

“All the world’s a stage” – The Spatial Value of Destination DJ Videos

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- ▶ electronic dance music
- ▶ spatial value
- ▶ destination marketing
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- ▶ social media analysis

ABSTRACT

This exploratory article analyzes the contemporary trend in the music and event industry of organizing and filming electronic dance music (EDM) events at tourist destinations. These videos featuring DJ sets in attractive locations, referred to as destination DJ videos (DDJVs), accumulate a substantial number of views on social media platforms, primarily YouTube. Due to their widespread popularity, they represent an untapped source of online media content, holding potential for broader industry utilization and academic analysis of their spatial value, understood as an addition to the typically considered social, cultural, and economic values of music events. DDJVs combine the popularity of a music genre, an artist, a music streaming platform, and the destination featured in the video, offering various perspectives and approaches for assessing and evaluating them within the domain of tourism. The presence of datasets encompassing DDJVs stands as a noteworthy and substantial resource for novel academic explorations within the sphere of tourism research, expanding the scope of visual studies in tourism. Moreover, DDJVs have the potential to serve as valuable and pragmatic instruments for fostering innovation in the field of destination marketing. This exploratory study provides an early evaluation of research directions for DDJVs.

Introduction

Sets of electronic dance music (EDM) performed by Disc Jockeys (DJs) at characteristic landmarks and iconic places have become a popular trend among fans of this music genre (Mitchell, 2020). Videos of these events are what we will refer to as Destination DJ videos (DDJVs). DDJVs posted on social media attract high numbers of views, and as well as

promoting music, they have a strong potential for destination promotion, like other forms of popular culture (Lexhagen et al., 2023). Thus far, the spatial value of DDJVs for destinations has not caught the attention of researchers.

There is a strong link between EDM and travel activities. For several decades, young people have taken vaca-

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tions to pursue their passion for EDM and follow their favorite DJs around the world, visiting famous nightclubs and festivals that host these DJs, and numerous specialist and non-specialist tour operators offer specially themed holidays centered around dance music (Sellars, 1998). Dancing to EDM has often been related to an experience of immersion of the dancers in the activity and a form of escape from mundane life (Peter, 2013). For example, as a hybrid of art and music, techno is ritualized in multimedia dance events known as raves or underground nightclubs in urban settings or as trance parties often in secluded rural areas (Della Corte et al., 2017). Over the past decade, fans of EDM have developed a thriving scene by attending festivals, local clubs, and large sporting venues and stadia to see their favorite DJs and EDM musicians perform (Adams, 2021).

Social media and online streaming services are among the primary channels for the promotion and distribution of mainstream electronic music. Online live music streaming has existed as a practice within the music industry since the late 2000s. Since then, it has grown via social media channels to include professional broadcasters hosting millions of viewers around the world. The largest of this live music streaming professional broadcasters operate largely within the world of EDM (Boyle, 2022).

DDJVs gain significant traction on social media platforms, particularly *YouTube* (Mitchell, 2020; Watson, 2019). The appeal of these videos lies in their combination of factors, including the popularity of the electronic dance music genre, the fame of the featured artists, the platform used for music streaming (Watson, 2019), and the visually captivating locations where the events take place (Stankov et al., 2019). Those videos primarily follow the DJ's performance and their interactions with the crowd (if present at a set), but the camera also frequently widens its focus to encompass the surrounding areas, employing appealing camera angles, often supplemented by visually striking drone shots. For instance, drone footage enhances the videos' attractiveness by offering dynamic and diverse filming angles, as well as a broader range of filming locations compared to terrestrial cameras (Vujičić et al., 2022). Deliberate consideration is given to the timing of these recordings, with a selection of moments that coincide with daylong periods or sunsets, thus augmenting the overall attractiveness and visual appeal of the resulting video content. This convergence of elements provides diverse perspectives and approaches for evaluating and assessing these videos (Dinhopl & Gretzel, 2016). As suggested by Zuo et al. (2023) destination management should shift its focus towards emphasizing the interplay of space, people and activities in destination videos, rather than merely showcasing physical settings.

