining” (87) suggests that many visitors experienced the site as a family-oriented attraction rather than a destination specifically linked to the cinematic fandom. The results show that the cinematic dimension is present but secondary, and that the dominant discourse reflects motivations and experiences characteristic of casual and recreational tourists rather than dedicated film tourists.

Throughout the reviews, the term “zoo” consistently appears in descriptions of the park as a hybrid attraction, as shown in reviews such as: “a mix between a zoo and the Wild West,” and it is often associated with children, animals, and family activities. This is also evident in reviews such as: “a lot of fun for kids”; or “ideal for spending the day with kids.” These references suggest that visitors often frame the experience in terms of general leisure and family entertainment rather than in explicitly cinematic terms. In contrast, the term “western” (419) appears in reviews that explicitly reference cinematic settings, the aesthetics of spaghetti westerns, and the authenticity of the town (“authentic western town”; “you can feel like you’re in *For a Fistful of Dollars*”). However, even within these reviews, the thematic emphasis shifts between enthusiasm and disappointment, with some visitors highlighting the cinematic immersion while others describe the site as abandoned or poorly maintained. Finally, the term “hot” (135) is used primarily to comment on environmental conditions rather than the thematic or cinematic experience. Visitors repeatedly mention the heat as a limitation on their visit and relate it to practical considerations such as sun exposure, hydration, or the need for shade and entertainment. These qualitative patterns confirm that the most prominent and frequently reported aspects in the narrative of the reviews are practical (weather), recreational (zoo, animals, pool), and family-oriented, while the Western/cinematic dimension, though present, emerges in visitors’ discourse as a secondary component and one that is experienced more sporadically..

