

# Reimagining Adventure Tourism Memories through Ghibli-Style AI Portraits: A Phenomenological Study on Emotional Sustainability

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## Keywords

- Adventure Tourism
- Ghibli Aesthetics
- Emotional Memory Reconstruction
- Sustainable Storytelling
- Phenomenological Research
- Colaizzi's descriptive phenomenological method

## Abstract

*The current research problem is how AI-created Ghibli-style portraits would produce emotion and reprocessing of adventure tourism experiences in a sustainability context. A phenomenological research design was used to recruit 17 Indian adventure tourists, and each of them provided personal and significant travel photographs. Such images were converted into Ghibli-linguistic anime portraits through an artistic generation process that uses AI. Respondents then participated in some reflective activity aimed at bringing forth their emotional reactions to the manipulated images. The derived narratives were then put through a seven-step procedure of Colaizzi and therefore gave methodological rigour and exhaustive thematic extraction. The analysis resulted in five strong experiential dimensions: awe, resourcefulness, nostalgia, tranquillity and emotional grounding. These emotional results were placed in the framework of various Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Emotional grounding and increased well-being were consistent with SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being), reflective learning and experiential insights of the participants with SDG 4 (Quality Education). The cultural echo instilled in the stylised portraits allowed making the place and heritage more closely connected, which helped achieve SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities). Besides, the creative revolution was in support of a pro-nature policy, which leads to SDG 13 (Climate Action), and inner harmony and self-preservation, which appeals to SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions). In general, the research indicates that AI has a potential not only as a technical tool but also as a co-creative partner that can be able to create an emotionally sustainable travel narrative. The results highlight new horizons of utilising affective computing, digital aesthetics, and the global development agenda to promote caring, ethical, and wise tourism development.*

## **Introduction**

Adventure tourism is considered to be participation in natural activities that include challenges and natural risks where the participants will have intensely emotional experiences which will trigger a significant personal change (Akaho, 2024). In a broader context beyond the physiological field, every experience creates a reverberation or resonance which creates a strong feeling of camaraderie with both nature and the self. These activities are linked to memories which ultimately were made to be one of the 'shoulds' of the individual, thus affecting the future behaviours and perceptions (Pomfret, 2012). Thus, studies on this area have identified the need to approach adventure tourism considering the factors that predict its emotional and psychological aspects, more so how such experiences can aid in self-discovery and personal growth (Buckley, 2012; Gyimothy and Mykletun, 2004).

Over the recent years, the development of technology in the tourism industry has produced new ways of remembering and decoding these memories. The advent of artificial intelligence (AI) in the creative industries has significantly enabled the process of making personal photos turn into stylised art, thus providing an extra dimension to the process of memory reconstruction (Zhang and Luo, 2024). Art designed by AI, especially the artworks that build on unique aesthetics such as the Studio Ghibli aesthetic, is again another platform that allows people to re-embed into the past (Linghorn, 2019).

The therapeutic value of AI-created art is actualised in those processes that facilitate emotional responses and self-reflection (Chen and Ibrahim, 2023). The external representation of inner experience is achieved by converting personal photographs to portraiture that is emotional in its nature, and thus it improves awareness and integration of the past events. This procedure is consistent with the practices and concepts of art therapy and narrative psychology, claiming that creative output can produce the effect of healing and introspection (Malchiodi, 2006; McAdams, 1996). The fact of a machine's existence creates a collaborative relationship between human creativity and machine learning, and there develops a synergetic relationship where both sides face and solve one another to have the real outcomes of art expressed.

These sorts of subjective experiences, in particular, are most effectively studied using phenomenological research methods, which enable the researcher to understand not only what happens but also what some of these occurring things

are awarded the significance of. As an example, using a phenomenological approach presented by Colaizzi (1978), researchers will be capable of evoking the nature of the experience of participants with AI-generated art by emphasising its salient characteristics. Based on this method, more associative themes and emotional reactions concerning this new medium can be obtained. The existing debate offers one such interpretation with regard to how people think and internalise the reinvented memory of adventure.