As a result of their widespread popularity, these videos present a novel and unexplored form of online media

content, offering potential practical and academic opportunities for investigation of their spatial value (van der Hoeven & Hitters, 2020), seen as an enhancement to the commonly recognized social, cultural, and economic aspects of music events (Ord & Behr, 2023; van der Hoeven & Hitters, 2019; Vujičić et al., 2023). Due to their specific nature, DDJVs have the potential to influence consumer segments and to be seen as management and marketing tools at the intersection of the music, event, and tourism industries together with social media. Thus, this research adopts a narrative approach to present the trend of DDJVs and explore potential future research directions. Conclusions are drawn from a blend of secondary data used for narrative review and primary exploratory research involving DDJVs' *YouTube* metadata. The article starts by showing reasons for the appeal of these videos by pinpointing a combination of factors, including the popularity of the electronic dance music genre, the fame of the featured artists, the platform used for music streaming, and the visually captivating locations where the events take place. This study further builds its arguments on the specifics of DDJVs based on the exploratory study of one of the most popular *YouTube* channels and culminates with clear delineation of research directions.

Literature review

The attractiveness of DDJVs could be related to popularity of particular DJs; the streaming platform (social media) used for sharing videos; the destination's image and the EDM genre's attractiveness.

The expected primary driver behind the viewership of EDM is typically the popularity of the DJs and the music they play, although audiences could also take non-musical traits of artists (e.g., physical attractiveness of a performer) into account during the music evaluation process (Schaap et al., 2023). The top 100 DJs earn an annual income of \$352,500,000. Additionally, these esteemed DJs collectively amass an audience of 734,118,248 monthly listeners (InternetDJ, 2023). This data underscores the immense influence and widespread appeal that these DJs hold within the contemporary music landscape.

EDM artists are increasingly embracing social media as their avenue for accessible and budget-friendly marketing strategies (Boyle, 2021). This enables them to effectively communicate and establish connections with both their existing and potential audience members. In terms of user engagement EDM is relatively small on mainstream social media (*Facebook*, *Instagram*, and *Twitter*) compared to other genres. On the other hand, EDM's social following is more heavily reliant on *YouTube* than that of other genres, in terms of new content, uploads, subscribers, and activity, compared to *Twitter*, *Instagram*, and *Facebook* (Boyle, 2022). Most importantly, social video engagement is a strong point for electronic music.

Traditionally, major cities have been the epicenters of EDM, in part due to their attractiveness for visiting DJs and their followers (Garcia, 2016; Vujičić et al., 2020). For example, the so-called “techno-tourists” of Berlin are music fans who return repeatedly to the city to participate in the local EDM scene. More than one third of visitors to Berlin come because of the city’s club culture (Clubcommission Berlin, 2019), where 40% of clubs play techno (Watson, 2019). However, while the association of EDM with tourist destinations like Berlin, Ibiza, or Miami is not a new phenomenon, DDJVs shared on social media could have potentially broader promotional impact, including a wider variety of destination and specific tourist attractions, and presenting these in novel and often visually dramatic ways (Dragović et al., 2019; Ritter, 2023).

Methodology

The methodological section is based on the empirical study of the major provider of DDJVs, *Cercle*, who distribute content via their *YouTube* channel (<https://www.youtube.com/@Cercle>). *Cercle* is one of the most popular *YouTube* channels for DJ sets at tourist destinations and attractions. *Cercle* began live-streaming electronic music events in April 2016 and now streams one show weekly. The prime goal of *Cercle* is to showcase cultural heritage and other landmarks through the prism of electronic music and video. Their scope has broadened from unique venues in France to other locations across the world (Cercle, 2022). *Cercle* videos attract a young global audience, within which 5 out of 10 countries with the highest watch time are outside of Europe (Watson, 2019). In August 2023, the official *Cercle YouTube* channel had over 2.9M subscribers and had received more than 744M views.

In this study, we utilized the *YouTube* API to retrieve the metadata from the official *Cercle* channel. The *YouTube*

EDM is the third most popular music genre in the world, after pop and rock music, with an estimated 1.5 billion listeners (Watson, 2019). According to a US study, fans of EDM have a higher propensity to attend live music events than those of any other genre (Nielsen, 2018; Watson, 2019). Moreover, the rising popularity of DJs is a contemporary trend. The highest-paid DJs usually perform over 100 shows every year. The EDM market was estimated to be worth 6 billion US dollars in 2021. This includes clubs and festivals, DJs’ and artists’ earnings, music sales, streaming services, hardware, software, and education about EDM (Watson, 2019). It must be noted that different EDM genres vary in popularity and appeal. Consequently, the choice of music genre in the DJ video can influence its attractiveness to a specific audience.

