

# The literary hero Harry potter and his importance in cultural entrepreneurship in London and oxford

Maria Manola <sup>1</sup> and Fotini Maniou <sup>2,\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Tourism Management, University of West Attica, Greece.

<sup>2</sup> Department of Economy and Sustainable Development, Harokopion University of Athens, Greece.

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## Abstract

The article examines the role of the literary hero Harry Potter as an agent of cultural entrepreneurship in the tourist destinations of London and Oxford. The study highlights how connecting these areas to the magical world of Harry Potter boosts the local economy, providing new business opportunities based on the cultural heritage and fictional narrative of the series. Local businesses are taking advantage of the growing tourist flow through innovative themed activities such as specialized shops, restaurants and tourist products inspired by the world of Harry Potter. At the same time, experiential experiences and events are being organized to enhance the authenticity of the visit and strengthen the cultural identity of the destinations. The analysis shows that the Harry Potter phenomenon is a strategic tool for cultural entrepreneurship, combining entertainment with economic and tourism development.

**Keywords:** Literary Hero; Harry Potter; Cultural Entrepreneurship; London; Oxford

## 1. Introduction

The Harry Potter film series, based on the universally popular novels of the same name by British author J.K. Rowling, is one of the most important cultural phenomena of recent decades. In addition to their artistic and commercial success, the films have had a profound impact on the tourism sector, making destinations such as London and Oxford cultural and tourist attractions. The strong symbolic value of the filming locations has transformed ordinary spaces into iconic attractions for visitors from all over the world.

The present study aims to analyze the existing literature and articles on the impact of film productions on tourism, focusing particularly on cases based on literary works. The aim is to explore how films can act as catalysts for cultural entrepreneurship, creating new areas of activity for local communities and businesses. So-called film tourism, and in particular the Harry Potter phenomenon, is a prime example of this dynamic.

In this context, the study attempts to demonstrate how literature and cinema work together to highlight landscapes and locations as tourist attractions, while at the same time enhancing cultural identity and the local economy. Understanding this relationship can provide useful insights for developing strategies for cultural entrepreneurship and sustainable tourism, at a time when culture and experience are key elements of tourism consumption.

Literature fiction, along with the Internet enhances the ability to reach larger audiences to attract tourism and to develop entrepreneurship. This is done by digital economy procedures and marketing as well as via education. So, concluding the introduction we underline the importance of digital technologies within the education sector and for training in cultural entrepreneurship. Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) facilitate education for all,

\* Corresponding author: Fotini Maniou

introduce innovative approaches for effective teacher training, enhance knowledge retention, promote collaboration, increase transparency, foster learner-centered methodologies, create novel teaching strategies, and expedite knowledge acquisition. Additionally, they offer new means for knowledge representation and support educational activities and techniques through mobility, virtualization, artificial intelligence, and new learning environments. Specifically, in entrepreneurship training, ICTs have proven to be highly effective, improving assessment, interventions, and educational processes via mobile devices [32-33], which enable educational activities to take place anywhere, as well as through various ICT applications [34], that are fundamental to education. The utilization of AI, STEM, and robotics [35-36], elevates educational processes to new heights of adaptability, innovation, and effectiveness, while gaming transforms education into a multisensory, engaging, and enjoyable experience. Furthermore, the integration and enhancement of ICTs with theories and frameworks of metacognition, mindfulness, meditation, and emotional intelligence development [37-44], bring mental capabilities to the forefront of educational processes and policies, thereby further enhancing educational practices and outcomes, particularly in business and training for new entrepreneurs [45-51].

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## 2. Examples of Cultural Entrepreneurship through the Harry Potter Series

The Harry Potter series, which began in 1997 with the release of the first book *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* by British author J.K. Rowling, has grown into a global cultural phenomenon with significant implications for the entertainment, tourism and cultural entrepreneurship industries (Lancaster and Massingham, 2020). With more than 500 million copies sold worldwide and translated into more than 74 languages, the series has gained widespread recognition, enhanced by its film adaptation.

The films, starting from 2001 to 2011, boosted the global appeal of the Harry Potter brand and contributed to the creation of an extensive cultural entrepreneurship ecosystem, which includes theme parks (The Wizarding World of Harry Potter), museums, tourism packages, tours of filming locations (e.g. King's Cross Station, Alnwick Castle, Oxford Colleges), commercial products and digital applications (Brooker, 2007; Beeton, 2015).