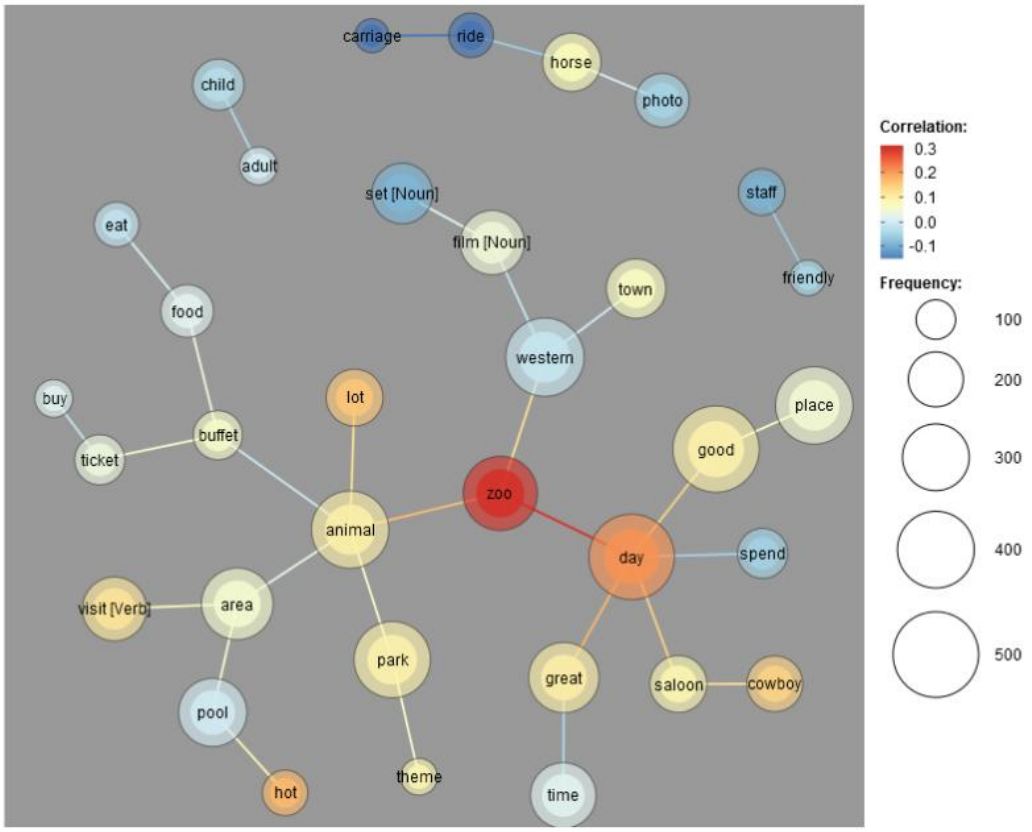
5.2. Co-Occurrence Networks

Figure 1 shows a co-occurrence network generated from the reviews. The co-occurrence network is represented using only the minimum necessary connection structure between terms, in order to reduce visual density and facilitate the interpretation of the main semantic relationships. This configuration allows for clearer identification of the central links in the discourse and the observation of possible variations in co-occurrence patterns throughout the text. In the network, the term "zoo" appears in a single node colored red. This means that the algorithm identifies it as an independent cluster. This occurs when a word functions as a central node, connecting thematic groups without strongly belonging to any particular one. In the reviews, the term "zoo" is linked to other words such as " animal," "day," "park," and "lot" and other subgroups, each of which belongs to different communities. As a result, the term "zoo" acts as a bridge between multiple clusters rather than being integrated into a single group. Its large size and central

position indicate that it is both very frequent and highly interconnected, linking references to animals, theme park activities, day-visit experiences, general evaluations, and even some Western thematic elements. From a film tourism perspective, this suggests that most visitors describe the destination primarily as a zoo or animal theme park rather than as a film or Western movie location. Figure 2 applies a visualization without minimum connection reduction; that is, it shows all the most frequent lexical relationships between the terms. This denser visualization allows us to observe the complexity of the discourse and the coexistence of multiple simultaneous semantic associations, albeit with a greater degree of visual overlap. In this network, the strength of co-occurrence is represented by the thickness of the edges. The largest and most densely connected subgraph again revolves around the terms zoo, animal, and park, while references to western, film, and set form a smaller, more peripheral component. Additional subgraphs linked to horses, cowboy activities, food services, or general evaluations (good, great, day) reflect the presence of broader leisure motivations. Taken together, both networks consistently demonstrate that film-related motivations are secondary within the dataset. These discourse patterns suggest a predominance of recreational and family-oriented elements in the experience described by visitors.

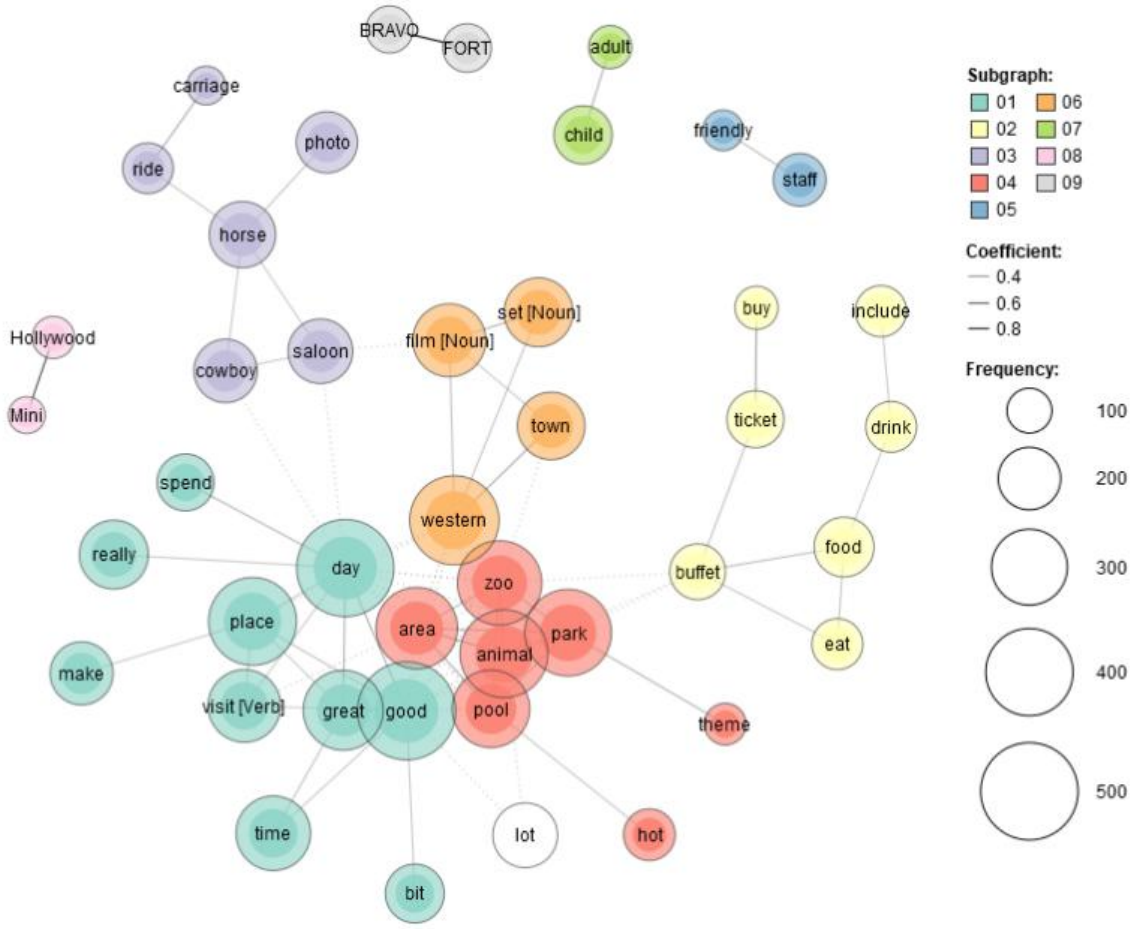
Furthermore, certain subgraphs include terms such as “child” and “adult,” along with evaluative expressions related to family activities, revealing that many reviews describe the visit as a family outing rather than a pilgrimage motivated by the western fan.