Trying to communicate with audiences outside the tourism industry in regard to sustainable practices would require the use of methods of AI-based art, which can be summarised as a type of public engagement based on personal experience. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) give preference to health, education and the preservation of cultures. The SDGs implicated in reflective storytelling include SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being), SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) through mental, emotional, and cultural literacy and creativity, inclusive cultural heritage practices, and the safe use of creative processes and exchanges to process and share, respectively (United Nations, 2015).

The research paper attempts to set a new paradigm in sustainable storytelling, which brings various strands together: adventure tourism, behavioural science, AI aesthetics, and sustainability education. The study also campaigns against the significant presence of AI images in the itineraries of participants by imagining such pictures as the instruments that went beyond being post-trip souvenirs and enabled certain emotional shifts and changes in retelling the memory (Deckker and Sumanasekara, 2025). Shared reminiscence of beautiful memories creates emotionally colourful stories that do good to individual health and the general cultural dialogue. This argument consequently provides a basis of digital aesthetics geared towards sustainable emotional intelligence in tourism practice in a fast-developing world, in which the world is becoming technologically enhanced.

The study suggests more sustainable types of tourism design where aesthetics and emotional connectivity become more fully developed. The concept of memory is transformed to be dynamic narratives which can heal, teach and inspire instead of being a fixed collection of discrete recollections. This study positions transformation as an aspect of life-changing experiences that both the local community and visitors experience by appealing to sustainability and

emotional associations in tourist design (Breiby, Duedahl, Oian, and Ericsson, 2020). The collaborating stakeholders have the ability to facilitate a holistic approach to tourist development that entails the integration of memory, emotion and technology to generate meanings that have sustainable effects.

## **Objectives**

- The role and influence of the Ghibli-inspired anime-style portraits in influencing the emotionality of the memories of the adventure tourism and taking into account their possible effects on the development of psychological well-being via associated mindfulness, therapeutic self-reflection and storytelling.
- Researches the AI intervention using a phenomenological framework by Colaizzi into the qualitative studies of digital visual culture and tourism.
- The project aims at sustainable storytelling in the UN SDGs: positivity with emotion, memory reconstruction, and conditioning associated with feelings, science and artistic digital aesthetics of travel.

## **Literature Review**

The given research project lies between the theory of memory reconstruction (Conway and Pleydell-Pearce, 2000) and the concept of affective tourism and the emerging research that describes artificial intelligence as a co-producer of personal experience. In tourism, memory is more than a repository or an unsolicited storage file but a perceptive, restructuring process that is influenced by emotion, aesthetic proficiency, and contemplation. The so-called self-defining memories (Singer and Salovey, 1993) explain the manner and nature in which emotionally charged adventure experiences are coded, later retrieved, and in some cases reinterpreted with time. Ghibli-like AI-generated portraits are perturbative stimuli, which allow travellers to reflect on past events with distorted emotional perspectives. It is consistent with the literature on therapeutic tourism, which assumes that travel is an intermediate domain that supports psychological recovery and self-reconstruction (Lean, 2012; Kirillova et al., 2017). The proposal of AI as more than a utilitarian tool but a creative agent attracts modern arguments in digital co-creation (Sundar, 2020), where artificial intelligence is criticised as the aggressor in not only content creation but also the emotional appeal it creates.

The modern trends that focus on unifying the cultural anchoring of anime with its definition as an independent film or television text have not been convincing enough in the academic discourse. As Kinder (1991) notes, anime, along with the content and characters, forms a central component in the dynamic, multi-connected network of transmedia products such as advertising, merchandising and theme parks, and, therefore, the phenomenon of anime makes anime a highly intertextual work of cultural artefact. In the modern Japanese environment, anime is not just entertainment but a comprehensive tool that improves memories of travelling and narrative presence (Pearson, 2023). Therefore, anime tourism has become a significant part of the cultural economy of Japan, which has a complex association with the structure of the wider tourism industry.