API allows developers to retrieve metadata from a channel by making HTTP requests to the *YouTube* Data API endpoints, where they can access information such as video titles, descriptions, upload dates, and view counts. By using API keys for authentication, developers can query specific channel data and receive responses.

The time span of videos collected was from April 2016 to the end of October 2022. A total of 155 videos were analyzed, encompassing the following attributes: video title, description, duration, number of views, likes, comments, and the date of publishing. In total, 127 videos were included in the analysis, as 28 videos were excluded from the sample. Exclusions took place in cases where no location could be determined (in the initial period of *Cercle*’s development, or in the case when videos featured a compilation of several videos) accounting for the exclusion of 9 videos, and another 19 were excluded because they were recorded in clubs, festivals, or in places that were not tourism destinations or attractions.

Results

Figure 1 shows geographical distribution of all videos in the sample. This shows that European destinations dominate, with 77.17 % of videos. It is followed by Asia (8.66%), South America (7.09%) and North America (4.72%). Africa (1.57%) and Australia and Oceania (0.79%) have the lowest frequency of videos. Here it must be noted that France is the leading country with 63.78% since *Cercle* is French-based entity and this is reflected in the fact that destinations in France dominated in videos from 2016 to the end of 2018, at the beginning of *Cercle*’s growth. Following this, in the period from 2019, the ratio of French destinations fell to 27.78% due to an increase in the frequency of videos produced in other countries (such as Mexico, India, Italy, Brazil, Turkey,

USA, Egypt, Croatia, and others). Figure 1 shows locations of DDJVs with a worldwide density-based clustering (showing areas where locations are concentrated and where they are separated by areas that are empty). The densest global cluster is in Europe, while closer inspection on the level of countries, shows that France is the epicenter, with sub-county clusters (e.g., around Paris or South France). This basic analysis demonstrates the existence of more interest of DDJVs creator for particular geographical regions.

All locations are classified into 25 subclasses based on the type of the attraction featured in the video and then are further reclassified into seven major classes (historical and archeological sites, natural attractions, museums,

