

Love is blurb: Reality TVs as local tourism marketing intermediaries

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ABSTRACT

Reality TV programs attract viewers from various backgrounds and age groups. Several previous studies have stated that reality TV shows can change viewers' lifestyles. In addition, reality TV shows can provide a platform for the existence and branding of public figures. Reality TV programs can be subjectively evaluated and can have both positive and negative effects. However, to objectively assess the existence of reality TV programs, it is necessary to examine whether reality TV shows can be beneficial for the audience or the economic condition of a country. The proliferation of reality TV programs on Netflix's Video on Demand services, such as Love is Blind, The Ultimatum, and Single's Inferno, indicates that success is generated from the production of these programs. One hypothesis is that the format of reality TV programs emphasizes certain tourist destinations. Thus, reality TV programs can be utilized as mediums or intermediaries for promoting and marketing tourism in specific regions or countries.

Keywords: marketing intermediaries, Netflix, reality tv, tourism

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RESEARCH & PUBLISHING



1. INTRODUCTION

Reality TV is a very broad term used to define certain kinds of TV programs whose characteristics involve non-professional talents, some common or typical civilians, using free scripted or mostly unscripted conversations, and using multiple handheld cameras to determine the effect of surveillance footage style (Tsay-Vogel & Krakowiak, 2015). TVs have been around since 1948 (Smith, 2024) and have become increasingly popular during the 21st century. There are numerous reality TVs such as *The Bachelor*, *Big Brother*, *Project Runway*, and *America's Got Talent*, which are still producing seasons to this day. These shows have evolved into spin-offs and franchises that reprise the same concept in different regions or countries. The United States made reality TVs popular, and its entertainment industry manages to keep producing several formats under the umbrella of reality TVs. Reprising and franchising show that many genres have found their loyal target audience. Thus, the entertainment industry must repeat and modify the formula bit by bit. There are several subgenres of reality TV: dating/romance, makeover/lifestyle, hidden cameras, talent, game shows, docusoaps, and sitcoms (Tsay-Vogel & Krakowiak, 2015). The audience can browse these subgenres on Netflix for shows such as *Love Is Blind*, *Selling Sunset*, *Prank Encounters*, *Iron Chef*, *Physical: 100*, *Bling Empire*, and *Men on a Mission*.

The involvement of social media is understood to be very beneficial in boosting the popularity of not only the show but also the talents who are unprofessional actors. Currently, there is one crucial factor in making anything popular: its elements of going viral, meaning it is relatable to the audience, so clips of the shows are edited and reposted on social media as memes or trends. *Big Brother Naija* and other reality TV shows are flourishing because of pressure from friends, family, and acquaintances to remain popular on social media. As a result, an interesting ecosystem is created in which conversations and interactions about the show help make it more popular and related products or promotions go viral (Umoren & Udonquak, 2022). Many reality TV formats extend their reach through social media, creating interactive experiences such as live tweeting or hashtag challenges that contribute to the wider spread of their content (Klein & Coleman, 2022). Through strategic cultivation and promotion of personal brands, contestants can leverage viral moments to build a following that lasts long after the event ends (Klein & Coleman, 2022). Viewers connected with reality TV participants because they often presented relatable challenges and triumphs. This ability amplifies emotional connections, making content more shareable and memorable (Tsay-Vogel & Krakowiak, 2015). Now, imagine the impact it can spread through a single popular reality TV, then double, triple, and more. Netflix's *Love Is Blind* and has gained popularity through its casts' social media presence. The original *Love Is Blind* has aired for seven seasons in the United States and has been produced in many territories around the world: *Love Is Blind: Brazil*; *Love Is Blind: Japan*; *Love Is Blind: France*; *Love Is Blind: Sweden*; *Love Is Blind: UK*; *Love Is Blind: Argentina*; *Love Is Blind: Germany*; *Love Is Blind: Mexico*; *Love Is Blind Habibi*; and *Love Is Blind: Italy*.

