**Leveraging Author Fame for Tourism Promotion: A Comparative Analysis of Literary Tourism Impact on the West Coast of Ireland**

**Authors**

Dr Emmet McLoughlin

Senior Lecturer in Tourism and Event Management

Cardiff School of Management

Cardiff Metropolitan University, UK

[emcloughlin@cardiffmet.ac.uk](mailto:emcloughlin@cardiffmet.ac.uk)

Dr Nick Taylor-Collins

Senior Lecturer in English

Cardiff School of Education and Social Policy

Cardiff Metropolitan University, UK

[ntaylor-collins@cardiffmet.ac.uk](mailto:ntaylor-collins@cardiffmet.ac.uk)

**Leveraging Author Fame for Tourism Promotion: A Comparative Analysis of Literary Tourism Impact on the West Coast of Ireland**

**Abstract**

**Introduction**

This exploratory study has revealed that literary tourism presents a valuable economic opportunity on Ireland's West Coast. While authors such as W.B. Yeats and Sally Rooney have contributed to increased interest in the region, others, like John McGahern, still need to be more well-known. Previous research by the authors has suggested that there is a correlation between an author's international acclaim and publicity and the economic benefits generated by literary tourism. Therefore, this submission aims to expand on initial findings by conducting in-person interviews with tourists and residents, identifying successful factors and strategies for promoting literary tourism's economic opportunities. Therefore, this submission aims to understand further the impact of leveraging renowned literary authors on destination marketing and promotion. The objective is to explore further the relationship between literary tourism, the evaluation of destination marketing strategies, and discerning the perspectives of key destination-level policymakers.

**Relevant Background Information**

In order to establish the context for understanding the role of author fame in attracting visitors to literary sites and the broader implications for destination marketing. It is necessary to understand the importance of literary tourism when it comes to tourism and destination marketing. Literary tourism has emerged as a dynamic component of cultural tourism (Hoppen Brown and Fyall, 2014), linking literature, history, and destination appeal (Otay Demir, Yavuz Görkem and Rafferty, 2022). With its rich literary heritage (Hanrahan and McLoughlin, 2015), Ireland presents an appealing landscape for exploring the symbiotic relationship between renowned authors and tourism promotion (O'Connor and Kim, 2014). Regarding tourism destination marketing, integrating cultural and literary elements has become a pivotal strategy for many countries (Pike and Page, 2014). The success of such initiatives often relies heavily on effectively leveraging the fame of authors associated with the destination. Therefore, the interaction between literature and tourism offers a unique platform for promoting the literary heritage and the overall cultural richness of tourist destinations.

**Research Approach**

This project stage utilised qualitative methods to examine literary tourism in Ireland, explicitly employing two semi-structured interviews targeting tourism policymakers and organisations responsible for promoting and marketing tourism on Ireland's west coast. Qualitative semi-structured interviews allowed for an in-depth exploration (Jordan and Moore, 2018) of perceptions, strategies, and challenges associated with incorporating an author's international acclaim and publicity into tourism marketing strategies and policy.

Policymakers included relevant Local Authorities (Mayo, Sligo, Leitrim, and Roscommon) and the Western Development Commission (WDC). In contrast, organisations responsible for tourism promotion and marketing included the Arts Council of Ireland, The Heritage Council, Sligo LEADER Partnership, Leitrim Development Company, Southwest Mayo Development Company, Mayo Northeast LEADER Partnership, Irish Film Board (Screen Ireland), Screen Producers Ireland, Irish Literary Society, Yeats Society Sligo, and John McGahern Barracks. Interviews were conducted online via MS Teams and Zoom. All interviews were transcribed, and a thematic analysis was utilised to identify potential themes.

**Discussion**

The significance of conducting this study lies in its potential to enhance our understanding of the complex relationship between literary works and tourism promotion. By focusing on the West Coast of Ireland, a region with a rich literary history, the authors anticipate uncovering patterns and insights that can inform local strategies and contribute to broader discussions on literary tourism and consequences for marketing destinations.

Anticipated findings are expected to reveal the varying impacts of different authors on tourism promotion. Understanding such is essential for destination marketing efforts to effectively capitalise on specific authorial associations (Hewlett and Brown, 2018). Moreover, the study aims to identify potential synergies between literary tourism and broader destination marketing strategies, thus providing an additional framework for examining tourism resilience, destination management and sustainable tourism development.

**Conclusions/Implications**

In conclusion, the findings of this study are anticipated to have significant implications for the future of tourism in Ireland. Identifying effective strategies for leveraging literary tourism can contribute to formulating targeted policies and marketing initiatives. Furthermore, the study's insights may inform the development of collaborative efforts between policymakers, local communities, and the tourism industry to maximise literary tourism's positive impact on the West Coast of Ireland further.

For future research, it may be necessary to explore further the specific aspects identified during this study, such as the role of social media in promoting literary tourism or the potential synergies with other cultural attractions. Ultimately, this research seeks to guide the sustainable development of literary tourism, positioning the West Coast of Ireland as a further destination for literary enthusiasts and cultural explorers.

**Keywords:** Tourism Promotion; Literary Tourism; Ireland; Destination Marketing.

**References**

Hanrahan, J and McLoughlin, E (2015). "A Framework for Analysing the Local Authorities Tourism Planning in Ireland: A Socio-Cultural Perspective". European Journal of Tourism Research, vol. 2, pp. 73-87

Hewlett, D. and Brown, L. (2018). Planning for tranquil spaces in rural destinations through mixed methods research. Tourism Management, vol. 67, pp. 237–247.

Hoppen, A., Brown, L., and Fyall, A. (2014). Literary tourism: Opportunities and challenges for the marketing and branding of destinations? Journal of Destination Marketing & Management, vol. 3(1), pp. 37–47.

Jordan, E. J and Moore, J. (2018). An in-depth exploration of residents' perceived impacts of transient vacation rentals. Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing, vol. 35(1), pp. 90–101.

O'Connor, N., & Kim, S. (2014). Pictures and prose: Exploring the impact of literary and film tourism. Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change, vol.12(1), pp. 1–17.

Otay Demir, F., Yavuz Görkem, Ş., & Rafferty, G. (2022). An inquiry on the potential of computational literary techniques towards successful destination branding and literary tourism. Current Issues in Tourism, vol. 25(5), pp. 764-778.

Pike, S and Page, S. J. (2014). Destination Marketing Organizations and destination marketing: A narrative analysis of the literature. Tourism management, vol 41, pp. 202–227.