Figure 1. *Co-Occurrence Network With Minimal Connection Structure*



Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Figure 2. *Co-Occurrence Network Without a Minimum Connection Structure*



Source: Elaborated by the authors.

In conclusion, both Figure 1 and Figure 2 reveal consistent discourse patterns, characterized by the predominance of recreational and family elements over strictly cinematic ones. These results reinforce the idea that, although the film component is present at the destination, it is not expressed as a central theme in the description of most visitors' experiences. It is important to note that, in this analysis, co-occurrence networks allow for the identification of semantic associations and thematic structures of discourse, but they are not, in themselves, a sufficient tool for conclusively classifying visitor behavior. In this sense, the results of the keyword and co-occurrence network analysis are complemented by a qualitative textual content analysis that allows for a more precise identification of visitor type.

5.3. Qualitative Textual Content Analysis

The analyzed dataset consists of 858 reviews from the two movie-themed parks: 396 reviews from Fort Bravo–Texas Hollywood and 462 from Oasys– MiniHollywood. Based on manual coding by the research team, visitors were classified into three groups according to their identified motivation: fans of film tourism (n = 128; ≈15%), casual tourists (n = 31; ≈4%), and a larger group of “unclassified” visitors (n = 692; ≈81%). The unclassified visitor group primarily includes family, recreational, or generalist motivations, which prevents their direct identification as casual tourists in the strict sense. Therefore, this study distinguishes between the operational category of “casual tourist,” explicitly defined during coding, and

the presence of recreational or non-cinematic narratives in the discourse, which may also appear among unclassified visitors.

To evaluate the visitor experience, three indicators were developed based on the results of coding the reviews. First, the Overall Satisfaction Index (OSI) was created, calculated as the sum of three dimensions: satisfaction with the ambiance, satisfaction with the shows, and satisfaction with the value for money. Each of these dimensions was coded on a scale of 1 to 3, where 1 = "not at all satisfied," 2 = "neutral," and 3 = "very satisfied." The resulting index ranges from 0 to 9, providing a summary measure of overall satisfaction.

On the other hand, the Global Loyalty Index (GLI) was calculated, which is the sum of the recommendation and return intention indicators, each of which can be 0 = no recommendation/no intention to return and 1 = recommendation/intention to return. Since it is a sum, the index value will range between 0 and 2 (as a person can both recommend and intend to return). For the comparative analysis, the average GLI values per subgroup were used, which can therefore take decimal values between 0 and 2.

The mean of overall satisfaction index is 4.26 with a standard deviation (SD) of 2.36, indicating moderate satisfaction levels and some variability in reported experiences. The overall loyalty index has a mean of 0.34 (SD = 0.52), reflecting a relatively low propensity to recommend or return to the park. The statistical relationship between satisfaction and loyalty, measured using Kendall's Tau C coefficient (for ordinal variables), is positive and statistically significant (p-value < 0.001) but moderate (0.173). This means that higher satisfaction tends to be associated with a greater likelihood of recommending or returning, although the relationship is not strong, suggesting that other factors besides the evaluated experience are involved.