Despite its success in replicating concepts, the management of TV production has questionable practices regarding the commodification of production crews as management employees. Production management of reality TV frequently puts profits and viewership ahead of employee-friendly procedures. Analysis of the creation of programs such as *D'Academy* and *D'Star* demonstrates that management choices are heavily influenced by the commodification of gimmick as well as long working hours (Susanti et al., 2020). Participants are frequently required to divulge personal tales during the pre-production stage to intentionally construct tensions between contestants, judges, and hosts to draw viewers. Because participants are required to divulge private details about themselves for possible on-air use, this procedure can be intrusive. The shows that 'lengthy broadcast times up to six hours at times reflect management that prioritizes efficiency over consideration for the psychological and physical toll that personnel and participants endure. The main goal of these tactics is to increase revenue by guaranteeing strong ratings during prime hours (Susanti et al., 2020).

There is no guarantee that every successful and popular reality TV is beneficial to many economic sectors. However, it is worth considering managing the well-rounded production of reality TVs to promote certain specific economic areas, such as tourism. By exposing viewers to beautiful places and cultural landmarks, reality shows serve as independent agents of destination promotion, affecting their opinions. Reality TV such as *The Amazing Race* improve familiarity and travel intention toward featured destinations

by boosting cognitive and emotive impressions of those places (Mege & Aruan, 2021). Reality programs engage viewers at an emotional level using immersive imagery and storytelling (Akmalia, et al., 2024). For instance, viewers and participants get fond of places that are frequently highlighted in challenges or stories, promoting interest in travel (Mayagita, 2021). The South Korean media industry has its own model to integrate government planning as a tourism marketing strategy by collaborating with production companies to feature destinations in reality shows. This helps to amplify reach and build a positive image of the location as a desirable travel spot (Rhee et al., 2011). This involves depicting historical landmarks, contemporary attractions, and regional customs, generating an interest in Korean travel on a global scale. Audio visual content can be used as soft promotion material in marketing intermediaries.

Marketing intermediaries enable companies to advertise, market, and deliver goods to consumers (Cempaka & Srimayasandy, 2024). In this case, the company is the government, the goods are tourism or destination spots, the advertisement is the reality TV shows which feature destinations, and the consumers are the audience. There are two strategies to apply marketing intermediaries. First, media outlets postpone revealing additional negative reviews of strongly pushed products. Our view of this pattern is that critics practice relationship management. Second, media outlets artificially distinguish themselves from the competition. No two organizations have the same taste positioning, but by analyzing media outlet pairs, we show that critics are more deviant when they examine another's opinion. Our assessment of this pattern is that media outlets constantly reposition themselves to provide distinct perspectives to their customers (Olson & Waguespack, 2020).

This study aims to investigate the function of reality television as an intermediary in regional tourism marketing communication. The specific purpose of this study is to examine how popular reality TV presents images of local locations that might influence audiences to encourage familiarity and increase trip intentions. Additionally, it seeks to evaluate reality TV's potential as a tactical instrument for destination marketing organizations to boost engagement, attract travellers, and eventually support regional tourism.

2. METHOD

This study is conducted using a qualitative approach and content analysis method by observing one of Netflix's original TV shows, *Love Is Blind*. The series promotes itself as "an experiment" to ascertain whether love is blind, or if one may develop romantic feelings for another individual without ever perceiving their appearance. Therefore, to eliminate the factor of physical attraction, contestants go on a series of dates inside "pods," which are essentially two lounges connected by a translucent wall. Contestants can clearly hear each other, but they cannot see each other; women sit on one side and men on the other. After five to ten days, the contestants settled on their fiancés. Once couples have become engaged, they meet in person. They then go on vacations to exotic tourism destinations (Crimmins, 2020). This destination depends on the series version of the program. For example, *Love Is Blind: UK* couples are going to Greece, the US version of *Love Is Blind* couples are going to Mexico, etc. The scenes from the series' episodes will be reviewed using content analysis to draw fruitful conclusions and build connections between the text and the real phenomenon (Sirilakshmi et al., 2024). The analysis concentrated on Seasons 1, 2, 4, 5, and 7 of the U.S. versions of the show that featured Mexico as the destination for the engagement trip. Purposive sampling was used to choose these episodes because of their overt use of the location as a major plot point in romance. Both primary (cast reactions) and secondary (visual representations) destination image productions were used in the content analysis. Screenshot documentation, dialogue transcription, and visual feature coding were all part of the data-collection process. Scenery, cultural experience, opulent amenities, and emotional tone were among these categories.