Japanese tourists, who come to spend money on anime and manga products, mainly because of the English-speaking markets, are often motivated to use the immersive experiences. They include museum sites, specialised shops and theme parks, most of which are advertised in cyberspace, like the invitation to an otaku tour (National Tourist Organisation of Japan, 2007). Manga, similar to anime, brings out a plot and a style mostly created by young Japanese artists, and they raise the question that these were created to fulfil the interests of the art school students as they grow (Toku, 2001). The development of communication technologies in the global arena is associated with anime-related tourism. The increasing anime and manga consumption rates have elevated the population consumption of anime and manga to 78.2 per cent of the total population in the country, becoming highly penetrated by the high penetration of the Internet in Japan, which in turn fuels the globalisation of anime and manga (National Tourist Organisation of Japan, 2007).

The number of attractions featuring anime has grown in the last ten years, randomly and prodigiously. The best examples of the institutionalisation of anime as a tourism resource involve the Studio Ghibli Art Museum, Hello Kitty theme parks, and museums dedicated to such legendary anime directors and poets as Osamu Tezuka and Shigeru Mizuki (Denison, 2010). Such places are not just business settings but are cultural symbols and can be described as a combination of nature and art, especially the Ghibli Museum at Mitaka, Tokyo, which incorporates natural colours as a part of the landscape, buildings and infrastructure.

Since anime is a multi-dimensional cultural production, which tends to cross between mass culture and high art, the products possess a problem of categorisation. Denison (2015) argues that this paradox is epitomised by the Studio Ghibli brand, since its repertoire has been heading between the film-centric masterpieces and commercialised souvenirs. Ghibli has an art-industrial French character that makes it a recognisable but contextually permeable cultural brand of its own internationally. Such duality is in accordance with more universal understandings of anime tourism as an artistic and consumer experience.

In combination with economic features, the sociocultural environment of anime tourism is also supported by the so-called otaku culture, which is the deep-rooted attachment to anime, technologies, and other analogous products of media (Azuma, 2009; Okamoto, 2015). The etymological history of the word 'otaku' in the 1980s meant people who had obsessive interests specifically in the area of anime or computers. Anime tourism became a part of popular culture in the 1990s, driven by a new generation sensitive to digital communication technologies that, in turn, took over the tourism industry, stimulating and facilitating interaction with digital media.

The Studio Ghibli Museum, which is a fantastic illustration of the cultural soft power that Japan uses to tap into the creative peacemaking, was the culmination of the anime tourism. The museum was developed in the form of a joint venture by Tokuma Shoten, Mitaka City, and Nippon Television Network as a cultural field integrated into an eco-friendly park, Inokashira Onshi Park, which takes the form of a green vision (Denison, 2010). The Ghibli Museum is unlike commercial anime hubs in that it provides a particular visitor experience and integrates with the natural environment.

A 2005 literature review on the modern tendency of cultural and creative tourism in global tourism development reveals the growing interest in cultural and creative tourism. According to Lai et al. (2021), it is a type of travel that appreciates cultures and encourages creative ways. In that regard, Kim and Thapa (2018) emphasise that in such situations, the way to achieve a flow experience, the mental state that increases perceived value, is the key to tourist satisfaction. Flow relies on preexisting expectations and emotional responses; it is a very important parameter in the measurement of the effect of cultural tourism (Pizam, Shapoval, and Ellis, 2016).

Phenomenological inquiry as a methodological framework is very effective and is used to explore the subjective aspects involved in anime tourism, especially once objective questions have been answered. Phenomenology is an emerging philosophy of the first half of the twentieth century that attempts to describe the essence of lived experience in the first person (Sokolowski, 2000; Smith, 2015). Intentionality, consciousness and embodiment have been explored by pioneering philosophers like Husserl, Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty (Husserl, Alston, and Nakhnikian, 1964; Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2020; Merleau-Ponty, 1956). Phenomenology has been operationalised into a well-regarded qualitative epistemology in social sciences; the interpretive validity of the results is validated through participant verification, thus guaranteeing the validity of verisimilitude and substantiveness of depth.

The phenomenological methodology has contributed to many fields (Drury, Cocking, Beale, Hanson, and Rapley, 2005), such as healthcare (Mortari and Saiani, 2018) and education (Mortari and Ubbiali, 2017), by valuing the human-centred inquiry. When applied to tourism, this methodology allows exploring both the affective and the sensual dimensions of an experience related to ostensibly exotic phenomena, like anime tourism, and questioning things that may be poorly represented by a traditional quantitative theoretical framework.