However, when comparing the means (Table 2), fans are compared to casual tourists and unclassified visitors, statistically significant differences emerge (p-value < 0.05 for both variables). Fans show notably higher levels of both overall satisfaction (mean of 4.89 vs. 4.19 and 4.19, respectively) and loyalty (mean of 0.51 vs. 0.34 and 0.31). This trend suggests that, although numerically a minority, the fan segment obtains a more fulfilling experience and makes satisfaction become a more favorable attitude toward the destination.

Table 2. *Mean and Standard Deviation by Visitor Groups and Analyzed Variables (Overall Satisfaction Index and Overall Loyalty Index)*

	OSI		GLI	
	Average	Standard Deviation	Average	Standard Deviation
Fans	4.89	2.35	0.51	0.58
Accidental	4.19	2.27	0.35	0.49
Unclassified	4.16	2.35	0.31	0.50
Total	4.26	2.36	0.34	0.52
p-value	0.006		<0.001	

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

In a more detailed but descriptive way (without statistical analysis), when satisfaction is broken down into its components—ambiance, shows, and value for money—it is observed that fans consistently rate these aspects higher than other visitors. The ambiance and shows, elements closely linked to the park's cinematic dimension, receive particularly high ratings from this group. Likewise, fans show a more positive

perception of the park's authenticity: nearly 70% consider the ambiance highly authentic, compared to 35% of casual tourists and unclassified visitors. This contrast reinforces the idea that cinematic motivation not only shapes expectations but also influences the interpretation and evaluation of the experience.

The overall ratings given by visitors to TripAdvisor reviews confirm the differences previously observed in the satisfaction indicators. Fans have the highest average rating (mean = 4.02 on a scale of 1 to 5), indicating a clearly positive evaluation of the experience. Unrated visitors have a slightly lower average rating (mean = 3.73), while casual tourists have the lowest rating (mean = 3.29). This pattern mirrors the trend observed in the Overall Satisfaction Index, where fans express greater alignment between their expectations and the experience received, while casual visitors are more critical or less thematically engaged. Table 3 shows the results of the mean comparison analysis, revealing statistically significant differences (p-value < 0.05).

Table 3. *Mean and Standard Deviation per Visitor Groups and Overall Score*

	Overall score	
	Average	Standard Deviation
Fans	4.02	1.27
Casual tourists	3.29	1.49
Unclassified	3.73	1.35
Total	3.76	1.35
p-value	0.013	

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Another distinguishing feature of fans is the presence of cinephile emotions. Approximately six out of ten mention nostalgia, excitement, dreams fulfilled, or affective references to films or directors associated with spaghetti westerns. Among non-fans, this type of emotional content is barely present, at only 7%. Furthermore, when analyzing only the fan subgroup, an unexpected pattern emerges: fans who make superficial references to film (code = 1) exhibit the highest levels of satisfaction (OSI mean = 5.1), while those who include specific mentions of films, directors, or particular elements of the western genre (code = 2) show slightly lower levels (OSI mean = 4.08). This result suggests that more specialized fans may also be more critical, possibly due to higher expectations regarding the park's authenticity and cinematic fidelity. In line with Gómez-Morales et al. (2024). The fact that the most dedicated fans can also be the most critical may reflect the greater effort they make in terms of time and money to visit the film locations that interest them. This trend is also seen in other types of tourist establishments, such as high-end restaurants, where more discerning, specialized visitors or fans of fine dining are more critical of the experience and have higher expectations (Marine-Roig, 2024).

In contrast, among accidental and unclassified visitors, the trend is more consistent: overall satisfaction is lowest when there is no film reference in the review (code = 0; OSI mean = 3.52), while both superficial (OSI mean = 4.94) and specific mentions (OSI mean = 4.89) are associated with significantly higher levels of satisfaction. These results suggest that, even for non-fans, film references—however minimal—increase the perceived value of the experience. This difference (considering accidental and unclassified visitors) is statistically significant with a p-value less than 0.001.