The destination perception of tourism spots must be comprehended as destination image formation. Destination image production can be divided into two categories: the cognitive and affective aspects that make up the destination picture and the method by which the destination image is generated. The primary image is formed from first-hand experiences while visiting a destination. The secondary image is formed through contact with all of the formal or induced messages emanating from the Destination

Management Organization (DMO), tourism authority, or other commercial or public sector entities charged with promoting the destination, as well as contact with all of the organic and autonomous informal messages transmitted via channels such as word of mouth, social media, television, film, and travel writing (Kislali et al., 2020, in Skinner et al., 2021). Television programs set in tourist areas are now just as likely, if not more likely, to be reality-based than traditional vacation shows, in which presenters go to various destinations to report on them. Thus, it has been acknowledged that in these broadcasts, 'the tourist is replacing the tourist location as the object of the television camera's gaze' (Dunn, 2006, p. 54), in Skinner et al. (2021). Due to the nature of the data being secondary publicly available audiovisual content, ethical approval was not required.

In some situations, the location of a television or film has been compared to 'product placement' (Alvarez & Campo, 2011, in Skinner et al., 2021), whereas 'destination placement' of a location in television or film (Tessitore et al., 2014, in Skinner et al., 2021) would give representation regarding the location as needed in tourism promotion. These representations are visual inputs coded into secondary destination image production using visual rhetoric theory. Visual rhetoric theory is critical in advertising, because it shapes opinions, elicits emotions, and influences customer decisions. Beyond aesthetics, it is also important to create a compelling narrative for viewers. Images serve as strategic tools for marketers to capture their attention and convey messages quickly (Azman et al., 2024).

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

As mentioned in the previous subsection, *Love Is Blind* has many regional versions. In this study, we focus on *Love Is Blind* US production. The US production has aired seven seasons with different vacation destinations for couples who have gotten engaged after several dates in the "pods." As observed from netflix.com, the vacation destinations for Season 1, Season 2, Season 4, Season 5, and Season 7 were several spots in Mexico: Cancún for four seasons (1, 2, 4, 5), and Cabo San Lucas for one season (7). Couples of Seasons 3 and 6 went to Malibu and Santorini, respectively, so these two seasons were not included in the research. It can be assumed that Mexico is one of the favorable destinations for tourists from the US since it is nearby, and both countries have become familiar with each other's culture and food.

The initial hypothesis was that the Mexican government would invest in Netflix for its tourism promotion program. After observing several sources, Mexican senators managed to lobby not only Netflix but also Amazon to ensure that at least 30% of their catalogues are national content (MBN, 2021). It was fruitful that Netflix injected approximately USD 300 million by 2021 through the Netflix Fund for Creative Equity in Mexico (Botella & Mirassou, 2024). By investing, Netflix expects to gain more audience from Mexico and the rest of the world, since many contents from Mexico are attracting millions of users and even among users' favorites. One example is *The Control Z* series (2020), which was watched by 20.5 million users and made it the top 10 in more than 60 countries (MBN, 2021). The idea of commissioning audiovisual content serves as an intermediary between the film or television production industry (production companies, directors, and screenwriters) and the host area (local institutions and community). Hence, they can promote and value the historical and artistic aspects of a territory, leading to efficient development (Malpica et al., 2023).