For example, the creation of the Warner Bros. Studio Tour London - The Making of Harry Potter in Hertfordshire has become one of the UK's most popular tourist destinations, attracting millions of visitors each year (Connell, 2012). King's Cross station with its 9¾ platform is also an iconic photography spot for fans, demonstrating the power of literary and cinematic imagination in reshaping urban spaces (Reijnders, 2011).

The tourism dynamic of the series develops alongside the concept of 'fantasy tourism', where visitors seek experiences that bridge the fantasy world with the real one (Kim, 2012). At the same time, the institutionalization of Harry Potter-themed events, cosplay festivals and literary conventions has further enhanced public participation and consumer activity around the franchise (O'Connor and Kim, 2014).

Cultural entrepreneurship stemming from the Harry Potter universe demonstrates how the combination of literature and film can lead to the creation of new markets, destinations and business opportunities based on the emotional connection of the audience to a narrative (Hudson and Ritchie, 2006; Pine and Gilmore, 1999).

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## 3. Harry Potter theme parks and cultural entrepreneurship

The success of the Harry Potter series has transcended the boundaries of literature and cinema, turning fantasy into a tangible tourism product and becoming a timeless example of cultural entrepreneurship. Theme parks based on the magical world of Harry Potter, such as Universal Orlando Resort in Florida and Warner Bros. Studios Tour in London, are strategic forms of exploiting cultural imagination, while enhancing the economic and tourism development of the regions where they operate (Manola, and Gioka, 2021; Maniou, 2023b; Maniou, 2024b).

The creation and operation of such theme parks is a modern business model based on the concept of "cultural experience". Visitors of all ages are invited to 'enter' the literary world they know through books or films, interacting with props and technological applications that enhance experiential learning and leisure tourism (Papaioannou et al., 2023). This approach is closely related to the practices of literary parks in Italy or Greece, where cultural identity and cultural memory are transformed into attractive tourist assets (Michopoulou et al., 2021; Maniou et al., 2025a).

The 80-acre, \$265 million theme park in Florida, opened in 2010, is a model of cultural entrepreneurship, using the cultural references of Harry Potter's fictional world to provide entertainment and educational experiences at the same

time. Similarly, the London Park (2012) incorporates props, authentic costumes and interactive exhibits, attracting thousands of visitors daily (Maniou et al., 2024b).

The continuous increase in visitor numbers to these parks demonstrates the potential of cultural entrepreneurship as a means of sustainable tourism development (Maniou et al., 2025c). The example of the Harry Potter parks supports the view that contemporary cultural tourism should be linked to local identity and global cultural consumption. Visitors are not just seeking entertainment, but seek participatory experiences, emotional connection and embodied access to culture (Maniou et al., 2025b; Tsatalmpasoglou et al., 2025).

In this context, theme parks based on literary works, such as Harry Potter, act as innovative forms of cultural entrepreneurship, helping to boost cultural tourism, the local economy and cultural heritage.

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#### **4. Tourism of the future and the example of Harry Potter**

The tourism of the future is increasingly turning to forms that focus on experiential experience, technological enhancement and sustainability, incorporating values of cultural identity and the creative economy. The example of Harry Potter, as a multidimensional cultural phenomenon, offers a model for the new era of tourism, where imagination, technology and cultural entrepreneurship dynamically coexist (Maniou et al., 2025).

At the heart of this approach is the concept of narrative experience, where the visitor is not a mere observer but an active participant in a fictional world. Harry Potter theme parks are emblematic examples of so-called narrative tourism - a narrative-based tourism that offers emotional connection and enriched cultural experience (Manola et al., 2022)

The use of virtual and augmented reality (VR/AR) in theme parks enhances multisensory experiences, creating conditions of "immersive culture", a trend that is predicted to dominate future tourism (Maniou et al., 2024a). At the same time, the possibility of interconnected experiences through digital applications makes tourism more accessible, personalized and interactive (Maniou et al., 2024d).

Cultural entrepreneurship is now called upon to respond to the demands of the digital age and to adapt to new forms of cultural consumption. The commercial success of the Harry Potter brand highlights how innovation in cultural content management can lead to economic growth and tourism diversification, especially in regions investing in thematic and cultural tourism (Maniou 2024; Maniou et al., 2025a).