Regarding the results in terms of loyalty among casual tourists and unclassified visitors, the relationship between film mentions and loyalty is practically flat, although statistically significant (p-value <0.05). The

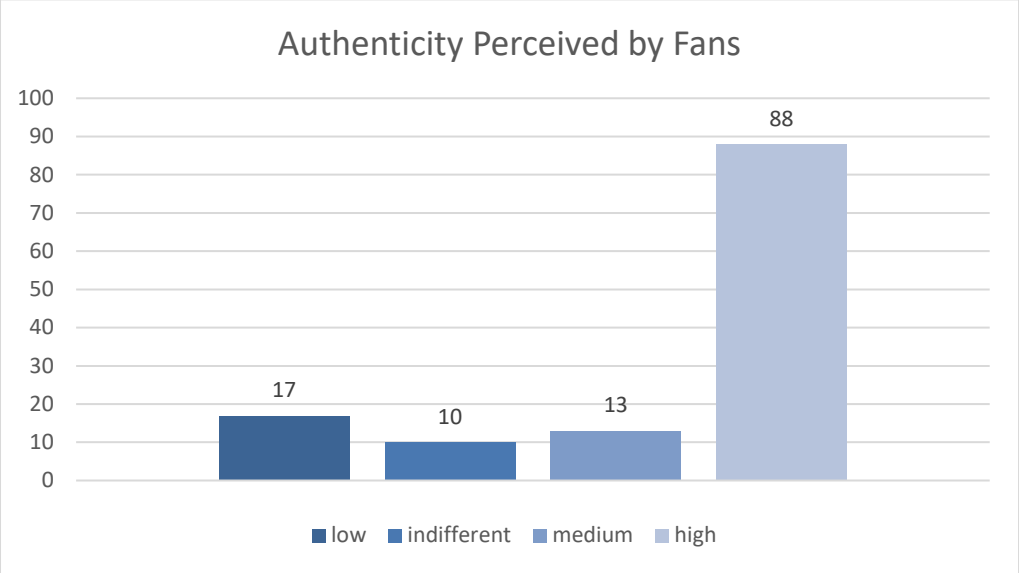
GLI ranges from 0.27 to 0.40 for the three mention levels (0, 1, and 2), indicating that film references are a determining factor in the willingness to recommend or return. The values obtained (GLI mean = 0.27 for no mention; GLI mean = 0.40 for casual mentions; GLI mean = 0.35 for specific mentions) show that loyalty is generally low in these groups.

In contrast, among visitors classified as fans, the relationship between film mentions and loyalty shows a different pattern than that observed among non-fans, with no statistically significant differences found. Fans who make no explicit mention of film in their review (code = 0) exhibit the lowest levels of loyalty (GLI mean = 0.14). This group appears to be motivated by an emotional or nostalgic connection to the Western genre that does not require explicit verbalization. Fans who make specific mentions (code = 2) show intermediate loyalty (GLI mean = 0.53), suggesting that, despite their high thematic involvement, the experience may be perceived as unique but not necessarily repeatable. Finally, fans who include superficial mentions (code = 1) also exhibit average loyalty (GLI mean = 0.50), possibly reflecting less defined expectations or a weaker fit between their film motivation and the lived experience.

The variable of perceived authenticity was also defined, which captures how visitors rate the fidelity, ambiance, or thematic coherence of the park. This variable was initially coded into four qualitative categories: high, medium, low, and indifferent. To allow for quantitative analysis, the categories were transformed into a numerical scale from 0 to 3 (0 = low, 1 = indifferent, 2 = medium, 3 = high).