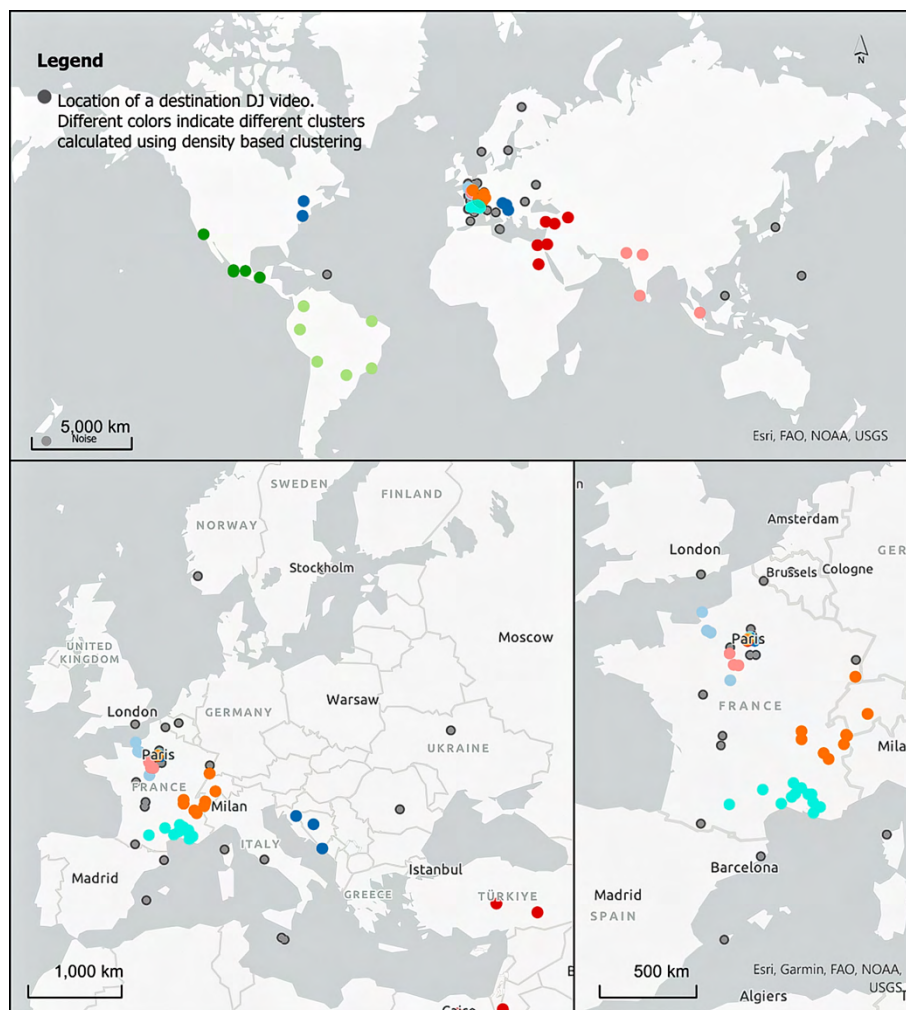


Figure 1. Spatial distribution of the sample videos with clustering based on location (the color of each location represents belonging to one cluster)

Source: Authors' own contribution

Table 1. Type of attractions featured in DDJVs

Major class	Subclasses	Frequency	Percentage
Historical and archeological sites	Castles, monuments, historical sites and archeological sites	30	23.62
Natural attractions	Parks, Geological sites, natural landmarks, mountains, rivers and beaches	27	21.26
Museums, cultural and religious sites	Museums, cultural institutions, exhibition halls and religious buildings	23	18.11
Event venues and sport facilities	Event venues, sport facilities, amusement parks	23	18.11
Infrastructure	Observation Decks, Skyways, Airports, transportation infrastructure	17	13.39
Other	Cities, embassy	4	3.15
Accommodation facilities	Hotels and restaurants	3	2.36
Total	-	127	100.00

Source: Authors' own contribution

Table 2. Top 10 DDJVs from the sample based on the number of views on YouTube.

Name of the artist	Featured location	Published	Views	Likes	Comments	Date of the last comment recorded on 27.07.2023.
Boris Brejcha	Grand Palais, Paris, France	13.06.2019.	45,357,833	428,374	15,334	27.07.2023.
Black Coffee	Salle Wagram, Paris, France	01.02.2018.	38,112,904	305,556	11,249	27.07. 2023.
Boris Brejcha	Château de Fontaineble, France	04.04.2017.	36,785,720	309,802	11,195	27.07.2023.
Fatboy Slim	British Airways i360, Brighton, United Kingdom	03.08.2018.	35,570,056	368,980	8,453	27.07.2023.
Deborah de Luca	Château de Chambord, France	08.09.2017.	29,585,399	248,982	6,948	26.07.2023.
ARTBAT	Bondinho Pão de Açúcar, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil	15.03.2019.	26,448,098	258,246	6,304	26.07.2023.
Ben Bahmer	Cappadocia, Turkey	10.10.2020.	25,294,844	270,429	12,316	27.07.2023
Solomun	Théâtre Antique d'Orange, France	24.04.2018.	23,037,840	211,552	6,556	22.07.2023.
FKJ live	Salar de Uyuni, Bolivia	28.02.2019.	22,669,560	387,056	10,899	27.07.2023.
Carl Cox	Château de Chambord, France	19.07.2018.	14,017,959	126,615	4,478	26.07.2023.
Stephan Bodzin	Piz Gloria, Mürren, Switzerland	26.07.2018.	13,499,414	152,331	6,247	27.07.2023.

Source: Authors' own contribution

cultural and religious sites, event venues and sport facilities, infrastructure and other). Man-made attractions account for around 80% of attractions, while every fifth video featured predominantly natural attractions.

The average duration of the video was 94 minutes. The standard deviation being around 15.2 minutes suggests that there is some variability in the values, but they are not too widely dispersed from the average duration of videos.

The average number of views was 5.125.611, with each receiving an average of 59.638 likes and 2167 comments. Table 2 shows the basic metadata of the 10 videos with most views. All of them have more than 10 million views. The overall analysis, as well as the specific metadata shown in Table 2, demonstrate high levels of user engagements, indicating the popularity of these videos.