According to this early observation, this research will further code and analyze episodes that consist of Mexico as destinations. There are usually three episodes, three to five, each season in which shots are taken at spots in Mexico. In these three episodes, the casts arrived and stayed together in Mexico after face-to-face meetings for the first time. Scenes from these episodes were collected and analyzed for primary and secondary destination image production. Primary destination image productions focus on the reaction of the casts to the place. However, the secondary inputs were visual inputs from the show for audience watching.

4.1. Primary Destination Image Production

The primary image is established from first-hand experiences while visiting a destination. During the couples' retreat to Mexico, they all stayed in one large resort, where they were going to explore their relationships romantically and physically. The place they stay in will play a significant role in shaping their relationships. The cast's reaction to the place is reviewed as primary destination image production.

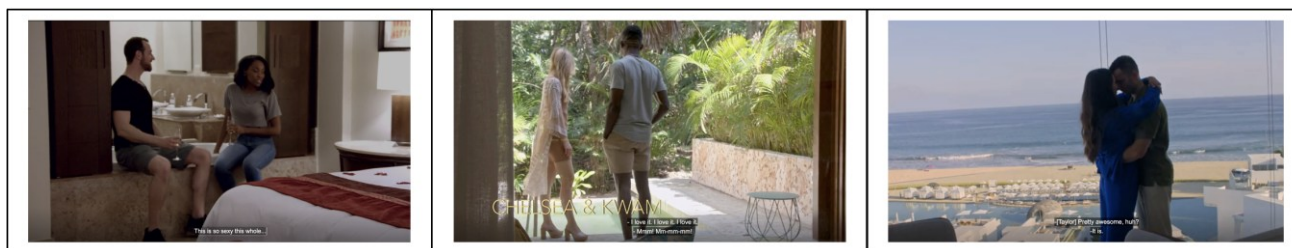


Figure 1. Couples Reacted to Their Rooms Being Sexy; has Lovely Pool; and has Amazing View

Source: Processed from Netflix.com

The series will follow each couple to their rooms and the activities they experience during the trip. All of the couple reactions describe the situations regarding the rooms, views, and features it offers. Testimonials from each cast are presumably talking points directed by the program director. However, the commentaries matter as much as the audience considers them adlibs. Figure 1 shows collages of three couple reactions when they explore their rooms in Mexico. The first couple from Season 1 described the room as sexy and romantic as she continued to describe the arrangement of rose petals on top of their bed, *"This is so sexy, this whole shebang. Rose petals.. Hot tub.. Me.. You."* As the man approaches her so that they are sitting closer to each other, the woman reaches her arm to hold his back. From this clip, the woman's reaction looked quite nervous, since it was the first time they would be vacating together as a couple. However, the intonation she delivered was indicative of happiness and excitement for the days they spent together.

The couple from Season 4 found their private pool in their room to be lovely; the man said, *"This is beautiful. I love it. I love it. I love it."* Then the woman responded, *"What's gonna be going down in this pool, huh?"* because they laughed together. The situation indicating the couple was excited and relaxed regarding traveling for the first time as a couple. The couple reactions from Season 7 were shown in montages as they arrived at the resort and entered their private rooms. One of the couples were enjoying the view they had from their room, the woman said, *"Pretty awesome, huh?"* Then, the man answered, *"It is."* as they continued to laughter. The following shots are detailed shots of a bed from one of the rooms with rose petals scattered all over.

According to several shots of three couples from three different seasons, reactions are always short, brief, and directed specifically to what makes couples excited the most. There were no more than three sentences during the entire interaction, which made it the final editing process. These three clips are samples for all seven seasons aired by *the Love Is Blind* US production. As observed, all seven seasons follow similar points. Further elaboration of secondary destination image production is required to support the content analysis of primary destination image production.