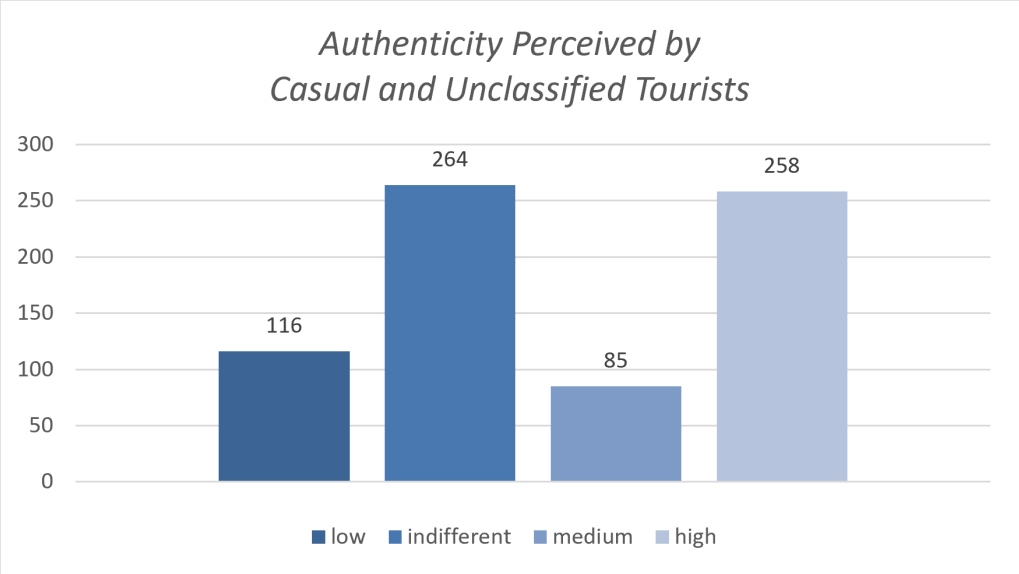
Perceived authenticity shows clear differences between the various visitor profiles (significant differences were found between groups, with a p-value less than 0.001). The results show that fans have an average authenticity score of 2.34. This reflects a high perception of thematic fidelity and cinematic ambiance. The vast majority of fans fall into the high authenticity category, as shown in Figure 3 (88), while low scores are infrequent (17/128). In contrast, the group of casual tourists and unclassified visitors shows lower scores, with an average authenticity score of 1.66. In this group, authenticity is more dispersed across the different categories of the variable, with a greater weight given to indifferent (264) and high (258) ratings, along with a significant presence of low perceptions (116), as shown in Figure 4. This pattern suggests that, although the cinematic ambiance is present in these visitors' experience, it does not necessarily constitute the central focus of their evaluation, unlike what occurs in the case of fans. In this sense, the results indicate that visitors with a stronger connection to the Western genre show greater sensitivity toward the scenic authenticity of the destination.

Figure 3. *Levels of Authenticity Perceived by Fans*



Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Figure 4. *Levels of Authenticity Perceived by Casual and Unclassified Tourists*



Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Finally, the variable "Main Motivation," coded during the content analysis, included six categories: fan, film-related, family-oriented, accidental, curiosity, and other (the latter grouping cases where the motivation was not clearly stated). This variable allows for a more comprehensive interpretation of satisfaction and loyalty beyond the visitor's final classification. Users whose main motivation is film—categories "fan" (N = 128) and "film-related" (N = 3)—show the highest levels of satisfaction (OSI mean = 4.92 and OSI mean = 5.33, respectively) and the highest levels of loyalty (GLI = 0.48 and 0.33). These results indicate that film affinity acts as a key modulator of the experience, since visitors with an explicit interest in the Western genre evaluate the park more positively. On the other hand, a significant number of visitors reported a family-oriented motivation (N = 200), confirming the park's recreational use. Although these

visitors exhibit relatively high levels of satisfaction (OSI mean = 4.45), their loyalty is more moderate (GLI = 0.39), suggesting that the experience is enjoyable but does not necessarily generate an intention to return or recommend the park. Accidental motivations (N = 34) and curiosity (N = 18) register the lowest ratings in both satisfaction (OSI mean = 4.26 and OSI mean = 3.72, respectively) and loyalty (GLI = 0.29 and 0.33). Finally, the "other" category—which includes 469 cases where the motivation is not explicitly stated—shows intermediate results, reflecting the diversity of park uses. These differences in the OSI and GLI regarding the primary motivation are statistically significant, with a p-value less than 0.05 for both variables.

Finally, it is observed that the distribution of fans is not homogeneous between parks: Fort Bravo concentrates a higher percentage of visitors motivated by cinema (72.66%) compared to Oasys–MiniHollywood (27.34%).

6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The results of this study confirm, firstly, that the theme parks in western Almería function as hybrid spaces where different logics of tourist use coexist. Although Fort Bravo and Oasys– MiniHollywood originated as authentic filming locations for the spaghetti western subgenre, the analyzed reviews show that, actually, much of the discourse revolves around recreational and family-oriented elements (zoo, swimming pool, animals, children's activities), while the cinematic dimension appears as a secondary component. This hybrid configuration results in a predominance of recreational and family-oriented narratives in the analyzed reviews, many of which cannot be explicitly linked to a specific cinematic motivation. According to the operational classification used, some visitors are identified as casual tourists. On the other hand, a significant number of unclassified cases are observed, characterized by general discourses focused on leisure, without these being conclusively assigned to specific categories. In contrast, only a minority of visitors clearly identify as fans of the western subgenre or as tourists specifically motivated by the cinematic component.