Besides, the phenomenological approach is consistent with the global development agenda. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals provide a macro-level means of analysis with the help of which many issues related to tourism, including the quality of education (SDG 4; Howden-Chapman et al., 2017; Ozga, 2012), air quality and health (SDG13), urban inclusiveness (SDG11), climate resilience (SDG13), and institutional responsibility (SDG16) can be handled in a single action. These are the objectives that strengthen the ethical principles of tourism development promoted by sustainability researchers (Doni, Gasperini, and Soares, 2020; Whaites, 2016).

To conclude, the merging of anime with tourism is a good example of the relationship between culture, media, and travel in a globalised environment. It presents a rich field of interdisciplinary inquiry, particularly upon consideration of a phenomenological approach, which prefigures lived experience and meets the provisions of sustainable development. The ability of anime tourism to promote economic growth, cultural safeguarding, identity, and becoming an international citizen is an aspect that requires more academic research by scholars.

## **Gaps in Literature and Rationale for the Study**

The interest in scholarly work on anime tourism, autobiographical memory, and artificial intelligence in the artistic sphere is booming; however, the intersection is significantly understudied in the field of tourism. Specifically, the scarcity of research on the way AI-mediated aesthetic reinterpretations, in particular, Ghibli-like portraits, can contribute to the process of affective reconstruction of the memory in the face of technological change in adventure tourism is visible. This gap is compounded by the lack of theoretical elucidation in terms of the influence of such interventions on developing sustainable storytelling that is in line with the psychosocial priority set in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Classic memory helps in tourism, such as digital photographs (Figure 1), video imagery and souvenirs, which tend to serve archival or representational purposes. In comparison, Ghibli-style portraits made by AI (Figure 2) are not strictly documentary; they are transformative, mediating the experiential memory through stylised emotive visual metaphors. Such reinterpretations have the likelihood of transforming fear into wonder, isolation into calm, and struggle into perseverance, thus boosting cognitive-emotive involvement. As a result, these portraits are intelligent artworks capable of reinventing memory as a therapy and powerful narrative instead of an object.

The proposed study fills the specified gap because the phenomena of remembrance associated with travel are examined through the lenses of phenomenology and digital aesthetics. The research adds to a developing concept of an emotionally sustainable tourism narrative.

## **Research methodology**

- **Research Design** – Due to the nature of the research question, the current study will have a qualitative nature of a phenomenological design since it examines the lived experiences of adventure tourists with the application of AI-generated Ghibli-like portraits on their travel memories. The choice of phenomenology was based on a more in-depth examination of subjective emotional experiences of the participants, as well as the mechanisms involved in recollecting the memories of an adventure through an aesthetic form of art, thus explaining the metamorphosis of the psychological and affective realities

of both the tourists and their memories of adventure, as it were, when reenacted by Ghibli-like art.

- **Sampling Methods** – Snowball sampling was used as the sample size of 17 participants who had taken part in adventure tourism activities in India that included trekking, rafting, mountaineering and paragliding. The snowball sampling was considered appropriate as it would allow reaching the diverse group of cohorts with extensive first-hand experience. The respondents wrote and chose one picture in their personal collection which had a specific emotional or personal meaning.
- **Data Collection Procedure** – The data collection process was carried out in two stages:
  - **First Stage:** The subjects will be asked to select a photograph that is representative of a major experience in an adventure tourism experience. The picture was not a freshly made one; it was an active choice of the participant in his/her gallery. The image was later turned into an AI-created Ghibli-like portrait by using the software that could be found on the Internet.
  - **Second Stage:** After the exposure to the AI-generated portrait, participants documented their thoughts on the instant reactions with an emphasis on the emotional reaction, as well as on the thoughts about the effect that the portrait had on the interpretation of the adventure memory. The primary set of data to be analysed further was the written reflections.

The authors were sensitive to the data saturation achievement in the process of data collection, as they observed that no new codes or even theme dimensions were found in the latter series of interviews. By the fifteenth interview, more elements were not generated in a coding stream, thus indicating that the authors were able to discover the meeting of salient structures in this experiential inquiry. The consistency of such results was supported during the two final interviews and proved that the phenomenological model suffers saturation of the phenomenon layer with regard to the structural layers of the experience. The indication of redundancy in theme associations also supported the sufficiency of sample size to be used in the study in terms of applicability in interpretation.