4.2. Secondary Destination Image Production

Figure 2 is formed through contact with all formal or induced messages emanating from scenes of reality TV shows or visual inputs from the show. There are certain templates that are used to show spots or specific places in Mexico. As observed, it focuses on shots that show the nature or exotic scenery of the place, shots that show activities the couples might enjoy and experience at the place, and established shots of the accommodation or resorts where the couples stay.

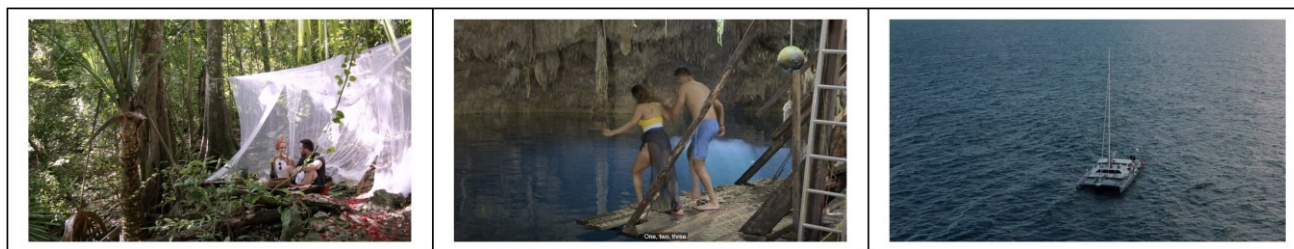


Figure 2. Couples Enjoy Nature and Bond into Their Relationships

Source: Processed from Netflix.com

One sample of nature shots from Season 1, a couple enjoyed picnic in a wooded exotic area in Playa del Carmen surrounded by rose petals all over while they were enjoying wines. This vision is clearly staged and worth discussing whether it is part of the resort's facility for tourists who are interested in exploring the area. It was not clarified where it is specifically, but the editing made sure to point out the place where they stayed, that is, Grand Velas Riviera Maya Resort. The spot may not look interesting without decoration from the TV's production team, but they managed to highlight some potential on spots to be romantic for couples having their dates at. In another sample of nature shot from Season 2, a couple enjoyed swimming and exploring a cenote in the area of the Yucatán Peninsula. Mexico, especially on the Yucatán Peninsula, has thousands of cenotes or sinkholes that are created when soft bedrock collapses, opening up underground bodies of water (Speiser, 2019). Cenotes are cultural and historical places in Mexico since they were believed to serve as ritual sites for the Maya people who considered cenotes to be passageways to the afterlife (Speiser, 2019). In the series, a couple bonded over their swimming experience and explored one of the cenotes. This accentuates the message about this spot in Mexico as a historical tourism promotion for the people interested not only in the exoticism or romanticism of the place, but for those cultural enthusiasts as well. Another natural shot from Season 4 shows a catamaran sailing in open water along the stretch of the coastline south of Cancún. This shot attempts to draw the audience's attention to the beauty of its scenic surroundings with vibrant blue hues and calm water. Many shots from the series use a similar formula to project romantic and picturesque scenes as a background for couples bonding in their relationships (see Figure 3).

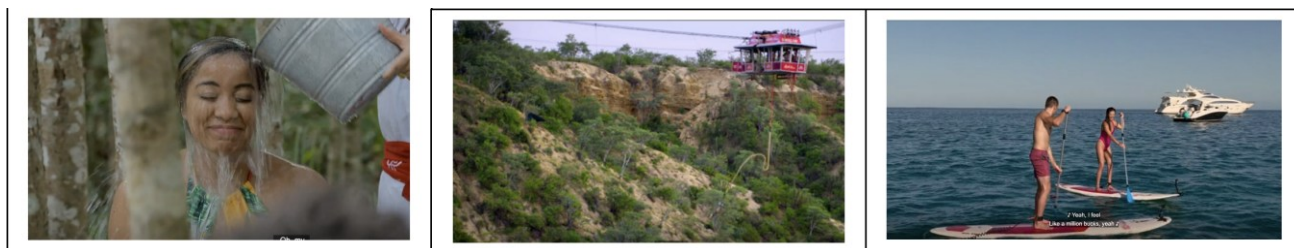


Figure 3. Couples Experience Various Activities and Getting to Know Each Other's Preferences