Fans exhibit the highest levels of overall satisfaction and appreciation of the park's authenticity, as well as higher loyalty rates (intention to return and recommend), consistent with previous studies such as Teng (2021). Accidental visitors, on the other hand, show lower levels of satisfaction and loyalty, and tend to interpret the park as a complementary visit within a broader trip, consistent with the findings of Croy and Heitmann (2011) and Macionis and Sparks (2009), which often position film tourism as a secondary or additional motivation to the main trip. Furthermore, the results show that, overall, casual tourists and unclassified visitors (characterized by diverse recreational and family motivations) far outnumber film tourism fans, supporting previous findings such as Macionis and Sparks (2009) and Moritz et al. (2024).

Regarding satisfaction and loyalty levels, this study confirms that satisfaction is positively associated with the intention to recommend and return, but the correlation is moderate, indicating the involvement of other factors (for example, the primary motivation, the type of visit, or the perceived repeatability of the experience). Among fans, some highly specialized subgroups—those who make very specific references to films and directors—show high levels of satisfaction but more restrained loyalty, which can be interpreted as "dream-come-true" visits that are unlikely to be repeated, in line with the idea of unique rather than recurring experiences. Among families, relatively high levels of satisfaction are observed, but more moderate loyalty, suggesting that the visit is perceived as a good leisure option, but not necessarily as an experience to be frequently repeated. Furthermore, the study confirms that the most specialized fans have higher expectations; they anticipate much more from the experience, making them more critical when evaluating it.

In theoretical terms, this study contributes to the literature on film tourism on several levels. First, it reinforces the importance of film genre as a modulator of motivations and experiences, as noted by works that highlight the role of genre and specific film elements in shaping tourist motivations (Raj, 2018). The case of the spaghetti western shows that the genre not only structures fan expectations but also conditions how the authenticity of the environment is perceived and the intensity of the emotional connection to the place. The parks analyzed represent a hybrid case in which originally authentic filming locations have been transformed into commercial theme parks, generating tensions between perceived authenticity, commodification, and fan expectations.

The study provides evidence on loyalty in film destinations, an area still relatively unexplored compared to other types of tourism. Our results align with the conceptualization of loyalty as the intention to revisit and recommend (Oppermann, 2000) and with studies that link it to satisfaction, image, and emotions (Stylidis et al., 2020; Zhou et al., 2022). By showing that loyalty is higher among film-motivated visitors and lower among accidental visitors and unclassified visitors with general recreational narratives, the study underscores the need to include motivation and cinematic engagement as key antecedents of loyalty in film tourism.

As it can be seen from the adjective frequency list, the emotions experienced during the trip were overwhelmingly positive. Among the most frequent words were emotional concepts such as “great,” “worth,” “authentic,” “interesting,” “amazing,” and “fantastic,” which reflect the profound and positive emotions visitors experienced and their close connection to the place. These results align with studies such as that of Devesa et al. (2010), who highlight film tourism as a highly emotional concept. Furthermore, it's worth noting that these visitors want to share these feelings and this connection with other travelers through their online reviews.

From a methodological point of view, this study demonstrates the potential of combining qualitative content analysis with quantitative text mining on online traveler reviews to segment profiles, identify motivations, and assess satisfaction, authenticity, and loyalty.