- **Data Analysis** – The written feedback was analysed using the seven-step phenomenological method of Colaizzi (1978), which is recognised as the most detailed method of qualitative analysis (Praveena & Sasikumar, 2021).
  - **Familiarisation-** All the written answers of the participants were repeatedly read in order to make the researcher plunge into the world of data and be able to understand the emotional and cognitive stories of those who presented them completely.

- **Extraction of meaningful specific statements:** The statements identifying emotional cues, perception of art (art), and those modifying memory were extracted by analysing the feedback of the participants.
- **Formulation of meanings:** The meaningful statements were decoded to reveal the inherent meanings of the emotional involvement and thinking change of the participants on the topic of adventure memory.
- **Clustering of themes:** Emerging meanings were clustered into thematic groupings that suggested common experience and emotional participation, including emotional recollection, use of art in a therapeutic identity and magical realism.
- **Exhaustive description:** The phenomenon was detailed by incorporating all the information that was extracted into one comprehensive picture that gives a complete picture of what the participants went through.
- **Fundamental structure:** There was a basic framework of the experience of the participants; it was distilled into major points of how AI-generated portraits caused emotional involvement and memory retrieval.
- **Validation:** Member checking was carried out; the results of the findings were discussed with some respondents to confirm the validity and correctness of the interpretations.

The resultant themes were then mapped onto applicable Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and thus demonstrated how digital art and successful emotional engagement can be used to achieve wider sustainability goals in adventure tourism.

- **Ethical Considerations** – The purpose of the study was explained to the participants, and they were assured that their participation was voluntary. Participation started with a wise decision being made in advance. The identification of the data was used to ensure the data are anonymous, and the subjects were informed of their free will to drop at any time without any consequences. Certain ethical protection measures were also taken regarding the use of art created by AI, as it required emotional support and respect toward the personal background of the participants, which pertained to their memories.

## Colaizzi's data analysis

The report on experiences of adventure tourism in 17 people forms the gist of this phenomenological qualitative study that uses the approach utilised by Colaizzi in 1978. All respondents remembered a memory of a personal adventure, which became a Ghibli-esque image in the form of an anime portrait. Semi-structured

but in-depth interviews were then conducted, based on photographs of post-trip experiences portrayed using anime style. Coding data were obtained through transcript insights, with a thematic approach to obtain meaning through experience. In the analysis, the transcript-based coding, conceptual bracketing and clustering demonstrated the recurring emotional and mental patterns.

**Step 1 – Familiarization:** The initial stage of the research involved a comprehensive literature review of available literature to develop a solid theoretical basis and to ensure that the research method is rigorous. It was then followed by a Colaizzi-based phenomenological approach as a broad overview of the transcripts of every respondent was implemented in order to evoke the lived experiences of each respondent around the memory of adventure tourism, re-created in Ghibli-style anime portraits. Following the template set by Colaizzi, every interview was carefully analysed so as to achieve a clear-cut insight into the emotional and psychological nuances inherent in the stories. This immersion allowed the researcher not only to record the content of the statements of the participants but also the peculiarities of the wording, accent, and minor indicators of emotions expressed in the thoughts of the participants. To illustrate, Table 1 captures P01 describing the feeling where he felt the silence that he had experienced in the trek because of the lights used in the animation, which is why P01 noted that off the animation the lights felt like they gave him a feeling of solitude. P08 also added that when he saw the animated forest, he cried, which brought back the feeling of peace, and this was a feeling generated within him as a result of the visualisation. These statements did not carry such literal readings; they were played through and through to isolate the affective frameworks of intricacy that put them in place. Therefore, the step produced a phenomenologically full, thematically subtle analysis of memory, emotion, and sustainability mediated by the use of Ghibli-style anime portraits.