Discussion and further research directions

The availability of datasets comprising DDJVs presents a significant and noteworthy resource for novel academic investigations, which can add to the growing field of video and broader visual research in tourism and geography (Arabadzhyan et al., 2021; Park & Kim, 2018; Volo & Irimiás, 2021) as well as part of system-wide shift in tourism theory and practice driven by technological and societal transformations (Lehto et al., 2022; Vujičić et al., 2022). Moreover, these datasets possess the potential to serve as a valuable and practical tool for innovation in destination management. Based on this exploratory analysis, several new research streams associated with DDJVs can be distinguished.

Destination marketing

Destination branding. In a similar manner to studies that examined the promotional effect of drone videos for destination (Jiang & Lyu, 2022; Stankov et al., 2019; Vujičić

et al., 2022), DDJVs could have the same direct and indirect effect on destination branding. Research into direct destination branding could include analysis of explicit efforts to highlight and promote specific locations. This can be achieved through elements such as visual signatures (including iconic landmarks, recognizable symbols, or unique natural features of the destination prominently within the video frames), verbal references clearly mentioning the destination's name, distinctive attributes, and appealing aspects; branding materials (integrating official tourism logos, slogans, and official promotional materials in the video). Indirect destination branding research would involve a subtler approach. This can include further research of emotional storytelling through EDM (analysis of narratives that evoke emotions and connect listeners to the destination's atmosphere, people, and experiences on a personal level), visual aesthetics including research, ana-

lyzing cinematography and editing techniques that capture the ambiance of the location (Dinhopl & Gretzel, 2016; Stankov et al., 2019). Another area for research could be thematic integration, which is aligning the destination's characteristics with specific themes (e.g., adventure, relaxation, cultural exploration) to create an association that lingers in the listener's mind (Ding & Hung, 2021; Stankov & Filimonau, 2021).

Travel motivation research. The correlation between music events and travel motivations has been firmly established (Cimbaljević et al., 2019), albeit with a predominant emphasis on participating in events within specific destinations. Exploring the potential impact of watching DDJVs on travel motivations (Parra-López et al., 2012) offers an intriguing angle, potentially unveiling video consumption as a distinct influential factor in its own. DDJVs could enhance the pre-travel experience by creating a vibrant and exciting preview of the destination, enticing potential visitors. Upon arrival, these videos can help travelers feel an immediate connection with the destination, recognizing familiar locations from the videos, thus enhancing their overall experience.

New consumer segments. With DDJVs, destinations could potentially access a new consumer base and leverage the existing trend of inclusiveness in EDM videos (Dhaenens, 2016). EDM events often create a platform for marginalized communities, offering chances to partner up for innovative musical ventures and enabling the exploration of novel sounds and experiences (Stankov & Gretzel, 2020). It also allows audiences to embrace diverse artistic expressions, such as fashion, music, and visual aesthetics (Mazierska & Rigg, 2021).

Further research could be directed into the analysis of the viral potential of DDJVs to determine the right blend of music and travel content that resonates with audiences and encourages them to share, engage, and discover the showcased destination. As suggested by Vujičić et al. (2022) this type of analysis could include analysis of thumbnails and titles that spark curiosity and convey the essence of the EDM event and destination, exploration of engagement with the opening moments that grab viewers' attention or integration of destination footage into the video's rhythm seamlessly with the music.

Spatial value and destination management

EDM events can bring new value to spaces and serve as a tool for the creation of new attractions, integration into various types of tourism attractiveness, and revitalization of less-recognized regions (Stankov et al., 2016). By strategically integrating EDM events into different aspects of tourism, destinations can create a unique and multi-dimensional appeal that resonates with a diverse range of travelers.

Location management and creation of new attractions. As seen from the results, apart from famous places, DDJVs

sometimes utilize ordinary spaces and turn them into dynamic and vibrant settings, creating a novel attraction for both locals and tourists. Abandoned warehouses, open fields, and unconventional venues can be repurposed to host ad hoc events, breathing new life into these areas. EDM events can continue the trend of leveraging event tourism as a tool for the revitalizing or promotion of otherwise lagging areas and regions. Research can be carried out regarding effectively positioning EDM events in less-recognized destinations in pursuit of putting these regions on the map and attracting attention from a broader audience.