Moreover, in the context of sustainable tourism development, such cultural products can enhance the local economy without harming the environment or altering the cultural heritage (Manola, 2024; Maniou et al., 2024c). This strategy promotes a new model of tourism based on the integration of local identity, the promotion of symbolic capital and the empowerment of local communities.

The tourism of the future, then, is shaped through synergies between culture, technology and entrepreneurship. The example of Harry Potter is not only an innovative tourism practice, but also a platform for cultural storytelling that contributes significantly to the transition towards a new, sustainable and participatory tourism model.

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#### **5. Bringing London and Oxford to life through Harry Potter**

The locations associated with the Harry Potter films are a prime example of how film tourism can boost cultural entrepreneurship, especially in areas of the UK and Ireland where iconic scenes were filmed. Since the screening of the first film, visits to these locations have increased by around 50%, demonstrating the power of cultural content in shaping tourism flows (Hudson and Ritchie, 2006). London and Oxford emerged as two of the key destinations as J.K. Rowling's films were instrumental in creating a new form of cultural entrepreneurship.

The city of London takes on a new dimension through the iconic locations featured in the Harry Potter films. The Australian House in the Strand, for example, was the setting for the interior of Gringotts in *The Philosopher's Stone* and the second part of *Deathly Hallows*. Although the building is not open to the public, the site has become a landmark for fans of the series. The historic Leadenhall Market, where scenes from *Leaky Cauldron* and *Diagon Alley* were filmed, attracts many visitors due to its unique atmosphere.

At the same time, Piccadilly Circus and Claremont Square have become popular tourist destinations, with Piccadilly Circus being notable for being featured in the first *Deathly Hallows* film. The Millennium Bridge, featured in the film *The*

Half-Blood Prince, is a major attraction, offering visitors unique views of the Thames and the London Eye. In addition, St Pancras railway station was used as the exterior of King's Cross, where Harry Potter boards the train to Hogwarts.

Oxford, on the other hand, was highlighted significantly through the films, with many scenes being filmed in historic buildings in the city. The Bodleian Library was the setting for the hospital and Hogwarts' dance classroom, while Duke Humphrey's Old Library appeared in *The Philosopher's Stone*. The increase in visitors to the library reached 60%, highlighting the significant impact of cultural entrepreneurship born through film tourism (Oxford Inspires, 2005).

Also, Oxford's most popular college, Christ Church, became world famous thanks to the films, with the staircase leading to Hogwarts Great Hall being one of the most iconic landmarks in the city. Since the films were shown, the number of visitors to Christ Church has exceeded 350,000 per year, and New College has also attracted a number of tourists due to the Draco Malfoy scene in *The Goblet of Fire*. The ever-increasing tourist flows to these locations confirm Harry Potter's catalytic role in creating cultural entrepreneurship, inextricably linked to tourism.

The success of the Harry Potter series transcends the boundaries of literature and film, making it one of the world's most influential cultural brands. Theme parks based on the magical world of Harry Potter serve as living examples of cultural entrepreneurship, as they combine entertainment with heritage promotion and economic development (Maniou et al., 2025).

This entrepreneurship strategy is not only limited to the economic dimension but also promotes cultural sustainability, creating experiences that connect the public with values such as friendship, solidarity and creativity. Through the integration of VR/AR technologies and digital applications, theme parks offer a multisensory and interactive experience that renews the way audiences experience culture and storytelling at the same time, the development of cultural tourism based on narratives such as that of Harry Potter promotes local and regional development, enhancing sustainability and the participation of local communities (Maniou, 2023; Maniou and Mitoula, 2025). The success of these models highlights the importance of cultural entrepreneurship as a tool for diversification and competitiveness in contemporary tourism.

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## 6. Conclusion

In conclusion, cultural entrepreneurship developed around narratives such as Harry Potter's contributes substantially to the development of a new paradigm of sustainable and thematic tourism development. Such initiatives strengthen the local economy, promote cultural identity and enhance global cultural diffusion. Linking cultural content with tourism experiences allows the creation of innovative, high added value products. The use of digital technologies and sustainable practices is crucial to enhance the competitiveness and resilience of destinations. In addition, the integration of educational and recreational elements enhances the experiential dimension of tourism. The case of Harry Potter confirms the potential of thematic tourism as a tool for cultural development and diversification. Finally, this approach responds to the needs of modern travelers and promotes a more participatory, inclusive and sustainable model of tourism.

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## Compliance with ethical standards

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The Authors proclaim no conflict of interest.

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