**Step 2 – Extraction of meaningful specific statements:** In the second stage the researcher used a systematic process of mining salient phrases out of the interview texts, using them as a basis of articulation of the phenomenological lived experience of every participant. The notes were reread over and over again in order to strengthen the emotional as well as the narrative involvement. Bright illustrations of emotional and cognitive reactions related to the memories of the participants of the adventure tourism, visualised in the Ghibli-style anime images, were singled out and enumerated. The statements extracted were accurately transcribed with exact line numbers, thus maintaining the contextual integrity and helping in thematic development in the future. First, the statements

were categorised by participant, and their identities were identified by clear identifiers, i.e., in the form of transcripts and line numbers to help in tracing them. One of the previously discovered meaningful statements was then sent to one of the peers to evaluate it, which improved the validity and interpretive power of the information. The response to peer reviews was that changes were made to ensure more clarity was added and bias was reduced. These are provided in Table 1, identifying each participant and the type of adventure tourism activity (walking, cave tours, rafting) performed during the activity, a brief text of a significant statement and the corresponding line number that is therein summarising the emotional nucleus in the memory. In this methodical extraction, clear emotional themes were brought out, which were in turn placed in the context of wider sustainable development situations.

**Step 3 – Formulation of meanings:** The meaning formulation process had taken place during this stage of research as per the provisions of Colaizzi (1978): every statement of concern had to be rephrased into a more abstract definition that would elaborate the meaning down to the essence as perceived by the participant. Each important wording gathered from the interviews was then reassembled into compact formed meanings, although the essence remained and consequently helped thematic grouping. An example is that the declaration of one of the participants, ten, who stated that 'I saw beauty in the struggle I faced when hiking', brought out the statement, 'Challenges were taken as meaningful and visually beautiful events.' To the best of its ability, this formulation was not created in a vacuum, but instead it was discussed with a member of the peer group to provide interpretative consistency and to check on the appropriateness of the restated statements as per the intended meaning of the participant. This peer debriefing provided another dimension of credibility in the process of analysis. As posited by Husserl's (1960) concept of bracketing, the researcher consciously put aside her personal biases and preconceptions in the meaning-making process in a bid to establish that the subsequent interpretations reflected the world of the participants, so the chances of misrepresentation were reduced. When production of meanings was satisfactorily produced, they were coded and sorted under broad themed categories. These codes and clusters were then reviewed by an expert researcher in order to determine how accurate, clear and consistent the process was. This methodological rigour is proved in Table 2, which proves the conversion of relevant statements into meaningful interpretations, which were systematically converted to form the thematic development.

**Step 4 – Clustering of themes:** During the last stage, the researcher created the designed meanings into thematic clusters that are systematically arranged. There then was a process of synthesising these clusters into emergent, overarching themes, as defined in Table 3. Their internal congruence and external divergence were such that each formulated meaning was evolved out of and corresponded to a different cluster of themes. As an example, meanings like 'animation' reawakened the emotional atmosphere of the journey, and AI-created images revealed unexpressed emotions condensed to the cluster of concepts 'emotionally enriched memory recall', which in turn reflected the emergent theme 'emotive recall'. Further developed connotations, such as aesthetics washing over former pain, appearance as a reflection of a state of internal emotion, and aesthetic recreation of memories and magical realism and self-narration separately, were the basis of the themes of Aesthetic Reframing as Therapy, Aesthetic Revival of Memories and Magical Realism, respectively.

The themes and emergent clusters within a specific group were carefully validated by a peer group and a phenomenological research expert to ascertain whether they were in line with the research questions of the study. Thematic mapping of Table 4 visually depicts how these clusters are related to each other and how the phenomenon of changing memory through anime-style portraits is the thematic structure in the context of adventure tourism.

**Step 5 – Exhaustive description:** Exhaustive Description In the fifth and final analytical step (Table 5), the researcher took all the assimilated meanings, emergent themes and clusters of meanings and put them under one exhaustive description of the phenomenon under study: the AI-directed anime-style portraits under the influence of Ghibli, changing memory and emotion in adventure tourism. The extreme description gives a testament that, since that of the participants, the portraits did not only improve memory recall but also emotional recovery, the empowering of their own stories, and aesthetic fantasies that their past adventure activities included trekking, rafting, forest hiking, and self-directed travel. Images that projected pain and fear were then stylised later on to bring about positive emotions and serenity. Nevertheless, it was not entirely a practice in aesthetics, but it touched on therapy, the making of meaning in narratives, and the sustainability of emotion, which are connected with the global sustainable development goals (SDGs). For example:

- Also derived from SDG 3: Good Health and Well-Being, is what is called Emotive Recall, which in this instance results in the significantly positive marks of emotional healing and resilience.