A tool for sustainable development. Set on mountain peaks and other natural wonders often not accessible to most tourists, DDJVs can convey messaging of protecting nature (Stankov et al., 2023). As opposed to electronic festivals that attract massive crowds (Kruger & Saayman, 2016) these events usually attract relatively small audiences. In some cases, the audience is not present at all, and videos exclusively show DJs and their immediate surroundings. The investigation of whether electronic dance music (EDM) videos featuring audiences yield superior performance compared to those devoid of such audiences holds a compelling avenue for inquiry. This proposition is particularly intriguing given the potential for human crowding (Stankov et al., 2017) to positively contribute to the tourist experience by engendering a vibrant and exhilarating atmosphere at music events (Kim et al., 2016; Radojević et al., 2023).

Research in cultural tourism. As seen from the data in Table 1, EDM events often fuse music and culture. Results from the example of *Cercle* show that frequent locations for hosting EDM events are castles, monuments, historical sites and archeological sites, museums, cultural institutions, exhibition halls and religious buildings. EDM videos often introduce visitors to the intangible culture of local music scenes and artistic works. More research could be directed into analysis and abilities of DDJMs to promote immersive cultural experiences. Indeed, more research could be focused related to exciting cultural values at EDM events and in videos, as EDM nowadays represent a multi-billion dollar culture industry that significantly moved from its subcultural roots (Conner & Dickens, 2023).

Collaboration with the music industry. EDM comprises various sub-genres allowing for different targeted audience engagement. Collaborations between EDM artists and mainstream musicians create cross-genre appeal and expand reach. In particular, destination managers should understand who influential DJs and producers are and what type of influence trends and fan engagement they attract. Collaborating with popular EDM artists can open avenues for cross-promotion, as the artist's fan base may develop an interest in the destination. At the same time, EDM events have disruptive potential, allowing direct-to-fan access for independent artists and bypassing the

conventional music industries' intermediaries (Ehlinger & Markey, 2022) offering possibilities for promotion of smaller or emerging destinations (Drakulić Kovačević et al., 2017; Vujičić et al., 2023).

Collaboration with event industry. Destination management organizations could explore ways of multi-stakeholders approach (Line & Wang, 2017) by closely with event industry and local governments to create supportive policies, streamline licensing processes, and improve infrastructure, making it easier to organize and promote events.

It is important to acknowledge that individuals attending EDM events may face an elevated risk of engaging in substance use and experiencing related negative outcomes (Palamar et al., 2021; Van Dyck et al., 2023). This underscores the necessity for destination management to take these factors into careful consideration (Bingöl, 2022). However, it's also worth considering that the level of risk could potentially decrease in professionally produced EDM videos showcasing destinations, especially when created in collaboration with music and event producers, as well as tourism authorities (Wright, 2019). Finally, future research could investigate if integrating cutting-edge technology and artistic innovation in DDJVs could position the destination as forward-thinking and attract tech-savvy travelers (Filimonau et al., 2022).

Social media analytics

The effectiveness of a media channel for the promotion of DDJVs would largely depend on the alignment between the platform's user base, its target audience characteristics (Gilstrap et al., 2021; Jovanović et al., 2019; Stankov et al., 2010, 2018), and DDJV content. For instance, EDM listening in the work environment may boost productivity (Jenkins, 2016), or at leisure time and social events, providing potential access to multiple listeners. The data shows a typical DDJV is longer than 1.5 hours, providing longer-listening sessions and thus longer exposure to destination footage.

Specifically, conducting additional research on *YouTube* metadata statistics, with a focus on user comments,

may reveal how many videos are listened to solely for their music content. Our data indicates that videos are often listened to several years after being posted on *YouTube*. Most importantly, this suggests the potential of DDJVs to perform as long-lasting content with spillover effect to destination promotion. Here, research should account for a platform's video recommendation algorithms or trending algorithms as potential biases. Furthermore, it would be interesting to discover if DDJVs showcasing different destinations can boost each other's popularity through what is known as the "halo effect." This effect occurs when a well-liked video indirectly shares its viewers with similar content due to their proximity in search results and suggested videos, potentially leading to increased views for both videos (Liikkanen & Salovaara, 2015). Further analysis could also compare the performance of these music-focused videos against other *YouTube* channels, official promotional videos from destinations, or influencer videos. Finally, in-depth video content analysis could elucidate which parts of the videos garner the most user interest.