Source: Processed from Netflix.com

Other than natural shots, several other activities were also shown to be experienced by couples. A couple from Season 4 enjoyed being involved in a cultural ritual in which they were playfully doused with water by local people. This promotes tourists' experiences of cultural rituals from the place. On the other hand, couples from Season 7 experienced very contrasting activities, such as bungee jumping and paddleboarding. Season 7's engagement trip was filmed in Cabo San Lucas, where it gives a complete opposite personality from the activities filmed in Cancún (not to mention that the geographical location between the two are literally opposite of each other). Cancún gave off cultural, calm, and exotic personalities. Cabo-San Lucas exhibits exciting, youthful, and luxurious characteristics. This paper argues that this is one of the show's intentions to highlight different choices for tourists interested in many potential spots in Mexico for getaways.

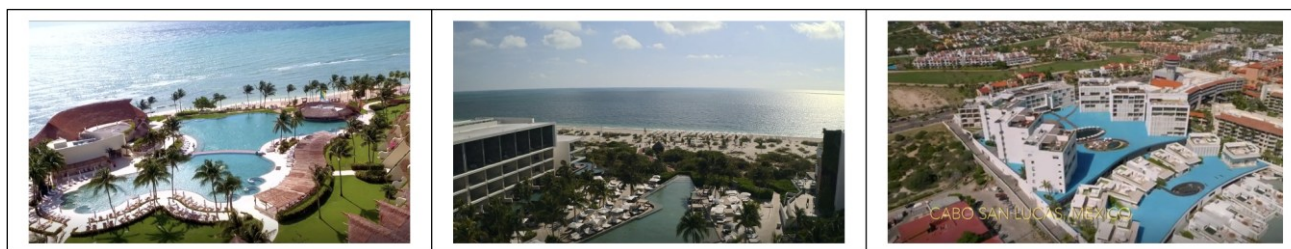


Figure 4. Established Shots of Hotels/Resorts the Couples are Staying In

Source: Processed from Netflix.com

In Figure 4, famously noticeable shots from the series are the established shots of the accommodation that the couples are staying in. Several variations of these shots are also used as transitions every time they need to change the scenes. They also managed to put on shots that displayed the name of the accommodation here and there in the background. This strategy would force the audience to notice and be curious about the resorts. They produced high-angle shots to provide a complete picture of the accommodation area. These visual inputs are crucial in promoting the strong features of certain places, which, in this case, are romantic and luxurious. Season 1 filmed at Grand Velas Riviera Maya Resort that, according to its website, sells romantic escape, family adventures, and secluded relaxation. Since *Love Is Blind* is a romance/dating show, they insisted on highlighting this hotel as one of the most romantic places to stay in Mexico with many shots of views from the Caribbean Sea and intimate spa treatment. Season 2 filmed at TRS Yucatan Hotel, Riviera Maya, which sells its infinite pool overlooking the Caribbean Sea. The hotel is fully in when it comes to promoting the place on a reality TV show that the hotel actually offers a Love Is Blind Package for tourists interested in reliving romantic moments from one of the most successful reality TVs on Netflix. Season 7 was filmed at Viceroy Los Cabos in Cabo San Lucas, which sells state-of-the-art architectural design concepts with private plunge pools looking out to the Sea of Cortez in the Gulf of California. Many shots of couples swimming in different massive pools and served by a private butler service. These scenes show that intimate dinners, rejuvenating treatments, and lavish experiences are crucial in building a certain ambience for couples starting romantic relationships. These accommodations are likely to be associated with destination choices for couples pursuing deeper connections with each other.