- SDG11 Sustainable Cities and Communities is also aided by aesthetic reframing and responsible travelling, which relates to meaning.
- Magical realism and self-narration also reflect SDG 4: Quality Education and SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions because they also give a chance to develop self-awareness and harmony after organic integration of personal narratives.

Scientifically, AI-based anime-faced portraits have provided a new way of methodology to regard emotional events and psychological comfort to digitalise them, which enables inclusive platforms to share their memories. They are an imaginative technology that allows maintaining emotional sustainability, enhancing experiential learning, and supplementing education and well-being systems of the SDGs of the UN. Although Ghibli-model anime portraits turn routine or painful escapades into sturdy and lovely narrations, they are the means through which the personal growth also happens and give life to an expression in the collective culture of ongoing emotional display at the world scale.

The interconnection of all emergent emotional themes to certain United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) offers a theoretical, and not empirical, justification to exemplify the overall psychosocial and cultural implications of AI-mediated emotional tourism memory. Not every SDG has a high level of participants associated with data, especially SDG 13 (Climate Action). Most of these links are inferential since they portray the sought-after aspects of future events that may be followed through in the future, as opposed to the action being undertaken in any empirical sense. The operationalisation of SDG alignment needs to be further analysed by additional research on how the use of SDGs by participants can be operationalised by using either participant-led sustainability reflection and/or behavioural outcomes in future research.

**Step 6 – Fundamental Structure:** The ultimate finding of this study is that the AI-generated anime-like portraits, particularly the portraits of the Ghibli nature, are an effective channel of emotional reframing and memory reformatting in the field of adventure tourism. To the participants, the past tours brought back the memories that were buried somewhere in the forest and formed a stronger bond between them as a result of rediscovery of emotion, nostalgia, serenity and self-knowledge. This reinterpretation did not only work wonders in creating more exquisite imagery, but it also helped get around to personal memories so that they could be brought to mind as poetic, myth-like stories. The aestheticisation of fears

led to the dilution; problems were romanticised, and the ordinary situation was set into symbolism.

It is the idea of the emergent emotions, which in turn frames the framework by aligning it to the relevant SDGs, which depict the potential of AI-mediated stories to improve emotional well-being (SDG 3), nurture lifelong emotional learning (SDG 4), promote sustainable culture (SDG 11), and encourage peaceful self-telling. Moreover, although the imagery had therapeutic effects, they also added to the strength of emotions, mental clarity, and a new experience of nature and personal landscapes.

In theory, the AI-generated anime portraits, including those that use Ghibli-inspired acoustic effects like smooth, nature-enveloping exteriors, encourage economic brain responses related to the regulation of feelings, memory, and aesthetic experience grounded in attachment. These neural activities facilitate cognitive-emotional synthesis that is associated with SDG 3 because they advocate psychological healthiness. These stylisations can easily be used in the teaching context (SDG4) to instill in students moral virtue of caring, storytelling, and culture conservation. Such idyllic scenery of harmony also suits Ghibli aesthetics, in support of SDG 11 and SDG 13, but with a minor reinforcement of the attitudes and environmentally conscious behaviour. By enhancing the amount of personal memory in the emotionally resonant visual stories, AI anime-style portraits allow one to express themselves peacefully (SDG 16), making it a beneficial tool in tourism and as a system to create long-term sustainable development based on emotional learning, resilience, and continuity of cultures and traditions.

It is demonstrated that AI anime-like portraits can transform personal memories into cultural properties of the community that can be stored throughout generations and create empathy among various communities. This creates a novel research paradigm of sustainable tourism that incorporates the notions of memory, emotion, art and technology into the immersive digital storytelling. It helps to fill cultural differences, to understand and value various experiences. The world becomes more unified and interconnected due to the availability of personal memories to be shared by the latest technologies, turned into mutual experiences and values. This type of innovative scheme improves the quality of experience that can be offered to visitors and at the same time further enhances the concept of preservation and valorisation of cultural heritage. In this respect, total creativity can be sparked off to elicit social discussion and highlight AI technology as the forerunner of the future of destinations.