6.1. Implications for the Destination

The results of this study offer several implications for the management of the parks and the Almería destination as a film tourism hub. First, the fact that, overall, casual and unclassified visitors far outnumber film tourism enthusiasts— the latter being a minority segment, but highly satisfied and relatively loyal — suggests the importance of adopting differentiated strategies. For example, maintaining and improving the recreational and family offerings (zoo, swimming pool, children's activities, restaurants), which account for much of the current appeal, and, at the same time, designing specific products for fans (film-themed guided tours, more faithful scene recreations, signage for original locations, interpretive content about filming) that allow capitalizing on the high potential for satisfaction and advocacy from this segment. This could also be linked to actions related to loyalty outcomes. Although the experience generates reasonable levels of satisfaction in all groups, the likelihood of repeat visits is limited, especially among casual visitors and families. This reinforces the idea that these parks work well as high-turnover, first-visit attractions, but there is room to encourage repeat visits, which could be achieved through special events (festivals, fan gatherings, outdoor screenings), periodic updates to shows, and themed activities that change over time. For fans, community gatherings (like those already existing around spaghetti western genre) (Lao et al., 2023) or tours of lesser-known locations can help deepen the connection and encourage longer and more frequent stays. The findings on authenticity also demonstrate the importance of developing transparent communication, especially with the fan base. That is, communicating transparently the degree of

transformation of the spaces (what is original, what is reconstructed, what has been added) and offering interpretive resources that allow fans to mentally reconstruct the "before and after" of the locations. Hiding the artificiality is impossible, so park managers could integrate into their narrative the transformation the location has undergone over the years as part of the history of the genre, as well as the evolution of tourism in the destination. The results also confirm the potential of film tourism to reduce seasonality and diversify the destination's tourism offerings, especially in Almería, which is generally dominated by sun and beach tourism (Empresa Pública para la Gestión del Turismo y del Deporte de Andalucía[1], 2019).

These results also align with recent studies that highlight the complexities of film tourism development in Spain, characterized by significant but uneven growth, as well as tensions between tourism promotion, the authenticity of locations, and their increasing theming (del Rey-Reguillo, 2020). In this respect, the case of the western theme parks in Almería reflects this complexity, demonstrating how originally authentic filming locations have evolved into hybrid tourism products where the cinematic component loses its centrality to broader recreational uses.

6.2. Limitations and Future Lines of Research

This study has some limitations that must be taken into account. First, the source of the analyzed reviews was only one (TripAdvisor). Furthermore, all reviews were translated into English, without distinguishing between fans, casual tourists, and unclassified reviews, which may obscure certain nuances, cultural references, or wordplay. This study analyzes only one genre (Western) and one region (Almería). While this allows for an in-depth analysis of a specific case, it also limits the extrapolation of the results to other genres, formats, or cultural contexts. Additionally, although the coding process was carefully designed and applied, a formal inter-coder agreement coefficient was not calculated, which constitutes a methodological limitation in terms of the analysis's reliability. Moreover, the application of qualitative methodology inevitably involves a certain degree of subjectivity. Finally, the design employed prevents establishing causal relationships between motivations, satisfaction, authenticity, and loyalty.

Future studies could expand the analysis to include other reviews and review platforms such as Google Reviews, social media, or specialized fan forums to determine whether the patterns identified in this study persist or, conversely, change. Furthermore, future research could analyze reviews in other languages and adopt a multicultural perspective to examine whether cultural factors or linguistic nuances contribute to different results. Methodologically, the use of reviews could be complemented by interviews with visitors to delve deeper into sociodemographic variables and aspects not captured in the texts. Furthermore, future research could comparatively explore different types of film tourism products—not only theme parks, but also urban locations, film routes, film studios, and festivals—to analyze how the type of resource and its degree of theming influence the visitor experience. Along these lines, it would be particularly interesting to compare the case of the western parks in Almería with other international models, such as the Cinecittà complex in Rome, which combines film studios with a theme park (Cinecittà World). This would allow for an analysis of how different forms of hybridization between the audiovisual industry and tourism offerings shape distinct experiences and perceptions of authenticity. Future studies could apply complementary methodologies, such as experiments or participant observation. For example, providing fans with manipulated information about the authenticity of the locations and analyzing how this influences their satisfaction and perceived authenticity.

[1] Public Company for the Management of Tourism and Sport in Andalusia

Finally, this study highlights the complexity of film tourism in hybrid contexts, where the cinematic dimension coexists with broader recreational and family uses. In line with the stated objective, the results show a predominance of recreational profiles, not specifically cinematic ones. This predominance is manifested, on the one hand, in visitors classified as accidental according to the operational criteria, and, on the other hand, in a significant number of unclassified cases, characterized by general leisure narratives. For their part, fans, although a minority, exhibit higher levels of satisfaction, perceived authenticity, and loyalty. These findings contribute to broadening the understanding of film tourism beyond the traditional approach focused on film-driven tourists, demonstrating the coexistence of different profiles.

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