4.3. Key Messages and Patterns

Several key messages and patterns can be summarized according to both primary and secondary destination image production. There are certainly talking points and topics directed for the casts to accentuate positive points about the place, context within the scenes in relation to the show's substance as a romance/dating show, and the overall picture of each shot category.

From the primary destination image analysis, it can be concluded that all reactions are always positive, and that casts love the place. The couple's banter on their first impressions of the destination (rooms, pools, and views). They use statements like "*This is so sexy*" and "*I love it*" to indicate enthusiasm and anticipation, but they are fleeting and superficial. The comments appear planned and formulaic, most likely driven by production, to maintain a focus on romantic aspects and resort amenities. Couples' comments frequently highlight the sensuality of the surroundings, implying that location acts as a trigger for developing closeness. Reactions were consistent over the seven seasons' discovery, a few moments of wonder-filled discussion, and then flirtation or laughter. A pattern for the show's destination imagery is created by frequently highlighting the same feature categories (rose petals, pools, and views). With minimal differences in the types of images or feelings conveyed, romantic arrangements and picturesque situations are essentially the same throughout the year.

The main purpose of destination imagery is to create an atmosphere of closeness and romance. This prepares couples to examine their relationships. Luxurious settings and exotic scenery served as backdrops, confirming the idea that physical circumstances affect emotional connections. The story does

not specify whether these aspects (such as picnics, rose petals, and cenotes) are natural to the resort experience or are created by the production team. This blurs the line between genuine romance and staged moments in a play. These moments rarely go into deeper relational growth or conflict, instead emphasizing physical beauty and grandeur. The setting is more important than the content. Although the locations are idealized, they do not really add anything significant to the dynamics of the couples; rather, they are largely used as visual aids to keep viewers interested and to generate aspirational imagery.

There are three visual necessities in building all of that: nature or scenery shots, experience or activity shots, and established shots of the accommodation. Nature and scenery shots highlight a region's cultural and geographic variety. The ambiance created by these photographs is unusual and gorgeous. Activities such as sailing and swimming in cenotes were specifically selected to showcase the nation's distinctiveness by fusing historical, cultural, and adventurous aspects. The show's requirement to show couples bonding or evaluating their compatibility is supported by experience shots and activities included, such as bungee jumping, paddleboarding, and cultural traditions. The contrast between Cancún and Cabo-San Lucas demonstrates Mexico's adaptability as a travel destination, implying that it can accommodate both peaceful and exciting experiences. Despite their diversity, these pursuits seem less important than the show's main objective of promoting romance in opulence. The resorts' established shots are highly styled and frequently include panoramic or aerial views to highlight their exclusivity and luxury. The link between luxury and romance is reinforced by the constant highlighting of characteristics such as sea vistas, private butlers, and infinity pools. Similar to the characters in the show, the resorts themselves have a significant influence on how couples view and engage with their environments.

According to research, *Love Is Blind* uses an emotionally charged setting to delicately promote travel destinations by linking them to romance, exclusivity, and exoticism. This approach provides a useful model for DMOs looking to update their outreach. Such aspirational content has the power to influence travellers' perceptions of a place on both the affective and cognitive levels. However, issues with authenticity perception arise because viewers might doubt the authenticity of the experiences depicted, which could make them less trustworthy of the portrayal. Furthermore, the commercialization of luxury and love runs the risk of offending more frugal tourists. A destination may become saturated and lose its uniqueness if it is overexposed to a variety of media products. However, there are several opportunities. In addition to governments forming strategic partnerships with production studios to feature destinations in globally streamed content, resorts can co-brand with popular shows to create themed vacation packages (such as the TRS Yucatan Hotel's *Love Is Blind* package). Reality TV's emotional realism has the capacity to forge enduring connections between viewers and particular locations.