**Step 7 – Validation:** The final validation was done using member checking, which included re-interviewing of the participants in order to determine the reliability and general representativeness of the emergent themes and the associated SDGs. Some of the themes that were put in front of the participants to capture the emotional nature of AI-generated Ghibli-style adventure memories portraits were a list of attentively chosen words: awe, sentimentality, healing, serenity, dreaminess, enchantment, and clarity. Participants were questioned as to whether the wording was congruent with their personal emotional reactions at first. The majority confirmed it to be the case and implied that the terms were appropriate to capture their internal responses and remodelling of memory.

## **Fundamental Structure**

The paper explores the way AI-created portraits interpret and mediate sensations of emotional engagement to adventure tourism (Figure 3). Animation has been used as a medium of emotional introspection by shedding some light on how it can possibly allow individuals to artistically form a memory of their travelling experiences. Respondents seemed to welcome such recall of their lived experiences, and they seemed to perceive it as refracted in an altered/enriched lens with affect and meaning. As a result, anime-type portraits are seen as therapeutic and a storytelling instrument in tourism. The study analytically analyses, through the perspective of adventure tourists, how they experience the Indian landscape, thus placing AI-enhanced images as content agents in the practice of changing the affect.

In addition, the emerged themes were also correlated to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, especially SDG 3, SDG 4, SDG 11, SDG 13, and SDG 16. Such mapping suggests that digital storytelling has the potential to be used as a memory-saving device, as it will positively impact the mental health of stakeholders. In this respect, the paper frames anime-style narrative in the wider environment of sustainable development and creates the avenues to digital humanities, experiential learning, and development of responsible tourism.

A transdisciplinary research path converges behavioural science, phenomenology, visual storytelling and sustainability studies. This study builds on the modern tenets of tourism by presenting a new methodological and conceptual framework of comprehending the mediation of personal development, strength, and post-travel reflections by digital aesthetics. Overall, the results

indicate that adventure tourism can be rethought and repositioned as a therapeutic engagement location, as well as a store of sustainable and meaningful activity that is mediated through the use of emotional mindful AI tools.

## **Conclusion**

The paper has introduced a new and advanced approach to the potential use of AI-generated Ghibli-style portraits as findings that serve as the mediating affective variable in recreating adventure-tourist memories. The findings suggest that such stylised products result in the most emotional responses, including awe, vulnerability, resilience, and tranquillity, which allow promoting emotional sustainability and contributing to SDGs 3, 4, 11, 13, and 16. Similar interaction between the participants and the portraits contributed to the process of deepened cognitive and emotional reflection, also proving that AI may be used not only as a piece of technological equipment but also as a useful and meaningful co-creator of tourism narratives and immersive interpretation.

The main strength of the study is that it is in line with the modern tendencies in digital aesthetics at the international level. The Ghibli-like depictions prevailed in the visual range in the past and still possess large numbers of followers. Besides, Gemini-based and other aesthetically orientated AI models have become widespread in a very short period, which means that a change in culture, a way towards viewing AI-mediated visual reinterpretation, has taken place: people tend to view AI-mediated visual reinterpretation more often than not as a certain component of personal storytelling. In the individual case of Ghibli, it has been the first to demonstrate an emotionally appealing design which is aesthetically synergistic and can be used positively and non-obtrusively so as to generate greater experiential recollection. Locating this phenomenon into a paradigm of phenomenology and sustainability, therefore, places the study at the vanguard of contributions by settling the interests of affective computing, digital art, and responsible tourism design.

Regardless of the positive results, the research admits the shortcomings of the design, such as the lack of exclusion when it comes to stylisation and the lack of diversity among the sample in terms of demographics. In the future, cross-cultural background and various forms of aesthetics ought to be taken into account to ascertain the generalisability of AI-intermediated memory reconstruction. Comprehensively, the study sadly adds to the progressive and ethically correct debate on AI-enhanced memory work, which is likely to enhance the tourism

experience, encourage deeper reflectivity, and add value to the field of sustainable tourism study.

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