Further research could be directed to finding the most suitable channels to effectively promote destinations with EDM and staying adaptable to trends and user preferences. Additional research can include determining detailed characteristics of target audiences; exploration of social media platforms that are popular for sharing video content and engaging with niche communities (Wang et al., 2002) interested in music and travel. This research can be expanded into the analysis of EDM niche channels, opportunities for cross-platform promotion and the evaluation of advertising options.

A dedicated stream of research could explore what motivates viewers to create and share their own content inspired by DDJVs, and how destinations could leverage this influencer trend. This is in close connection to the need for analysis of networks within EDM communities (Cannon & Greasley, 2021). Leveraging user-generated content goes in line with current market trends since it can significantly amplify DDJV reach and consumer engagement.

Concluding remarks

With this exploratory article, our primary objective was to illuminate the significance of DDJVs as an emerging phenomenon that deserves greater recognition within the realms of both tourism practice and research. Positioned at the nexus of the music and event industries, the analysis of these DDJVs necessitates a multidisciplinary approach and is open to the application of diverse theoretical frameworks, particularly when applied in the context of tourism. Figure 2 provides a visual summary of the research directions that we have outlined in this exploratory

article, establishing the foundations for future research into DDJV.

While prior research has examined the impact of music as a motivation for travel or as an integral facet of the tourist experience—be it through cultural heritage, music festivals, or as a design element in shaping memorable encounters—there remains a notable void in the scholarly landscape, specifically in addressing DDJVs' portrayal of destinations. The promotional influence wielded by these videos and their consequential effects on tourist moti-

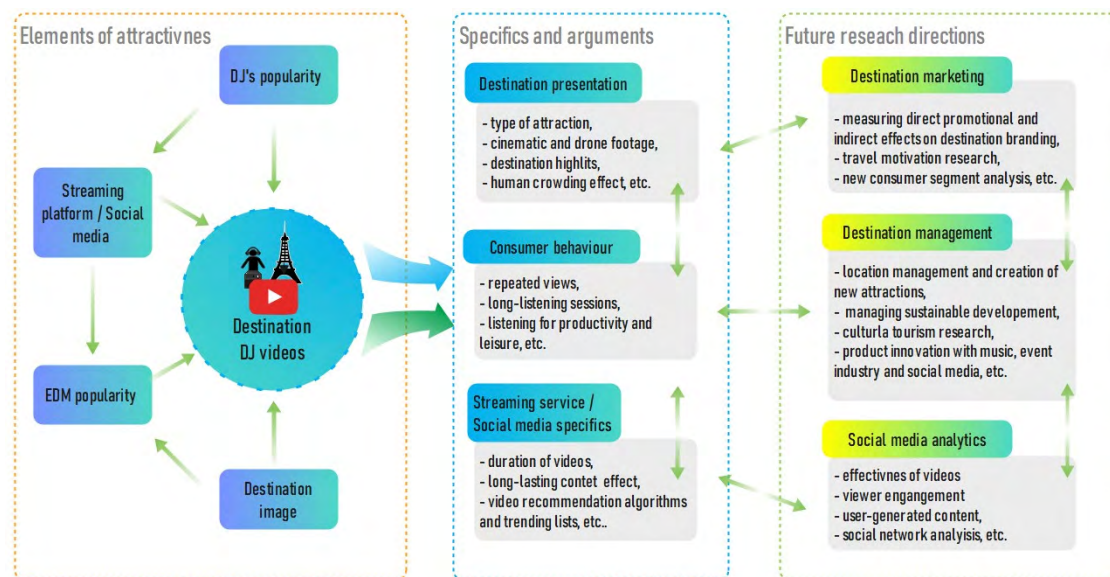


Figure 2. Research rationale for the future exploration of DDJVs

Source: Authors' own contribution

vation, the management of destinations, and marketing strategies have yet to be the focus of a dedicated research program.

The convergence of EDM and destinations possesses the potential to galvanize a novel research trajectory, one that

could invigorate the discourse surrounding social media marketing. This uncharted territory not only harbors the prospects for insightful inquiries but also presents an array of challenges that warrant scholarly attention and further inquiry.

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