4.4. Formulating Reality TVs as Marketing Intermediaries

Aspirational marketing has a significant impact on society today, as people are attracted to images of exclusivity, luxury, and foreign experience. These glorified lifestyles are promoted through platforms, such as Instagram and reality TVs. Romance is frequently associated with tangible locations, events, or material possessions, as seen in anything from lavish proposals to destination weddings. The distinction between what is manufactured for effect and what is real is blurred. However, the growing role of media content in destination marketing cannot be ignored. When choosing where to visit, viewers are influenced by what they see on the TV and social media. Hence, it is crucial to use as many platforms as the plan needs to create solid tourism marketing intermediaries, especially in the form of reality TVs.

Figure 5 depicts a formula that can be used to plan marketing for future destinations, which can be applied to a variety of reality TVs and is not necessarily limited to destination or travel content. To use reality TVs as tourism marketing intermediaries, relatable formulas such as romance/dating, friendship, or gameshow will do as wonderfully.

Visual Input	Purpose	Details	Marketing Impact
Nature or scenery shots	Showcase cultural and geographical diversity.	Picturesque views of cenotes, wooded areas, catamarans sailing, beaches, and coastlines.	Creates an exotic and aspirational atmosphere, appealing to cultural and nature-loving travellers.

Figure 5. Applicable Formula for Producing Reality TVs as Tourism Marketing Intermediaries

The formula has four elements: Visual Input(s), Purpose, Details, and Impact. The Inputs can be added as much as needed to create a point when selling the place. More categories can also be added, such as audio, dialog, or background music inputs. The purpose marketer then needs to communicate the results they need shown from the inputs. Subsequently, reality TVs need to show detailed shots to support the purpose. Therefore, there is a need to explain the kind of impact it needs to deliver to the audience. This formula is a greatly oversimplified pattern in which the audience can catch from watching reality TVs. Therefore, it must occasionally be refined in accordance with the social trends to which it adheres.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Reality television is an effective technique for tourism marketing because it tells relevant stories that connect audiences and promote regions, affecting travel intentions and increasing exposure to local attractions. The intentional combination of reality TV and social media increases their impact by building emotional ties that can promote tourism growth and economic benefits for featured destinations. As analyzed and elaborated, reality TV showcases its benefits in playing roles as intermediaries in regional tourism marketing communication. *Love Is Blind* is only one of the many examples that have similar patterns. The examination of *Love Is Blind* US production suggests that the portrayal of Mexican vacation places has a big impact on couples' experiences and relationships, with romantic and picturesque qualities that increase audience involvement. This depiction not only promotes tourism in Mexico but also emphasizes the show's theme of romance and connection among participants. This study highlights the influential role of reality television as a marketing intermediary in the tourism sector, emphasizing how aspirational imagery and narratives can shape viewers' travel choices.

4.1. Practical Repercussions for Stakeholders

Stakeholders in tourism stand to gain from making vacation experiences that are branded and connected to well-known reality TV shows, working together with streaming services to promote destinations comprehensively, and using reality TV's viral social media moments to continue marketing campaigns.

4.2. Research Directions for Future studies

Future studies should examine the following themes of the long-term impact of reality TV exposure on real-world travel behavior, a comparative study of the effects of various reality TV formats on destinations, the impact of viewer demographics on the efficacy of marketing and integrating staged romance with authentic destination branding raises ethical questions. By using a structured formula that incorporates various media elements, marketers can effectively leverage reality TV to promote destinations and experiences, thereby enhancing their appeal to potential tourists. Through the creation of emotionally compelling stories that promote audience identification and stimulate travel intentions, reality TVs has become a powerful instrument in tourism marketing. This study demonstrates how well-chosen destination imagery, when paired with emotionally charged storytelling, can serve as a potent middleman in regional tourism promotion through a thorough content analysis of *Love Is Blind*.

Ethical approval

Not Applicable.

Informed consent statement

Not Applicable.

Authors' contributions

Not Applicable

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Notes on Contributor(s)

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